House Untouched By Time

By DEBBIE D'AQUIN
Women's News Reporter

The house looks untouched by time.

An old pine bench made by her grandfather sits on the seven-foot front porch against the white plastered wall. Two wicker chairs nearby compose a sitting area.

Tall cypress plants in old crocks and an iron kettle are near the staircase. Peanut and Snowball two small dogs, chase each other up and down the stairs and around the yard.

The cypress house which was built around 1810 sits six inches off this ground at its corner on brick pillars. Its exterior is painted in a soft blue gray and a tin roof has replaced the woodingles.

And what is it furnished with? Antiques.

"It looks to well," says Mrs. Gertrude Trahan, owner of the seven-room home located on a slight hill a little over an acre at 103 Porter Lane.

"For a long time people thought a mud and moss house couldn't be moved but people are doing it all the time," she said. Mrs. Trahan moved her home from the Bayou Carencro area west of Carencro to the present setting nearly 20 miles away.

Second Restoration

She previously restored a smaller house built around 1850 that she had moved from Breaux Bridge to 318 Goldman St. and was eager to restore an earlier built house.

"The many old houses are destroyed which are so representative of our culture and area," she noted.

She bought the house in November of 1975. It took one week for three friends to dismantle the wood-pegged house for moving. The front porch and the area above the ceiling had to be dismantled and the week before Christmas it was moved. "Every board was numbered," she recalled, in the dismantling.

For two and one-half months, "It rained on the mud walls," she said. But seven months later she moved into her "New, but old" home measuring 32 feet by 50 feet, including the porch.

"Robert E. Smith, who is very knowledgeable in the many phases of material culture or colonial Louisiana, acted as the architectural restoration coordinator," she said.

"The style is first Creole, second French and then Acadian," said Mrs. Trahan.

She bought the house which had not been occupied for about 30 years from the Haydel family. It has been referred to as the Broussard home but Mrs. Trahan thinks the original owner was a Guibourd.

First Addition

Between the 1890's and 1940's, a living room and a bedroom were added to the side of the original house. At that time, from French doors and glass windows which were originally openings covered by curtains, were added. (Battens, or doors, had covered the openings during the night and cold weather.)

Before - Mrs. Gertrude Trahan moved the house from an area west of Carencro to its present setting near 20 miles away. The house is shown on the truck just before it started its journey to 103 Porter Lane.

After - The style is first Creole, second French and then Acadian," says Mrs. Trahan. She bought the house which had not been occupied for about 30 years from the Haydel family. It has been referred to as the Broussard home but Mrs. Trahan thinks the original owner was a Guibourd.

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A French gray, the wood trim and finishes, Prussian blue and the baseboards, which were faux-marble (made to look like marble) were painted green, grey. Central air and heat were added on the house.

Behind the house, Mrs. Trahan moved a smaller one-room house which also has a fireplace. She moved this house, built around 1850, from Breaux Bridge and uses it like other parts of her home for business purposes.

"It's educational, it's historical and it's interesting," she said. And she hopes others will become interested in saving old houses.

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