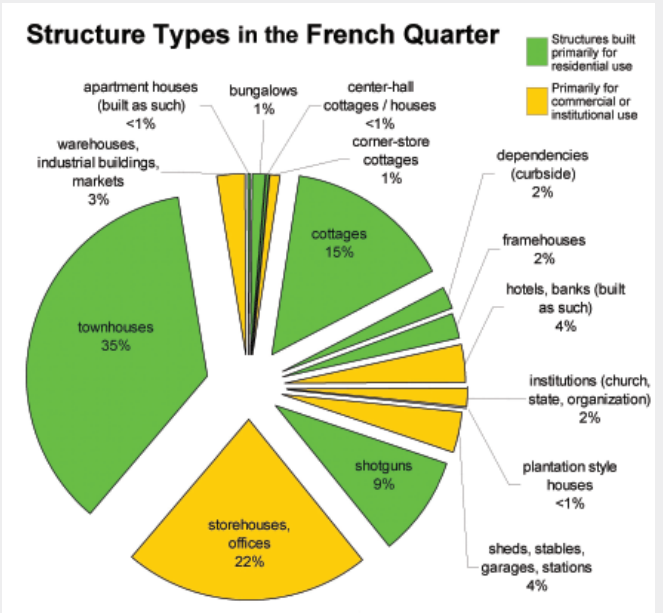
"A Philosophy of Space"
Patterns of Structure Type in the French Quarter

Structural typology, more so than architectural style, shapes the French Quarter's built environment and distinguishes it from the urban American norm. *Typology*, or *type* is the underlying form, shape, orientation, and layout of a building. While styles are informed by ever-changing tastes and draped upon structures rather interchangeably, type reflects the needs, wants, and means of its builders and owners, representing "a philosophy of space, a culturally-determined sense of dimension."[63] Cultures that value privacy would probably not build their houses without hallways, such that rooms can be accessed only from other rooms, while gregarious societies may be more inclined to embrace such an arrangement. Individuals with abundant means, and a desire to display it, may opt for a townhouse; those with limited means may have no choice but settle for a cottage or shotgun. Style in these scenarios is not inconsequential, but it is secondary.

Structure types, like styles, sometimes resist easy categorization. The line between type and function for entities such as banks and hotels can be blurry, as is distinguishing between two related types, such as shotguns and certain bungalows. It is also debatable whether a "Creole cottage" is type *per se*, or a Creole *style* applied to the cottage *type* (as I have handled them).[64] But the major distinctions are the important ones, and of the sixteen types identified in this study (see pie chart *Structure Types in the French Quarter*),[65] only four accounted for 81 percent of the 2,244 buildings in the Quarter: the townhouse (35 percent), the mixed commercial/residential-use storehouse (22 percent), the cottage (15 percent), and the shotgun (9 percent).

A townhouse is a multi-story brick structure set in a row, often with shared walls, designed originally for the residential occupancy of its affluent owners. Townhouses in the French Quarter were usually mansions. A storehouse is outwardly similar but serves a commercial purpose on the ground floor, and may afford either residential or commercial (including storage) use on the upper floors. Both townhouses and storehouses in the Quarter were usually built with three bays on each of two to three floors. Conversion over the years between townhouses and storehouses, and from mixed-use to solely commercial use, accounts for some gray zones between these two types. But there is no confusing them with cottages and shotguns. Cottages are rectangular or square residential structures (unless they be on corners, where they often serve retail functions as well), usually one to one-and-a-half stories plus an attic, whose roofline is parallel with the abutting street. Shotgun houses are elongated linear structures oriented perpendicularly to the street, described in detail below. Variations abound within these prevailing types: townhouses and storehouses may have steep or flat roofs, balconies or galleries, or arched or square openings; cottages and shotguns may have hip or gable roofs, brick or wooden walls, or single or double bays.



"Structure type" refers to the underlying form, shape, orientation, and layout of a building. Of the sixteen structural types identified in this study, only four accounted for over 80 percent of extant Quarter structures: townhouses, storehouses, cottages, and shotgun houses. *Graph and analysis by author.*

