**HALF OF A HOUSE**

Verot Home Has Unusual History

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is part of a series of articles on historical sites and homes in Lafayette.

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Family once split this house in two. Now family is again making it a home.

**IN LULYETTE.**

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In 1935 the Gerald Verot home was built in Lafayette by Andrew Matthew Sellers. Ernie Sellers, his son, agreed on a property settlement, but the house was still unoccupied. Unable to decide upon a mutually acceptable compromise, they finally reached an unusual solution, but to them, a reasonable one that divided the house in two.

And so the house was carefully cut into two halves by hand saw. Each brother moved his half a distance from the original site, rebuilt the exterior walls and the two families lived in harmony.

The left half of the house was torn down a few years ago and replaced by a modern structure. The right half is now owned by the Verots.

Gerald Verot's father, Isaac, grew up in the old half-house and then moved to a nearby home when he married. The half-house then became the property of his sister, Althea Andrews. Upon her death, Isaac Verot purchased the property from his sister-in-law, Theogena LeBlanc, and he, his wife and two children moved into the half-house of his childhood.

He moved the house across the road to its present site beneath spreading oak trees on two and a half acres. And on a cold, miserable Dec. 13, the Gerald Verot family moved into the half-house.

"We almost froze that first winter," Mrs. Verot said. The winter winds whipped around and under the house and the single cypress floor couldn't stop the cold. So the first thing Gerald did was add a furnace of pine for warmth.

The original house was made of bousillage construction and typical French-Acadian architecture. The chimney in the original house was made of handmade bricks using mud from the Vermilion River. When the house was divided, each half was rebuilt with a fireplace.

Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Verot lived in the half-house until 1966 when they built a new house and the half-house then passed to Gerald. He moved the right half remained intact. During the past 15 months Mr. and Mrs. Verot have renovated the house and added a left half to make it a complete home once again (Advertiser Staff Photo).

**ONCE AGAIN A HOME** — Ten years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Verot inherited the right half of a house built by Andrew Matthew Sellers in 1835. His sons divided the house upon his death and each in half. The left half was torn down several years ago but the right half remained intact. During the past 15 months Mr. and Mrs. Verot have renovated the house and added a left half to make it a complete home once again (Advertiser Staff Photo).

The original part of the house has massive pegged cypress beams. Where nails were necessary, they were inserted into old-fashioned square ones.

The same type of construction is being used in the new part. The Verots have added a large living room downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs. The living room has exposed beams, a large fireplace and will soon have a working staircase. Because cypress was unavailable, the floor was made of hardwoods and then stained. Area rugs will be used for accents.

The plank door on the front of the house has been replaced with an antique French door made of cypress and a porch has been added to the front of the house. The plaster door and three other original doors are being used elsewhere in the house. Mr. Verot is also making duplicates of old doors from old wood he has gathered to replace the few modern doors which had been added over the years.

The original stairs, well worn through the years, lead from the kitchen to the upstairs bedroom in the old half-house. The entrance to the upstairs is narrow and small, most likely many heads have been bumped on the ceiling.

The Verots are buying antique furnishings wherever they can. "We've been to antique shops, flea markets...any place we can think of," they said.

So far they've located a number of pieces, including a tester bed, a rope ladder and even a wood stove. Mr. Verot, however, has no plans to cook on the stove.

When they began remodeling, Gerald had hopes of finding enough cypress to rebuild the house. This proved impossible, however. So he settled for hardwoods for the floors, sheetrock instead of bousillage for interior walls and redwood for the exterior walls. The redwood has been bleached to look like weather-beaten cypress.

The long process of rebuilding is nearing an end. And soon, now, very soon, the old halfhouse will again be a home.