NICKERSON HOME RETAINS FLAVOR OF NINETIES
A Silent Witness Of Stability

STERLING GROVE, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Chappuis, stands on the corner of North Street and Simcoe Streets. Although it has housed a distinguished family of this area, the home can also stand on it with a little neighbor, and in it the children in the neighborhood used to play under the trees at Sterling Grove. It is as quiet and cool under them now as it was then.

Mrs. Chappuis' family has a great deal of Lafayetle. Her father was one of the first men here to be active in promoting the oil industry. Her mother, Lavinia, Mr. and Mrs. Judge Parkerson, who purchased Sterling Grove for a visit. Not only did he immediately decide to build his home here, but the town became his year-round home.

The lady of the house is Mrs. Richard Chappuis, but Sterling Grove knows her as Nellie. She grew up here and wouldn't think of being anywhere else, even though the axis of social life may have moved to a newer part of town.

She wouldn't leave her home because Sterling Grove stands for something, not only to her but to the other families who make it up. Every part of the house, and yard, holds memories for her.

As she moves from room to room, pointing out this chair or that table which tells its own story to her, she talks about her home low.

A Gentle Time

"There was a lot visiting in those days. I wish people still took the time. The ladies had engraved cards which told which afternoon or evening they were at home." My mother's cards read: 'At Home Tuesday Evening'. If you received a card, you were welcome to call on the lady.

"Sterling was so isolated. We had a stable in the back yard and there was a horse Mann at daybreak out along the bayou where Oak Branch Country Club is now." Rooms were more important to people in those days. Everyone in the family rode and, as the saying goes, she still has her mother's side saddle.

Two Little Girls

"There was an old stepping stone in front with Nickerson written on it. I remember my mother used to stop on when she got into her carriage to make the horse go slower until he was used to being on the stone."

MOTHER-DAUGHTER PROJECT - There are many things about the Nickerson Home which bear mute testimony to the closeness of its inhabitants. Mrs. Chappuis etched a footstool to match the chair above, which is covered with a needlepoint design made by her mother, the late Isabella Judice Nickerson.

which gives fragrance the year round. The sweet olive trees, magnolia fuscata and live oak trees are all very old.

Many were planted by Judge Nickerson. His father loved flowers and gave Dr. Stephens, then president of the University of Southern Louisiana, the young oak tree that now borders the main campus, even helping him plant it.

"I'm very sentimental about the house and yard. I'm attached to everything here."

The past has taken its toll from town after town across the country. But it has lingered for a while on this street and that. North Sterling is such a street.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is one of a series of articles about old homes and historical sites in Acadiana.

BY ROSEMARY HUBBARD

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