Historical Trends of Structure Type

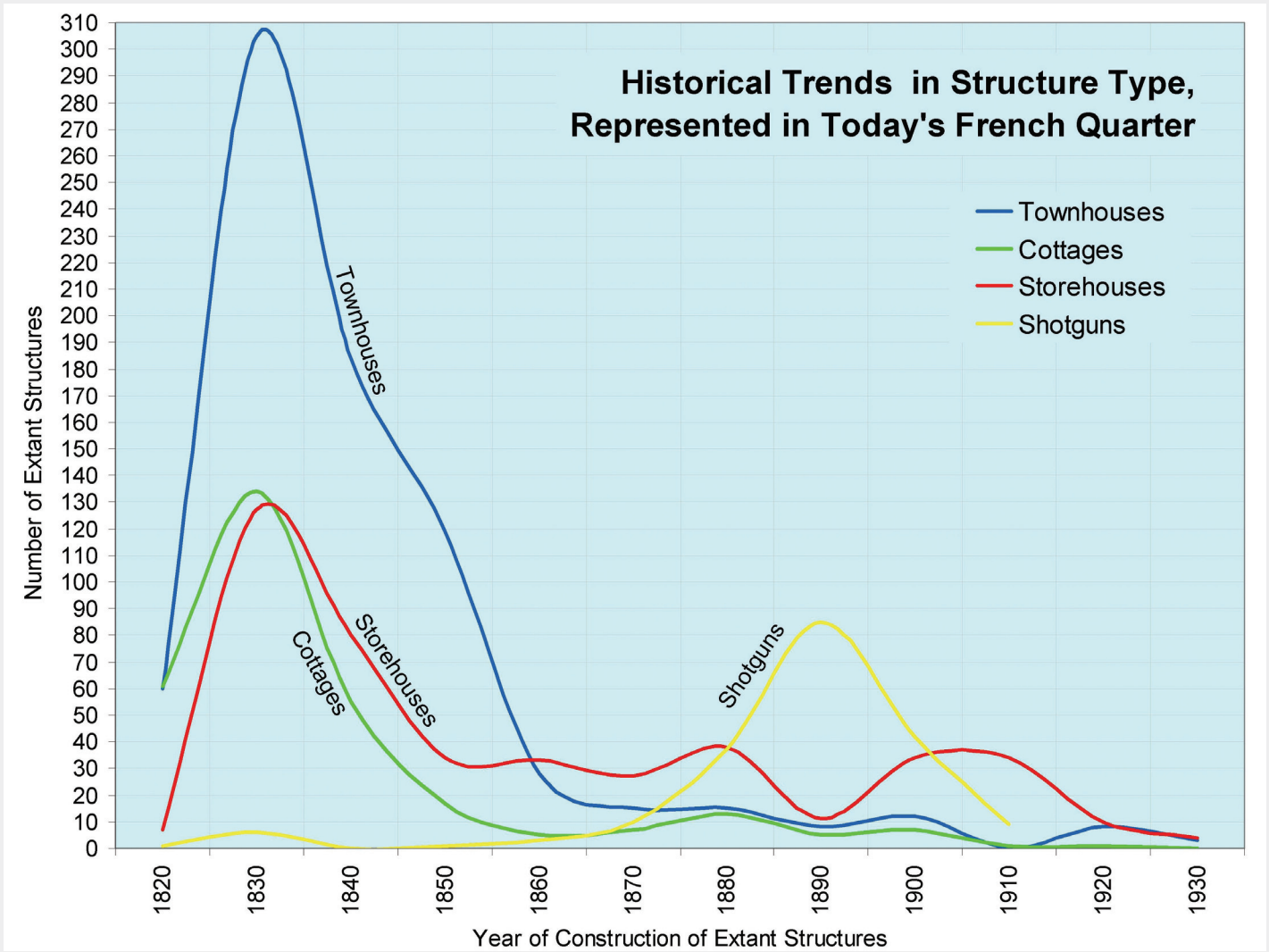
The graph *Historical Trends in Structure Type Represented in Today's French Quarter*, shows that cottages, townhouses, and storehouses were all popular during the building boom of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Townhouses were especially popular, but because these data represent *extant* buildings, this peak may reflect the greater likelihood that costly and architecturally significant townhouses were more likely to survive to the present day. Shotguns, on the other hand, were extremely scarce in the early 1800s, though not entirely absent. Construction of all types came to near-total halt during the Civil War, and returned at minimal levels during federal occupation.

Once the city got back on its feet in the late 1870s and 1880s, a new built environment arose in the French Quarter. Gone, with few exceptions, was new townhouse construction: the wealthy by this time had departed the no-longer-fashionable old city for uptown and Esplanade Avenue, a trend that had actually started before the Civil War. Others had lost their fortunes to the conflict. Storehouses also overtook town-

[63] John Michael Vlach, "Sources of the Shotgun House: African and Caribbean Antecedents for Afro-American Architecture" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1975), 164.

[64] Not all cottages in the Quarter are Creole cottages. Some are "dressed" in the Greek Revival, Queen Anne, or Italianate styles. There is even one rare Spanish colonial cottage, both in style and era of construction.

[65] Based on an analysis of the Vieux Carré Survey. See the chapter, "An Architectural Geography of the French Quarter" for methodological details.



Cottages, townhouses, and storehouses were all popular during antebellum times. After the Civil War, the French Quarter changed. New townhouse construction declined as the wealthy departed for uptown and Esplanade Avenue. Storehouses overtook townhouses, further indicating that what was once a commercial/residential neighborhood with both affluent and working-class populations had transformed to a gritty district for the working-class and poor. Most significantly, shotguns surged in popularity, at the expense of cottages, which had declined steadily after their 1830s peak and never really returned. *Graph and analysis by author.*

Most of these houses, which exhibit Greek Revival or Creole styles draped on the cottage typology, date from the 1830s and 1840s. The 500 block of Burgundy provides an idea of rear-Quarter residential streetscapes from the mid-nineteenth century, prior to the boom in shotgun house construction a half-century later. *Photograph by author, 2004.*

This rare flat-roof Spanish colonial cottage at 707 Dumaine, circa 1799, demonstrates that cultural tradition often trumps environmental consideration in housing: a flat roof works better in arid Spain than in humid New Orleans, yet colonists nevertheless continued this and other traditions in their new environs, adapting them to local factors only afterwards. Until around 1890, a similar cottage stood to the left of this one; as was often the case, it was razed for a Victorian Italianate shotgun double, visible here. *Photograph by author, 2003.*

This handsome house at 929 St. Louis is a cottage type adorned in the Queen Anne style, popular in the turn-of-the-century era, particularly uptown. There are only eleven representatives of the Queen Anne style in the French Quarter. *Photograph by author, 2002.*

houses, a reversal of the antebellum trend, further indicating that what was once a commercial/residential neighborhood with both affluent and working-class populations had transformed to a gritty industrial/commercial/residential district with only a working-class population. Note, however, the dip in storehouse construction in the 1890s, possibly caused by the big new industrial buildings and warehouses erected in the upper and riverside blocks in that decade.

