Attakapas Indians Dominated Land Now City of Opelousas

Agent Exercised Permit to Trade with Tribe

By CLAIRE PUNEKY (Times-Picayune Staff Correspondent)

OPELOUSAS, La. — As the 250th birthday of the Opelousas country gets under way, centralized in this one-time Confederate Capital City of Louisiana, that long-ago past conjures up a picture of those days when the Attakapas Indians dominated the land.

Among those who knew the fierce tribe was a French government agent who for a quarter-century exercised a permit to trade with its members.

He was Joseph Blanpain, who lived at the Houmas in what is now Ascension Parish and established his cattle lands or "vacheterie" where the community of that name on the Mississippi River now stands.

The history of Blanpain and the Attakapas Indians is an exciting one, and it must be because of the influence that he and others who traded here in cattle wielded in this territory but hardly in the rock-n-roll or hillbilly numbers.

The style show on next Sunday to be held at the Hebrard House, built about 1770; The Hebrard House, of early 1800s origin; Linwood Plantation House, built in 1865; Belles Heures, a mid-1900 home, and Shangri-La, built about the same time, and to the St. Landry Catholic Church, also on the tour?

TOUR SCHEDULE

The tour is to be at 1 p.m. Saturday and on Sunday at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Blanpain would be a good judge of the beard contest, set for 2 p.m. Saturday, followed by a Battle of the Bands. And how would be regard the fireworks at 9 Saturday night?

The style show on next Sunday should attract him, particularly his interest in the garb of the Indian maiden in the performance at the Woman's Club following Sunday's tour.

One wonders if he would stay over for the final day of the celebration, which is cleanup day, to help return the city to its modern normalcy. He probably would.

DISPLAY TO OPEN

The heirloom display that opens Monday, along with displays of costumes, farming equipment and the like might have some familiarity for him. And he would certainly need that day of rest that the anniversary committee has provided for Tuesday.

He would fit into the scheme of things in which store and office personnel dress in costume, but the dance revue at 7 p.m. Wednesday would bewilder him.

And if Blanpain comes to Opelousas on Thursdays, he will have a chance to observe the lawmakers of Louisiana, including Gov. John J. McKeithen, who has accepted State Rep. H. B. DeJean's invitation to attend Legislative Day promises to be theme "Anything of the Past."

Miss Carr and her court be a good queen to rule them. What would they make of it? The turnday of rest that the anniversary committee has provided for Tuesday.

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