



## Investigation Summary Report

### Shadows on the Teche New Iberia, LA



### HISTORY



A white-columned brick building constructed between 1831 and 1834, the Shadows is both a survivor and a reminder of another time. The Shadows serves as a solid reminder of the many layers of history associated with the site, each succeeding generation building on the one before to become an integral part of the property's history. Fortunately, we not only have the house and the historic site, but we also have the Weeks Family Papers, a collection of over 17,000 invoices, receipts, business, legal, and personal letters that testify to the joys, sorrows, fears, sickness, celebrations, pain, prosperity and poverty, all the emotions and situations of life. The site has been the stage for business entrepreneurs, politicians, soldiers, a backdrop for the Civil War, and a comfortable, familiar setting for childhood and old age, witnessing birth, sickness, and death, all of which are documented in the Weeks Family Papers.

The house, the landscape, the people's faces through their portraits, and their voices through the words they wrote in letters, have been preserved and together form a picture of life on a nineteenth century Louisiana plantation. They tell the story of change over time and emphasize the stream of continuity connecting the present with the past.

David Weeks, builder of the Shadows, was just one of many Anglo-Americans who made their way to the Attakapas region, the present day parishes of St. Martin, St. Mary, Iberia, Vermilion, and Lafayette, after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase to seek their fortune making sugar. Another family important to our story is the Conrad family of Virginia. By 1808, Mary Clara Conrad and her family were living on a plantation on the Bayou Teche between New Iberia and Jeanerette, probably Rosedale, the home of Mary's maternal grandmother Ann Thruston.

As a young man, David Weeks began working with his father, William Weeks, accumulating much property in the Felicianas and the Attakapas in the early 1800s, purchasing most of Grand Cote (now Weeks Island), over 2,000 acres by 1818. They grew cotton in the Felicianas, and attempted indigo and cotton in the Attakapas before David Weeks began concentrating on sugar in the early 1820s. While establishing the plantation at Grand Cote, David found time to court and marry Mary Conrad, Mary being 21 years of age and David 32. The couple resided on William Weeks' plantation on Bayou Sarah near St. Francisville.

After David's father died, they decided to move to their Attakapas properties to concentrate on the production of sugar at Grand Cote. Though Grand Cote was ideal as a sugar plantation, its location was considered too remote for his family, so David first acquired property on Bayou Parc Perdu where they lived for four years, before he bought, in 1825, the property at New Iberia on Bayou Teche.

Mary was proud of the house they built at Parc Perdu, where her first child was born in 1822. But in 1825 David sold the Parc Perdu plantation and moved his young family to the recently purchased tract of land on the outskirts of New Town (New Iberia now), where he built on a tract of 158 acres, the brick dwelling house now called The Shadows-on-the-Teche. Eight children were born to David and Mary: Frances, William, Alfred, Harriet, Charles, Frederick, David, and an infant girl who died shortly after birth. Construction of the new house began in 1831 and was finally completed in 1834. Invoices indicate that two brothers were in charge of most of the building process, Jotham and James Bedell. One of only three brick structures on the bayou in its' vicinity, the Shadows was constructed in a Classical Revival style on the exterior with the distinctive eight white columns across the front facade. Unlike other southern plantation homes of its time, the new Weeks home incorporated a Louisiana Colonial floorplan.

As the house neared completion in May 1834, David Weeks left on a sea voyage to New Haven, Connecticut, in an attempt to find a cure for a recurring unidentified disease. In mid-June 1834

Mary and six children moved into the new house. The happiness of moving into the new home, was overshadowed by worry about the absent David Weeks, who died August 25, 1834, never having lived in the new house on Bayou Teche. Almost six months after his death an inventory was taken of his estate; the house and furnishings were valued at \$20,700 while the main plantation of Grand Cote at \$75,000.

Following the death of David Weeks in 1834, his widow Mary C. Weeks was kept extremely busy seeing to the management of the plantation holdings of the David Weeks Estate, her children's inheritance. Her brothers advised and assisted her, but she often dealt directly with overseers concerning the sugar plantation on Grand Cote.

