



**Sorapura House**

A French Creole style home from the mid-1800s.

The area which became St. John the Baptist Parish was fairly well settled by the end of the eighteenth century. Created in 1807, the parish grew to become a prosperous sugar planting area. Although St. John was part of the so-called German Coast, its dominant cultural influence was French Creole. Presumably there were once a few hundred Creole residences of various sizes in the parish. Today, out of a total of over 1,100 buildings identified in the parish survey as being fifty years of age or older, the Sorapura House is one of only about ten which remain to portray the area's Creole environment and lifestyle. The home's floorplan, ten light French doors, exposed beaded ceiling beams, and mantels which wrap around the flue in the French manner all mark the building as an early and important example of the Creole style.

Creole houses such as the Sorapura Home represent St. John's earliest architectural development and are the primary representatives of its well-known Creole cultural heritage. It should be noted that in any given French parish in Louisiana, the Creole buildings are generally considered the most important. This is because the French Creole heritage is the major element distinguishing Louisiana from other southern states and in many ways forms its cultural identity.

The home is also important as a rare example of Federal styling. Within St. John the Baptist Parish, only the Sorapura House and the much larger Whitney (National Register) have mantels in this style.

**Source: *Division of Historic Preservation. Historic Structures Survey of St. John the Baptist Parish.***

#### Historical Note

The Sorapurus, a family of Creoles of Color, have lived in St. John the Baptist Parish at least since the late 1700s. At that time the farming family was also part owner of a sugar mill. Later, Louis Sorapura was an early postmaster of Lucy, while Adolphe Sorapura served as the parish's Recorder of Mortgages in the 1850s. The family built the home c. 1825, and Sorapura descendants lived there continuously until 1996. Although the building is currently vacant, the Sorapurus are interested in preserving the home.