Chez Les Castilles Was Constructed in Mid 1800's

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It is pleasant on a holiday afternoon to sit in an Acadian cottage like Chez Les Castilles on Poydras Street in Breaux Bridge and hear Acadians like Les Castilles reminisce about the Acadian way of life that their ancestors enjoyed and which they, too, experienced as children.

Les Castilles is an Acadian cottage that was built by Valery Thibodeau in the mid 1800's. Originally it was built like a "shot-gun" house, but was added to later to accommodate a growing family.

Now living in the old Acadian cottage are his granddaughters Mable, Evelin and Jeanne, Castille and their mother, Mrs. John Castille, who remained in the home and cared for her parents following her marriage. She inherited the property as part of her inheritance from the Valery Thibodeau Estate.

Interesting facts are revealed in probing into the history of the Acadian cottage which is the home of the Thibodeaux family. The house was built in the mid 1800's.

The main part of the house originally contained two rooms and was 27' feet wide. The exterior walls of the house were of boulouage. In the 1800's the walls were boarded, because they were beginning to crumble. The family grew, the house was enlarged. Miss Castille says that this was probably done around 1881.

The expansion provided for three rooms across the front of the house and one room back of the kitchen and dining room. The room at the right was the master bedroom. There were back-to-back fireplaces for this room, and the one in the "corridor." There was also a fireplace in "La Salle." The floor of the room with the "corridor" was the "pataterie".

The louver for the house, beams, flooring, shingles, doors etc. were hand hewn and came from Thibodeaux's "cedar mill," which was on Bayou Teche, across from the house.

The upstairs or attic was bricked area between the kitchen and dining room. The upstairs was never completely finished. It was used as a storage room for the "parterre." The room at the back of the "parterre" was the "garmainiere" which was in the dining room. It may also have been in the small back bedroom on the north side of the house. It was used as a "boudoir" in the summer. Some louver in the back was used to store the "parterre." The louver in the "corridor" was used for food storage and was never completed.

Additions done by the present owners provided a closet in the "corridor" and the one in the "pataterie." It was a "pouletier" (chicken house) as well as a "patatoe" (potato house). It made a complete of boulouage. In the cool interior the potatoes were carefully arranged on a raised dirt floor to preserve them. At least once a week there was a "fridge" (a sorting) of the potatoes and those on the verge of rotting were fed to the pigs.

In spite of the passage of years and the ravages of time, the "patatoe" stood almost 100 years.

Wine Cellar

At one time an excavation was made to separate the wine cellar. There were two rooms left and when Casville children played there, they were intrigued by the fact that once there was a wine cellar there.

Another structure no longer on the place was the "hangar," where the buggy was kept. The lean-to at the back of the kitchen was also gone. In its day it served as the wash house year round and in the summer as a bathroom. There was a bathtub and a lavatory in the "parterre." However, because the lean-to was made of planks and was not air tight, it was too cold for use in the winter months. The flooring of the lean-to was made of planks and was not air tight.

We also had personal shaving mugs for each client. The Orillon shaving mug is decorated with a train. Orillon was a railroad engineer on the train that ran between Lafayette and St. Martinville. Another interesting piece is an antique washstand made so that one could wash on the floor with "enfant" to one have shaving mugs. From 1905-1925 the floors were covered with a grass mat tucked at the edges. Once a year the mat was lifted up to clean the accumulated dust under it.

One of the most interesting artifacts is the large "parterre" of the house. It is a natural piece of sculpture. To further enjoy their beauty, Les Castilles have placed lawn chairs nearby, where they and their guests may sit and remember their beauty.

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