Perhaps the most fascinating postbellum trend is the surge in popularity of the shotgun house, at the expense of the cottage, which had declined steadily in the Quarter after its 1830s peak and never really came back. What explains this switch? First, some background on the famous shotgun house.

These spectacular Greek Revival-style townhouses at 532-542 North Rampart date from around 1850. Townhouses, originally built as city homes for wealthy families, are the most common structure type in the French Quarter, reflecting its mid-1800s prosperity. When the Quarter declined, many were subdivided into cheap apartments. Today, after decades of gentrification, many old townhouses have been subdivided again, this time as condominiums, though some still retain their antique interiors. These particular units have seen better days. *Photograph by author, 2003.*

Origins of the Shotgun House

The shotgun house is the most ubiquitous traditional vernacular house type in the South and particularly in New Orleans. Its simplicity, distinctive appearance, conspicuous name, and association with poverty make the shotgun a quintessential component of the Southern landscape, one that outsiders revel in discovering, for it seems to fulfill expectations of rough-edged Southern authenticity. Folklore holds that the utterly non-euphemistic name derives from the ability to fire a shotgun through the front door and out the rear without touching a wall. Another story claims that the house's shape recalls a single-barrel shotgun, a duplex thus resembling a double-barrel shotgun. The name, at least in New Orleans, seems to have been applied retroactively: architect Robert Cangelosi has found the term *shotgun house* in print only after 1910, a decade or two after the shotguns' peak popularity; earlier references described them as box houses, tenements, or cottages.[66] The name makes one thing clear: rooms in a shotgun house are adjoined consecutively, forming a long, narrow structure. Folklorist John Michael Vlach defined the typology of the shotgun as "a one-room wide, one-story high building with two or more rooms, oriented perpendicularly to the road with its front door in the gable end," but added that "other aspects such as size, proportion, roofing, porches, appendages, foundations, trim, and decoration have been so variable that the shotgun is sometimes difficult to identify."[67] Its outstanding exterior characteristic is its elongated shape, sometimes in length-to-width ratios approaching ten-to-one. Inside, what is salient is the lack of hallways: residents and visitors need to pass through rooms—including private bedrooms—to get to other rooms.

Scholarly interest in the shotgun house dates from geographer Fred B. Kniffen's research in the 1930s on Louisiana folk housing, which explored structure typology as a means to delineate cultural regions.[68] Debate has since continued among cultural geographers, architectural historians, and anthropologists as to the shotgun's origins, form and function, and diffusion. New Orleans shotguns present a special problem, for nowhere else are they so common and so varied. A number of hypotheses on the origin of the shotgun house have been offered:

Native American Origins — Geographer William B. Knipmeyer saw parallels between the shotgun house and the Native Louisianian "palmetto house," pointing out its rectangular shape and "high pitched gable roof...oriented with its

[66] As quoted by Judy Walker, "Shotgun Appreciation," *Times-Picayune*, March 1, 2002, Living section, p. 1. A computer-based search of nearly one million pages of books and journals from 1840-1900 revealed not a single use of the term "shotgun house" or its variations. "Creole cottage," on the other hand, yielded eight usages, mostly by well-known "local color" writers such as George Washington Cable and Lafcadio Hearn. Search on Cornell University's "Making of America" database (http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/index.html) conducted on August 25, 2004.

[67] Vlach, "Sources of the Shotgun House," 29.

[68] Fred B. Kniffen, "Louisiana House Types," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 26 (December 1936): 186-91.

greatest length perpendicular to the bayou, path, or road."[69] Knipmeyer traced a lineage from the structural form of pre-European Choctaw huts to indigenous palmetto houses to wooden frame camps and eventually to the shotgun, which he viewed as a fairly late development, enabled by the lumbering of the late 1800s.[70] But another scholar argued that indigenous building types and techniques in North America, unlike those of other continents, proved "totally inadequate for even the lowest levels of European requirements," and were largely ignored by colonizers beyond the most rudimentary settlements.[71]

Haitian/African Origins — John Michael Vlach also disagreed with the Native American hypothesis in his 1975 dissertation on shotgun houses, noting the abundance of shotgun-like houses throughout present-day Haiti. Vlach traced the essential shotgun typology to the eighteenth-century enslaved populations of Haiti, formerly Saint-Domingue, who had been removed by slavers from the coastal and forested peri-coastal areas of the western and central African regions known at the time as Guinea and Angola. Vlach described a gable-roofed housing stock indigenous to the western coastal regions of modern sub-Saharan Africa, specifically those of the Yoruba peoples, and linked them to similar structures in modern Haiti, with comparable characteristics such as rectangular shape, room juxtaposition, and ceiling height (although perpendicular orientation varied). In many cases, "all that is required to convert the Yoruba hut into a morphologically completed shotgun is a shift of doorway.... [T]he Haitian shotgun may be considered a product of a continuing process of African architectural modification."[72] Vlach concentrated on tracing Haitian shotguns to their possible African antecedents more so than connecting either to New Orleans, but his general premise is that the exodus of Haitians to New Orleans after the insurrection of 1791-1804 brought this vernacular house type to the banks of the lower Mississippi. "Haitian emigres had only to continue in Louisiana the same life they had known in St. Domingue. The shotgun house of Port-au-Prince became, quite directly, the shotgun house of New Orleans."[73] The Vieux Carré Survey, which estimates construction dates of 1810 to 1823 for three extant shotgun-like houses, seems to support Vlach's timeline, since the main wave of Haitian refugees arrived in New Orleans in 1809. But this may be tautological: the researchers may have presumed that Haitians built these houses and approximated their construction dates accordingly. The circa-1810 shotgun-like house at 819 Burgundy Street—the oldest according to the survey—in fact probably dates to 1840. Other early shotgun-like "long houses" appeared in the residential blocks of the Quarter, according to Notarial Archives documents, in the 1830s, of which six, according to the survey, still exist.[74] Despite the apparent absence of very early shotguns, the Haitian/African origin hypothesis for New Orleans shotguns is favored by many scholars. One strand of indirect support comes from the distribution of shotgun houses throughout Louisiana, as mapped by geographer Fred Kniffen in the 1930s. Kniffen showed that this house type was generally found along the waterways and bayous of southeastern Louisiana as well as the Red, Ouachita, and Mississippi riverine areas in the northern part of the state.[75] These areas tended to be, and remain, more Francophone in their culture, higher in their proportions of people of African and Creole ancestry, and older in their historical development. Beyond state boundaries, shotguns are found throughout the riverine areas of the lower Mississippi Valley, spatially correlated with antebellum plantation regions and with areas that, historically and currently, host large black populations.[76] If in fact the shotgun diffused from Africa, to Haiti, through New Orleans and up the Mississippi Valley, this is the North American distribution we would expect to see. But there are economic variables at play here as well, and they may trump cultural factors in explaining the spatial distribution of the shotgun.

