NEW IBERIA — The changing growth and economy of New Iberia in the decades before and after the Civil War can be attributed to two factors: the advent of the steam-driven circular saw and the disruption of the plantation system.

Both brought a new kind of structure, the simple, cypress cottages that began to dot subdivisions.

Two such houses — the Renoudet cottage at 315 E. St. Peter St. and the old Perry house on the corner of E. Main Street and Prairie Avenue — will be opened to visitors during the city's Bicentennial Celebration April 8.

Records show the Renoudet house was built by August Picard in 1860. Constructed completely of cypress, the cottage looks today much like it did in the 1800's. It changed owners several times before being purchased by the P. L. Renoudet family.

It is simply constructed with four rooms jutting off of a narrow hall. Steep stairs lead from the hallway to the attic, and the cottage also features traditional broad front and rear porches and a separate kitchen.

The old Perry house is another New Iberia landmark of changing times and lifestyles. The house probably was constructed between 1856 and 1876.

The house has been moved from its original location and has undergone extensive exterior and interior renovation.

Only one somewhat primitive door, two fireplaces and some pieces of wide cypress flooring remain as original parts.

These two homes are two of seven being opened during the tour of homes and historical places. Other sites are the Steamboat House, Temple Gates of Prayer, The Magnolias, The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany and a modern cypress farmhouse built by architect John A. Landry.

Advance tickets may be obtained by writing Mrs. J. S. Brown Jr. at 924 E. Main St., New Iberia, La. 70560.