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Submitted by New Orleans District COE

R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. under contract with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, recently completed extensive excavations at the site of Nina Plantation in New Roads, Louisiana. Located approximately 20 miles upriver from Baton Rouge, the plantation was originally called Pecan Grove when it was established ca. 1822 by Jean Ursin Jarreau. It remained in the Jarreau family until 1857 when Charles Allen purchased the plantation, with its house, slave cabins, kitchens, cotton gin, sugarhouse, other outbuildings, and 84 slaves, and renamed it Nina Plantation.

The plantation grew both sugar and cotton through the nineteenth century, but by the late nineteenth century, riverine erosion had forced the relocation of the artificial levee to the rear of the plantation complex, leaving it unprotected from frequent flooding. Most of the buildings were abandoned and subsequently razed. Excavations in 1993-4 revealed alluvial deposits of up to 1.5 meters covering the remains of the buildings.

A 3600 square meter area was found to contain the remains of the mainhouse, two outbuildings, two cistern foundations, and a wood-lined well. One of the two outbuildings was a detached kitchen that also served as a residence, probably for the cook. The other outbuilding probably served as residence for household slaves/servants. The main house had been raised on substantial brick piers, while the outbuildings were constructed using earthfast techniques. A substantial alluvial deposit from a documented, mid-nineteenth century flood separates antebellum and postbellum deposits across the site, thus allowing analysis of spatial and temporal changes in activity patterns. The 150-200,000 artifacts recovered during the excavations are currently undergoing analysis.