In addition to decisions on acreage to be planted in cane and food crops, supplies to be purchased, and marketing matters, as a sugar planter, Mary was also responsible for the needs of the slaves on Grand Cote and at the Shadows, over 150 men, women and children. This meant making sure there was sufficient food and clothing for everyone and that adequate housing and medical attention were provided when necessary. In addition to the plantation, Mary also saw to the needs of her children, hiring tutors to teach at the schoolhouse behind the main house and later locating good boarding schools and colleges in which to enroll the five children who survived childhood. Frances, William, Alfred, Harriet and Charles learned reading, writing, arithmetic and geography from tutors at home until in their early teens they went off to boarding schools.

In 1841, Mary's life changed with her marriage to John Moore. Moore was born in Berkeley County, Virginia (now West Virginia), in 1789. John Moore owned property in and transferred his place of residence to various Louisiana parishes between the 1810s and 1830s. In 1816 he was acting justice of the peace in St. Mary Parish and was also "reading law" under Judge Joshua Baker of Franklin. In 1822, he purchased the property in St. Landry Parish now known as Magnolia Ridge, near Washington, Louisiana. From 1825 to 1834, Moore represented St. Martin Parish in the Louisiana House of Representatives. Then again during the mid-1830s he was listed as a parish judge in St. Mary Parish.

While legally keeping their property separate, Mary and her children frequently sought her husband's advice in business and family affairs. The 1840s and 1850s were prosperous decades for John and Mary Weeks Moore. She watched her children mature, marry and have children of their own. Her marriage to John Moore was a healthy and happy one, and she and her husband were respected members of the community. The plantations were doing well and the family's future looked secure.

Judge Moore was elected to Congress in 1840 and Mary traveled with him, taking the children, except Frances who had married Augustin Magill in 1841. The Moores enrolled the older boys, William and Alfred, in colleges in Virginia and Harriet in a female seminary in Georgetown. Moore was re-elected to Congress in 1851, but after visiting him once in 1852, Mary chose to remain behind at the Shadows, keeping in touch with her absent husband through letters. "I have little to say unless I tell you over and over again how much I miss your society and how much I want to see you. You know the monotony of Attakapas life, only varied by fear of freezes or of sickness." (Letter, Mary C. Moore, The Shadows to John Moore, Washington, DC, Jan 14, 1853)

Sometime in the early hours of December 29, 1863, Mary Moore died peacefully in her sleep as Union troops occupied her home and its grounds. She was buried in her garden, "as the graveyards were all open the fencing having been torn down by the Yankees." (Letter, Hannah J. Conrad, New Iberia, to John Moore, De Soto Parish, Dec 4, 1864). John Moore died at the Shadows, on June 17, 1867 at the age of 78 and is buried next to Mary.

THE ABOVE HISTORY WAS OBTAINED FROM THE SHADOWS ON THE TECHE WEBSITE.

## INVESTIGATION

We were very fortunate to be allowed to investigate the beautiful Shadows on the Teche Plantation. We cannot thank the staff of the home enough for allowing us access. The night was very successful and we definitely look forward to returning. Below is a brief recap of the events that took place. Thanks Jennifer for the following log.

At 10:15 pm, while in attic, Chris made mention of there not being anyone around and all of a sudden, heard something moving /walking in another room. We knew that we were the only persons in the attic, but went towards sounds and found no- one was there.

At 12:30 pm, while in attic, James, Danny and Jennifer were sitting in the office room and were trying to see if they could hear the attic movement again, when all of a sudden they heard heavy footsteps down the attic hall and then a cough. It sounded so real that they just knew that someone was there. Jennifer called out to see if anyone was there and then went down the hall looking inside each room - only to find that they were the only people in the attic. They tried recreating the sounds, by having people walk up the steps and on rear galley and in hallway of attic and the sounds were that of the hallway.

While Carla and Michelle were on the second floor, they heard what sounded like furniture moving in the office while others were in the library. They also had several EMF spikes (2.6) with response to Weeks Hall about a painting on the wall. A little later in the evening, the ladies heard noises in the master bedroom as well as music sounds

Finally, while Andie and Dannie were investigating, they found a cold spot in the Children's room that seemed to move slowly around the room and also found a cold spot in Mrs. Mary's room after asking about union soldiers.

In conclusion, our investigators definitely came out with numerous personal experiences. There were no interesting photographs nor video obtained during the night, however there were several audio clips that drew curiosity. Several clips were not posted simply for the fact that they were too vague for comprehension. Here at LaSpirits, we hold ourselves to a higher level of standards in every aspect, ranging from evidence analysis to investigations.