Broussard is miles away...

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Staff Writer

BOUSSARD...It’s located at the southeastern edge of Lafayette Parish, where the fertile plane and blossoming horror of the prairie meet the landforms and plateaus of the bayou. The town of Broussard, with a population of 20,000, is a place where you can walk back in time.

The perfect destination for a short sightseeing trip, or for a weekend getaway at one of the town’s two bed-and-breakfasts. If you’ve never been to the old town house in Broussard, you’ve never seen the true beauty of Acadiana.

We have the largest number of old Victorian homes for a town this size,” said Civic Kimmel, president of the Broussard Historical Society and owner of Maison d’Andre Billaud, one of the town’s two distinctively built bed-and-breakfasts.

The historical society is a handful of folks in Broussard interested in preserving the character of the town’s old houses. Kimmel said, “Our efforts have paid off.

As long as Main and Morgan streets (the town’s principal thoroughfares), with many blocks east and west of them, the narrow three- and four-story houses all under 100 years old line the streets. The historical society has a registry of marketable signs for the houses that links each house to its original owner and fate of construction.

A walking tour of Kimmel’s other homes in Broussard, the Spring and Stagecoach homes, or even the new homes on the island of Broussard, is a trip through many of the homes.

Most of the homes are related in some way through family interests,” Kimmel said of the recurring surnames attached to old homes.

Probably the most interesting tour in town is Broussard’s other bed-and-breakfast, the Paul Billaud House, also known as La Grande Maison (the Big House), built in 1911.

It’s a monument to Victorian architecture bulky, ornate, multilayered and grandiose. It rises from Main Street like a beehive — a landmark to the affluent days around the turn of the century when the Billaud family owned and operated a sugar mill.

The big blue and white house represents a blend of architectural styles: Renaissance, Gothic, Italian with a touch of the Old South in the picturesque porch out

The Martial Billaud Jr. House, built in 1873, is one of the oldest of Broussard’s grand old homes.

La Grande Maison, the Paul Billaud House, has been occupied continuously by four different families since it was built in 1911. Interestingly, though, no children have lived in the house since the 1930s when the Billaud family (seven children) sold the place.

It’s now one of two bed-and-breakfasts in Broussard.

Sacred Heart Church was used in a scene for Robert Durval’s upcoming motion picture “The Apostle,” which was filmed last fall.

One of Broussard’s two bed-and-breakfasts, the Maison d’Andre Billaud (Andre and Paul were first cousins), is particularly interesting for its wealth of stained glass. Group tours of the homes are available by appointment.

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Page 1 Column 2 Article 1

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