[69] William Bernard Knipmeyer, "Settlement Succession in Eastern French Louisiana" (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1956), 75.

[70] Ibid., 81-87. Knipmeyer's dissertation primarily addressed settlement succession, rather than the origin of house types.

[71] James Marston Fitch, "Creole Architecture 1718-1860: The Rise and Fall of a Great Tradition," in *The Past as Prelude: New Orleans 1718-1968*, ed. Hodding Carter (New Orleans, 1968), 72.

Some researchers have hypothesized Haitian, African, and Native American origins of the shotgun house; others suggest it was "invented" based on practical constraints, such as narrow lots. Shotguns are found throughout the lower Mississippi River region, particularly in areas with high black populations. These shotguns "on the wrong side of the tracks" in Vicksburg, Mississippi, illustrate that this house type is still closely associated with Southern poverty. Note the "Vicksburg pierced columns," an architectural trait unique to this river city. *Photograph by author, 2003.*

[72] Vlach, "Sources of the Shotgun House," 80-155; quotes from 154-55.

[73] Ibid., 80-155; quote from 189.

[74] Some architectural historians question whether any true shotgun house predates 1840. But a simple shotgun-like structure appears in the lower right corner of John L. Boqueta de Woiseri's 1803 painting, *A View of New Orleans Taken from the Plantation of Marigny*, suggesting that this basic form was not unknown to the city in the late colonial era. A detail of this painting appears in the chapter on Elysian Fields Avenue.

[75] Kniffen, "Louisiana House Types," 191-92. See Vlach's response on 38-41 of Vlach's dissertation.

[76] Among cities, Louisville, Kentucky, has been described as second only to New Orleans in its number of shotguns.

Independent Invention Based on Practical Constraints — Others speculate that while the shotgun resembles house types of other cultures, its manifestation in New Orleans and the South is related to them only because its ease of construction and conservation of resources (building materials, labor, space) made it equally attractive in many areas. One may reason that, given a mild climate, a builder need not rely on the wisdom of ancestors to design a rudimentary edifice that accommodates a narrow street-side or bayou-side lot while minimizing materials and labor. A shotgun, according to this theory, is simply a least-cost solution that any rational individual would invent independently, given certain limited resources. (Only a lean-to is simpler, and, alas, there are some very old shotguns in the Quarter with "leaning" roofs.) Advocates of this theory point to the traditionally narrow housing parcels on New Orleans blocks and the slender *arpent* lots following waterways in Louisiana as other causative agents for construction of elongated structures. "The reason there are shotguns," stated a *Times-Picayune* article, is because "they were an efficient way to house a lot of people on limited land in skinny 30-by-120-foot lots," like New York City's "railroad flats" or Philadelphia's "trinity" houses.[77] Lending some apparent support for the invention hypothesis is the activity of Roberts & Company, a New Orleans sash and door fabricator formed in 1856 that developed prefabricated shotgun-like houses in the 1860s and 1870s and even won awards for them at international expositions, where they were billed as the *Maison Portative de la Louisiane*. Whether Robert & Company truly invented the design or simply "capitalize[d] on a local traditional form"[78] is the key question. Others have suggested that shotguns were invented in response to a city real estate tax code which pegged taxation to street frontage rather than total area (though no one seems to be able to identity the exact code). But the invention hypothesis does not explain why the shotgun is not always found wherever narrow lots or frontage-based taxes exist, yet *is* found when these conditions do not exist, such as along the wide-open roadsides of the Mississippi Delta plantation country or the woodlands of the Felicianas. Nor does it explain why the shotgun failed to catch on until many years *after* the delineation of narrow lots. Additionally, it could be argued that common-wall row tenements utilize space more effectively than shotguns on urban blocks, yet we rarely see these structures in New Orleans. Could cultural factors outweigh local invention in the development of the shotgun? Jay Dearborn Edwards points out, "anthropologists have long realized that independent invention is rare in human cultural development. People are far better at borrowing the ideas of their neighbors than they are at inventing their own out of whole cloth."[79]

The "Spirit House" sculpture on St. Bernard Avenue in the Creole-associated Seventh Ward commemorates the shotgun house as an African contribution to America, by way of the Caribbean and New Orleans. The flying buttresses pay homage to the Catholic French and Spanish influences in early Louisiana history, and in the Creole legacy. *Photograph by author, 2003.*

