



Rebel Underground

Sons of Confederate Veterans
Major John C. Hutto Camp #443
Jasper, Alabama

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The Major John C. Hutto Camp's October Camp Meeting
will be in Jasper, Alabama on
Sunday 19 October 2025 at 2:00 pm

Program for October and back by popular demand is
Anthony Pennington's guitar and Jesse Malone on the banjo
playing period music

Louisiana's San Francisco Plantation
September 29, 2025
Norman Dasinger, Jr.



The richly decorated manor house of San Francisco Plantation, built in the 1850s along the Mississippi River in St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana | public domain

In her book Plantation Country Bobby Potts observed:

"Robert Fulton invented the steamboat, but he surely did not realize the grand form it would take, with all of the ornate gothic trim decorating it. Mark Twain described some

of the elegance that passengers found on the fine big steamboats ... 'All along the ceiling of the snow-white inner cabin were curving patterns of filigree-work touched up with gilding, big chandeliers of glittering glass drops, the glazing of the skylights cast a rainbow light below' ... How natural it was then, for some to decide that they would apply that particular architecture to the homes they built."

That is precisely what Edmond Bozonier Marmillion decided to do in 1853.

The story of this remarkable Mississippi River plantation began in 1827, when Elisee Rillieux—a free man of color—purchased the acreage that would become San Francisco Plantation. Later, he sold the land to Marmillion for \$100,000, earning himself a substantial profit. Before construction of the house on his 1,500-acre estate was complete, tragedy struck: Marmillion's wife and six of his eight children died of tuberculosis—all within a single month.

In his grief, Marmillion lavished extravagance on his home. He hired skilled artisans to hand-paint ceiling and door panels, commissioned wall murals from artist Dominique Canova, painted portions of the exterior a vibrant blue, and porches were extended to wrap around the structure. The result was an elaborate design—an opulent departure from the stately but restrained Greek Revival plantation style, its galleries resembling the decks of a ship. This "Steamboat Gothic" architecture revealed the strong German influence in South Louisiana and produced a grandeur rarely encountered.



As Francis Parkinson Keyes later wrote in *Steamboat Gothic*:

"But it was not only this variety of embellishment that made the house before which he stood a marvel in his eyes; it was likewise the almost uncanny resemblance which it bore to the most magnificent of those floating palaces where he had founded his fortunes."

The name "San Francisco" is an unusual moniker for a mansion in Louisiana, and its origin can be traced to several possible stories. The most widely accepted explanation is that Marmillion's surviving eldest son, describing the cost of construction, used the French phrase *son saint-frusquin*, meaning "the shirt off his back." Over time, the phrase was mistranslated into "San Francisco."

Today, the plantation stands about 40 miles northwest of New Orleans, tucked away in a grove of trees near Garyville. In the mid-1970s, Marathon Petroleum Corporation acquired the estate and opened it as a museum. In 2022, however, Marathon Petroleum transferred responsibility for its care to the San Francisco Plantation Foundation. As of June 2025, tours are suspended while the foundation pursues a sustainable future for the site. The foundation has floated the idea of relocating the structure and redirecting funds previously used for its upkeep into the local school system.



HUTTO CAMP OFFICERS

Commander	James R. Blackston
1 st Lt. Cmd	Trent Harris
2nd Lt. Cmd	Jeremy Jackson
Adjutant	John McGraw
Chaplain	Larry Elliott
Judge Advocate	Cherokee Brasher
Communications	Tony Pennington
Facebook	Brandon Prescott - Jeremy Jackson
Quartermaster	Billy Kinchelow
Flag Committee Chairman	Trent Harris
Newsletter Editor	James Blackston

Website: www.huttocamp.com

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