



Report Number: JR0022
GMP Ancestor: n/a
Prepared by: Judy Riffel
Date: 9 August 2022
Related Codes: n/a

Purpose: To present a history of the Batey & Downing Plantation on Bayou Fordoche

Discussion:

The Batey & Downing Plantation was one of three plantations owned by Jesse Batey, purchaser in 1838 of some of the GU272 enslaved from the Jesuits in Maryland . The plantation was located along Bayou Fordoche in Pointe Coupee Parish. None of the GU272 were found to have lived and worked on this plantation.

The plantation consisted of three noncontiguous tracts. Jesse Batey owned the upper part in partnership with William Downing while the lower part was his separate property. Batey acquired a half interest in the upper part in 1843 from his business partner, Henry Claiborne Thibodaux.¹ In 1845, Thibodaux sold his half interest to William V.D. Downing of Claiborne County, Miss.²

William V.D. Downing was the son of Dr. D.D. Downing, a native of Port Gibson, Mississippi, who owned the Downing Plantation directly below the Batey & Thibodaux Plantation on Bayou Terrebonne. Halfway Cemetery, located on the border between the two, was originally known as the Downing Cemetery. Dr. D.D. Downing died in 1830 in Terrebonne Parish, leaving William V.D. Downing, a minor living in Mississippi, as his only heir. Dr. Jesse Batey was appointed curator of William Downing.³ William Downing came of age in 1845 and took possession of his property.

In 1841, Jesse Batey purchased 12 enslaved people from Antoine Gilbert Marionneaux and Thomas L. Huff. They were as follows: David (22); Peter (32); Wayne (23); Scott (21); Andrew (22); Sam (22); Sophy (18); Frances (24); Martha (15); Eliza (15); Harietta (17); and Ann (17). According to the sale, they had lately been imported into the State of Louisiana. The purchase price was \$7,800 in cash.⁴

Jesse Batey died on the 20th of January 1851 in Terrebonne Parish. About a month later, an inventory was made of his property in Pointe Coupee Parish. The Batey & Downing Plantation consisted of Sections 15-20, 46-51, and 75-76, of Township 5 South, Range 8 East. Batey's half interest in the plantation consisted of the following enslaved people (ten of the 12 listed on Batey's 1841 purchase appear in bold print):⁵