The working-class rear Quarter possessed numerous "long houses" in the early nineteenth century. Only a handful still stand, possibly representing the nation's oldest surviving precedents to the shotgun house. The one above, built in 1823 for free woman of color Helene Le Page, is located at 1024 Gov. Nicholls Street. Note the hip roof covered with flat tiles, masonry construction, and staid exterior of banded stucco. Another is the so-called Baker Cottage at 819 Burgundy (yellow structure below), once thought to date to around 1810 but more likely 1840. Both were nearly in ruins in the 1960s but have since been beautifully restored. *Photographs by author, 2004.*

[77] Judy Walker, "Shotgun Appreciation," *Times-Picayune*, March 1, 2002, Living section, p. 1.
[78] Vlach, "Sources of the Shotgun House," 60-63.
[79] Jay Dearborn Edwards, "The Origins of Creole Architecture," *Winterthur Portfo-*

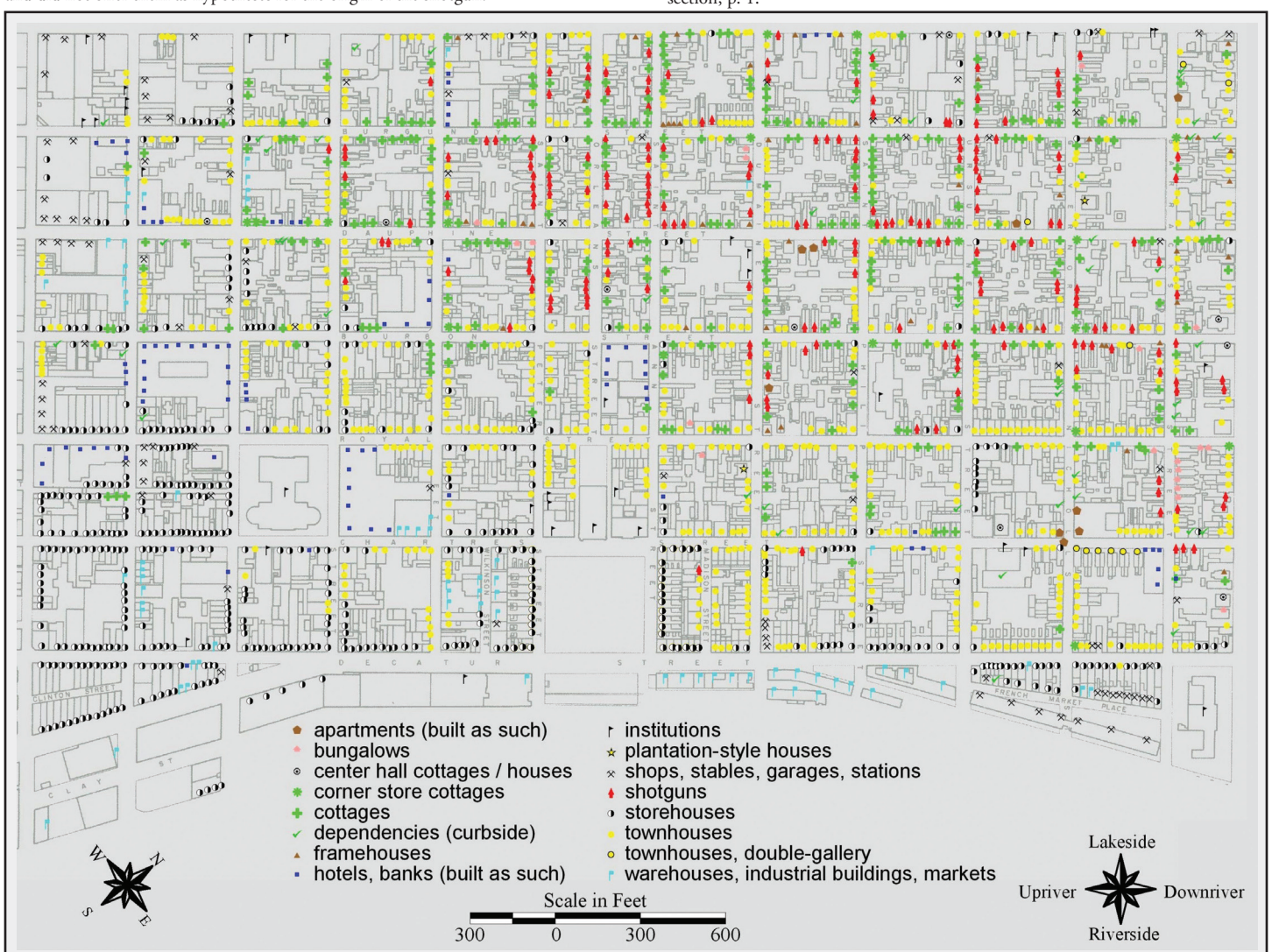
Some scholars note the presence of linear house types with interconnecting rooms in eighteenth-cenury France, raising the possibility of a European link, while others suggest that this vernacular house type may simply represent a modification of the Creole cottage (which also had interconnecting rooms with no hallways) to narrow lots.[80] Empirical evidence shows that, in the Quarter and citywide, the shotgun indeed filled the niche left open by the demise of the cottage. Shotgun singles and doubles came to dominate the turn-of-the-century rental-housing stock of New Orleans' working-class and poor neighborhoods, yet they were also erected as owned-occupied homes in middle- and upper-middle-class areas. New Orleans shotguns exhibited numerous locally inspired variations: with hip, gable, or "apron" roofs; with "camelbacks" to increase living space; with hallways for privacy; with grand Greek Revival and Neo-Classical porticos; with elaborate Victorian gingerbread; and, finally, as "bungalows," arguably the final variation of the shotgun.[81] Their relative numbers by neighborhood reflect when that area was developed: shotguns comprise only 9 percent of French Quarter structures, because the district was entirely developed by the time shotguns came into fashion; Mid-City, on the other hand, developed precisely during the shotgun's turn-of-the-century heyday, and its housing stock is nearly 50 percent shotgun.[82] Though some predate the Civil War by a number of years, and others postdate World War I, most local shotguns were built within a decade of the 1890s, when they were erected to standardized designs and decorated with jigsaw ornamentation sold through such sources as the Roberts & Company catalog. The fanciful gingerbread encrusting the cheerful pastel-colored façade of a typical New Orleans shotgun house masked the fact that the structure and the family life behind it were usually plain, frugal, and cramped.

lio: A Journal of American Material Culture 29 (Summer/Autumn 1994): 155.

[80] Ellen Weiss, "City and Country, 1880-1915: New Impulses and New Tastes," in *Louisiana Buildings 1720-1940*, eds. Jessie Poesch and Barbara SoRelle Bacot (Baton Rouge and London, 1997), 281-82; and Joan G. Caldwell, "Urban Growth, 1815-1880: Diverse Tastes—Greek, gothic, and Italianate," in *Louisiana Buildings 1720-1940*, eds. Jessie Poesch and Barbara SoRelle Bacot (Baton Rouge and London, 1997), 178. Note: the cited researchers mentioned these characteristics in passing and did not offer them as hypotheses for the origin of the shotgun.

[81] Vlach, "Sources of the Shotgun House," 190-92.

[82] According to Robert Cangelosi, shotguns comprise 46 percent of the housing stock in Mid-City, while side-hall shotguns make up another 3 percent. As quoted by Judy Walker, "Shotgun Appreciation," *Times-Picayune*, March 1, 2002, Living section, p. 1.

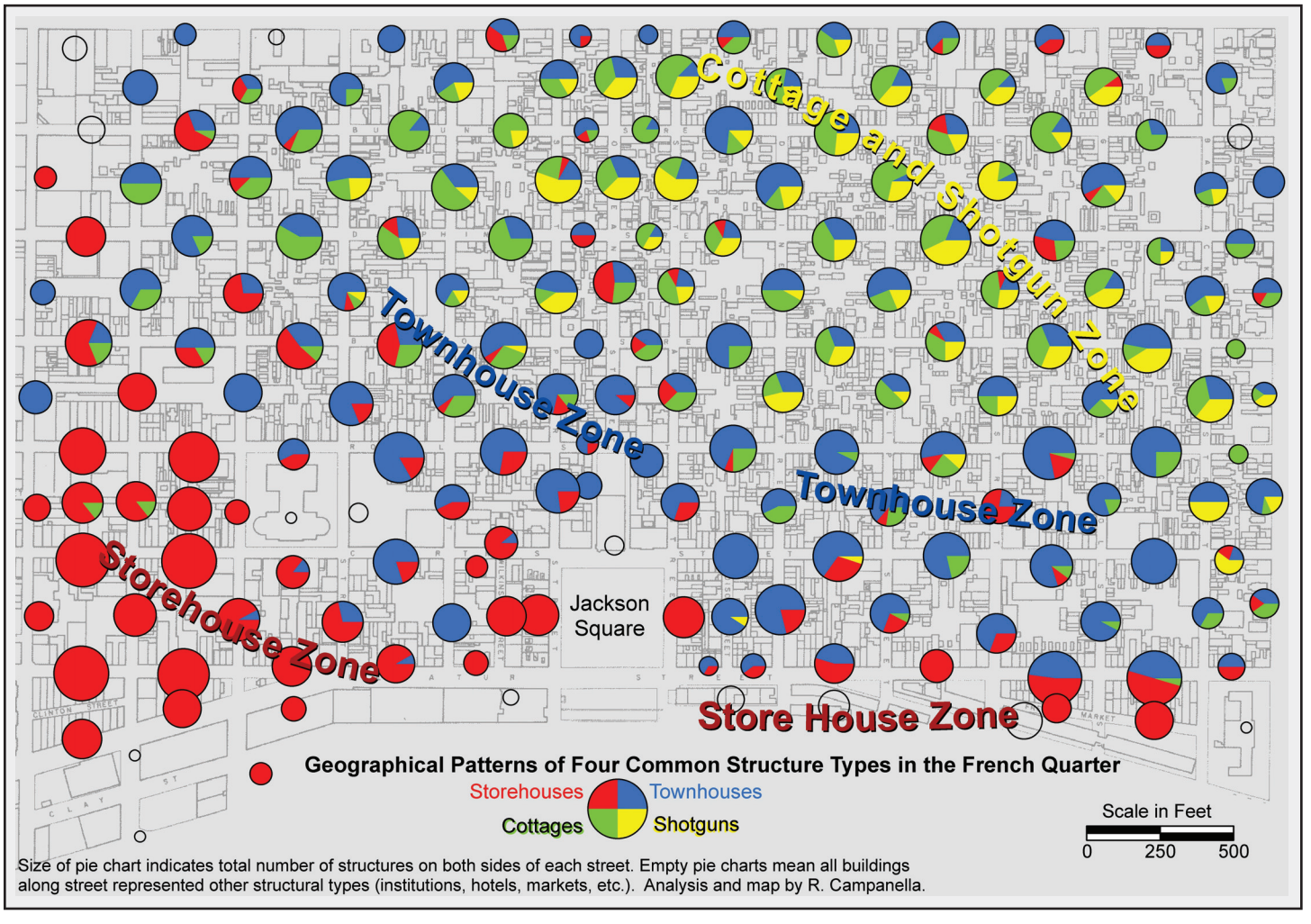


When structural types are mapped at the building level (above), and aggregated at the street level (right), three patterns emerge: a zone of cottages and shotguns in the rear and lower Quarter; townhouses clustered in the district's heart; and storehouses prevailing in the upper Quarter. These patterns reflect centuries of history and help drive modern-day commercial and residential use of the French Quarter. *Maps and analysis by author.*