Pierre, 32

Jane, his wife, 25, and her child

Josephine 8

Sam, 30

Caroline, his wife, mulatto, 24, and her child

Hannah, 18 months

Jim, griff, 33

Matilda, his wife, mulatto, 28, and her children

Henry, 10

Isabella, 8

William Nelson, griff, 31

Eliza, his wife, 23, and four children

George, 6

Douglas, 5

Fleming, 3

Theophilus, 5 months

Gabriel, 29

Sophy, his wife, 26, and her two children

Ben, 3

Claiborne, 7 months

Tom, mulatto, 44

Harriet, his wife, 25

Margaret, mulatto, 17

John, mulatto, 18

Tom, mulatto, 11

Amos, 30

Winnie, his wife, griff, 20

Andrew, 30

Ann, his wife, mulatto, 25, and two children

Jackson, 2

Julia Ann, 5 weeks

Peter, 40

Nancy, his wife, 25

Dave, 30

Betsy, his wife, griff, 28, and three children

Thomas, 7

Edward, mulatto, 6

Marshall, 3

Frances, 30, and two children

Mary Louisa, 3

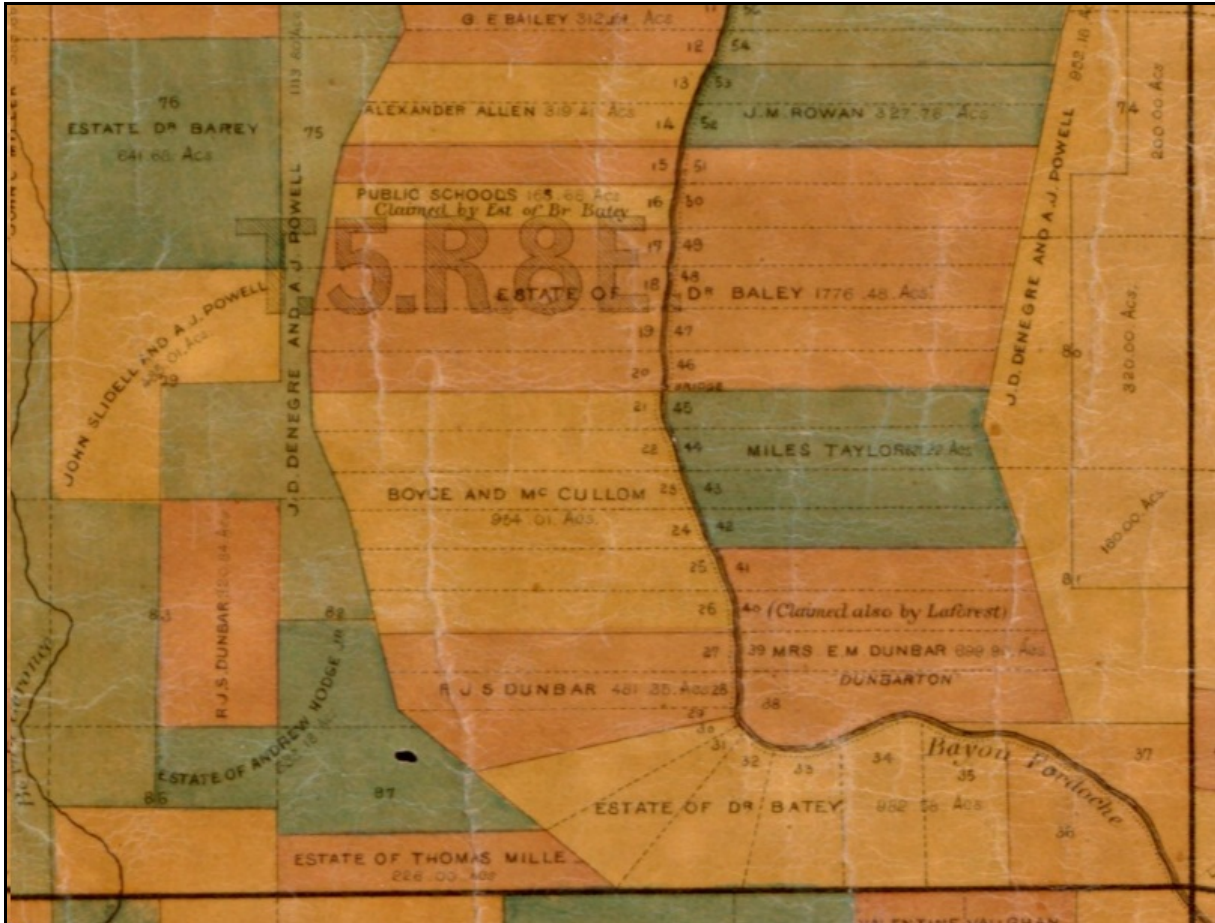
Sarah Jane, 7 months

Wayne, 31

Caroline, 24

In 1860, the heirs of Jesse Batey sold the land to John W. Newsom and Alfred Brown, but after the Civil War, they sued and recovered the plantation.⁶ In 1892, the property was sold for taxes. At that time, the Batey & Downing Plantation was referred to as the “McCrea” lots while the lower portion was referred to as the McKneeley Plantation.⁷

The GMP has been unable to locate any of the enslaved people or their descendants from the Batey & Downing Plantation after 1851.



1858 map showing three tracts belonging to Estate of Dr. Batey, Estate of Dr. Baley, and Estate of Dr. Barey. Source: Map of the parishes of Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge and Iberville: including parts of the parishes of St. Martins and Ascension, Louisiana, Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center of the Boston Public Library Digital Collection (<https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:3f463285g>).

Endnotes:

1. Sales by Henry Claiborne Thibodaux to Jesse Batey, 20 Feb. 1843, Conveyance Book I, pp. 392-394 and 402-404, Terrebonne Parish Clerk of Court, Houma, La.
2. Sale by Henry Claiborne Thibodaux to William D. Downing, 17 May 1845, Conveyance Book U, pp. 444-446, Lafourche Parish Clerk of Court, Thibodaux, La.
3. Probate #25, Terrebonne Parish Clerk of Court, Houma, La.
4. Sale by Antoine Gilbert Marionneaux and Thomas L. Huff to Jesse Batey, 27 Oct. 1841, Conveyance Book U, #313, Iberville Parish Clerk of Court, Plaquemine, La.
5. Inventory of the property of the succession of Dr. Jesse Batey, 25 Feb. 1851, Pointe Coupee Parish Clerk of Court, Original Record Book 1851, vol. 1, #1739, Pointe Coupee Parish Clerk of Court, New Roads, La.
6. Samuel Batey et als vs. J.W. Newsom, filed 17 Feb. 1866, Suit #487, 7th Judicial District Court, Pointe Coupee Parish Clerk of Court, New Roads, La.
7. *Pointe Coupee Democrat*, 7 May 1892 and 20 Aug. 1892.