Shotguns were replaced citywide by the California bungalow in the 1920s and 1930s and, after World War II, by the ranch house, as the "default" house type for new construction in the city. For years, architectural historians rolled their eyes at the run-of-the-mill 1890s Victorian Italianate shotgun houses lining street after street after street, and did not protest their demolition, even in the French Quarter, as late as the 1960s. In recent decades, however, many New Orleanians have come to appreciate the sturdy construction and exuberant embellishments of the classic shotgun, and today they are a cherished part of New Orleans culture and a favorite target for historical restoration. The Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans dedicates an entire month (March) to the shotgun, during which tours, restoration workshops, art displays, lectures, and even a "shotgun summit" are held to survey and encourage the many ways in which New Orleanians treasure their oddly sized, oddly named abodes.[83] Throughout the rural South, shotguns remain a symbol of poverty and are hardly cherished by those who reside in them. When lined up along barely paved streets on the wrong sides of towns like Donaldsonville, St. Francisville, Natchez, and Vicksburg, they form both picturesque vistas of Southern life and poignant reminders of a troubled past.

What, then, explains the rise of shotguns in the postbellum Quarter, at the expense of cottages? One hypothesis—my own—is that emancipation and postwar economic decline rendered obsolete the servants' quarters that were traditionally appended to the rear of city structures. We see far fewer of these slant-roofed dependencies built after the war, because slaves had been freed and the luxury of a live-in servant became less affordable. Many antebellum cottages had such quarters or other dependencies (such as kitchens and outhouses) behind them, overlooking a courtyard that occupied the rest of the parcel. With such external quarters no longer necessary, the logical adjustment would be to fill the entire rectangular lot with rentable structural space, rather than squandering it on obsolete dependencies and vacant courtyards. Technology by this time allowed kitchens and, later, toilets, to come inside the house, again meaning less need for courtyard space and greater need for interior space. The idea of a long, linear house type had already been introduced to New Orleans decades earlier, but remained fairly dormant. Now it offered the perfect solution as a more efficient utilization of limited parcel space: the demolition of a typical cottage availed space for two shotgun singles or one shotgun double. Add to this the cost efficiency of mechanized mass-production that went into turn-of-the-century shotguns, versus the slower, individualized construction of a traditional cottage, and the logic of switching from cottages to shotguns seems compelling. If this hypothesis is correct, then the cottage-shotgun shift in the late nineteenth-century French Quarter may represent a structural response to the

[83] Ibid.

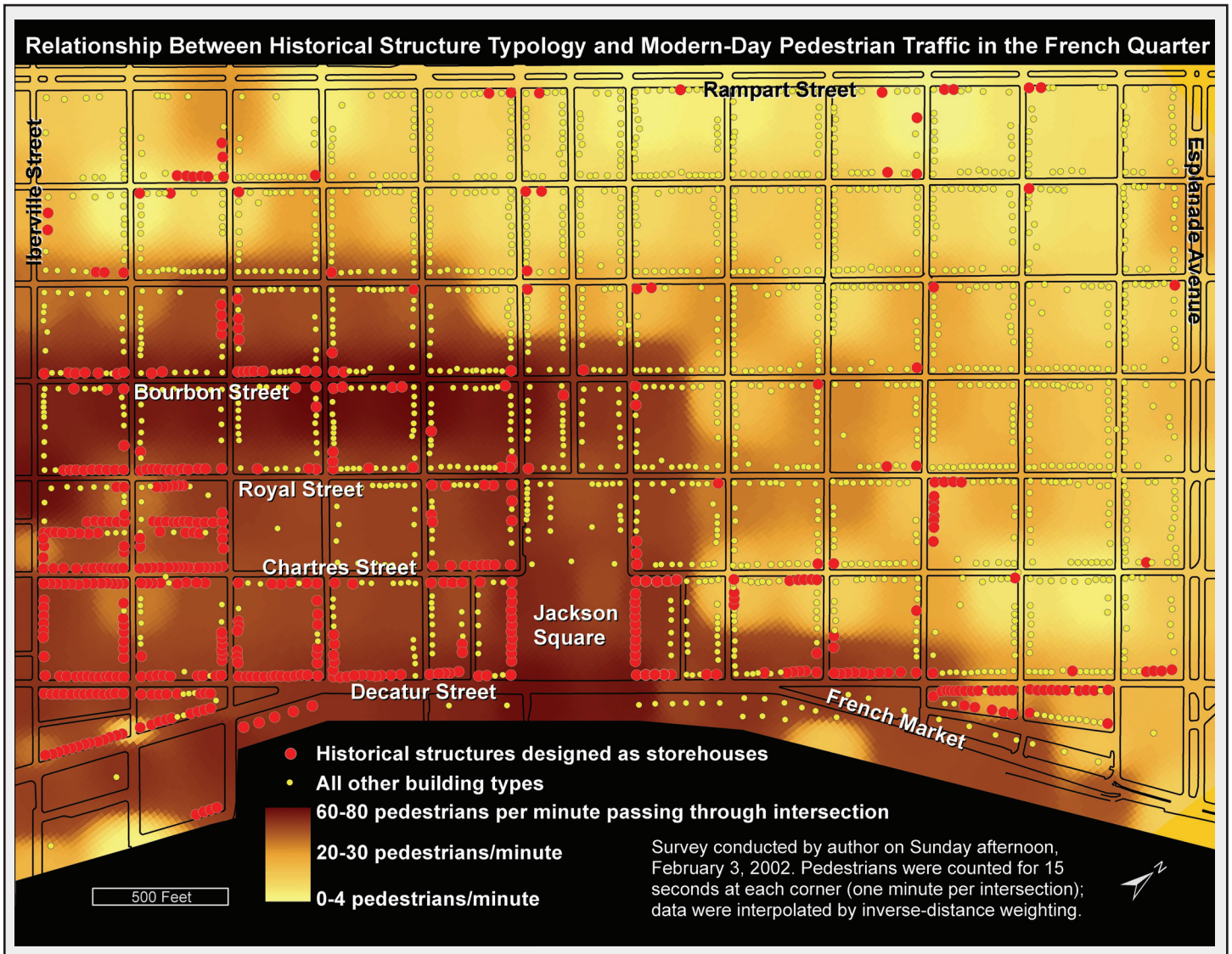


momentous historical and economic transformations occasioned by the Civil War.

Geographical Patterns of Structural Type

The spatial distributions for all sixteen structural types are shown at the building level in the accompanying map, and for the four most common types at the street level (*Geographical Patterns of Four Common Structure Types in the French Quarter*). We see that cottages and shotguns both predominate in the lower, lakeside quadrant of the Quarter. Of the 565 cottages (of all styles) and shotguns (including bungalows) in the French Quarter, almost 90 percent occur north of a diagonal line drawn across the Quarter, from the Canal/Rampart intersection to the foot of Esplanade. Shotguns in particular are extremely scarce south of this line. Reasons for this preponderance relate to economics and land use: the lower, lakeside (northern) section of the Quarter was, from the mid-eighteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, the working-class section of the neighborhood, hence the relative scarcity of townhouses and abundance of humbler abodes. Additionally, this was, and remains, the more residential section of the district, thus the preponderance of residential structures over commercial ones (shotguns are all but incompatible with commercial use). That cottages and shotguns both prevail in the same area lends some credence to the hypothesis suggested above. The pattern seems to corroborate the *Plan and Program for the Preservation of the Vieux Carré*'s observation that shotguns "replaced numerous earlier cottages, mostly in the fringe areas of the Quarter and were crowded onto narrow lots with narrow walkways on either side."[84]

[84] Bureau of Governmental Research, New Orleans, *Plan and Program for the Preservation of the Vieux Carré: Historic District Demonstration Study* (New Orleans, 1968), 33.



As this survey indicates, most pedestrian traffic in the Quarter flows in a dogleg-shaped pattern from upper Bourbon, Royal, Chartres, and Decatur streets, through Jackson Square, to the French Market, and back. The reason is simple: this is where tourist-friendly restaurants, galleries, bars, hotels, and shops predominate. But why are *they* here? One reason is the concentration of storehouses in this area (red points), a historical structural typology that today best accommodates tourism-related businesses. Townhouses, cottages, and even shotgun houses are also used for commercial purposes, but none are as suited for commerce as storehouses. The circumstances that led to their construction in this area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries thus help form the French Quarter experience of millions of tourists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *Pedestrian survey conducted by author on February 3, 2002 (Super Bowl Sunday afternoon) by counting pedestrians for fifteen seconds at every corner (one minute per intersection). Analysis and map by author.*

The "townhouse zone" is situated in the central heart of the Quarter, where mansions were built in large numbers in the antebellum era for wealthy families. Both townhouses and storehouses are more likely than other structural types to dominate entire streets, because, as row buildings, they were often constructed in multiple units.

The upper and riverside tiers of the Quarter, labeled "storehouse zone" in the map, have for centuries hosted the lion's share of commercial activity in the Quarter, and continue to do so today. Most tourists experience the French Quarter by strolling the upper blocks of Bourbon, Royal, Chartres, and Decatur, funneling through Jackson Square, then heading to the French Market and back. Why this dog-legged swath? Because this is where scores of old storehouses have enabled the establishment of businesses, restaurants, and clubs to sell the visitors the "New Orleans experience." True, many residential townhouses and cottages have been converted to tourist shops, and many businesses simply followed the tourists, rather than vice versa. But, in general, millions of tourists spend most of their time here simply because this is where the structural type needed to serve them is found in the largest concentrations.

A street-level view of the French Quarter bestows many rare and striking sights to the observant pedestrian: buildings older than entire American cities; architectural styles drawn from the world over; ironwork exhibiting the literal hammer-blows of eighteenth-century artisans. But the weightiest factor in forming these streetscapes—structural typologies—can be missed at the pedestrian level, as forests are missed for the trees. To appreciate fully the panoply of types assembled here, a lofty perch from a nearby high-rise is recommended. In the complex, angular, jagged, multifaceted, glistening roofscape that unfurls below, cottages intermingle with townhouses, shotguns iterate parallel lines, storehouses intermix with industrial buildings, oversized government institutions loom stoically, and church steeples and cupolas punctuate the skyline. It is a rare sight in modern America.