THE EXILED ACADIANS MADE THEIR FIRST YEAR'S CROP IN THE NEW LOUISIANA TERRITORY ALMOST AS IF THEY SPADED AND SHAPED THE FERTILE EARTH WITH THEIR BARE HANDS—WITHOUT THE AID OF TOOL OR IMPLEMENT. SOME, THE MORE FORTUNATE, HAD MANAGED TO HOLD ONTO A FEW FARMING TOOLS DURING THEIR LONG, PERILOUS VOYAGE SOUTH FROM NOVA SCOTIA WITH PRODUCE FROM THIS FIRST HARVEST, ALONG WITH GAME AND HIDES FROM THE SWAMPS, THEY BARTERED WITH THE NEAR-BY Colonies FOR STRONGER TOOLS, OXEN FOR PLOWING, SALT, SUGAR, GRAIN AND SEEDS. THE FOLLOWING YEARS PROVED PROFITABLE. "THEY BROADENED THEIR FIELDS AND GARDENS, CLEANING THE ELEVATED LANDS AND INLETS UNTIL ONE MAN'S FIELDS MERGED WITH ANOTHER'S, WITH ONLY TERRACE ROWS AND BAYOUS INBETWEEN THEY COULD PRODUCE VEGETABLE GARDENS TWO SEASONS A YEAR—LOUISIANA BEING A MILD CLIMATE, SO UNLIKE THE COLD REGIONS OF NOVA SCOTIA. TO INCREASE THEIR PROSPERITY, THEY SET TRAPS AND SPREAD NETS FOR SEINING THE RIVERS AND BAYOUS:

IN DUE TIME, THE ACADIANS CONSTRUCTED MORE COMFORTABLE, AND MORE PRESENTABLE HOMES. THE FURNISHINGS FOR THESE THEY MADE THEMSELVES, OUT OF WHAT MATERIALS AND WITH WHAT HAND TOOLS THAT WERE AVAILABLE, AND WITH THAT TOUCH OF ACADIAN ARTISTRY REMINISCENT OF THEIR PRIDE AND LOVE OF BEAUTIFUL... BUT SIMPLE... THINGS. THE INTERIORS TOOK ON A MORE HOMELY ATMOSPHERE, AND RARE HEIRLOOMS SALVAGED FROM ENGLISH HOSTILITIES IN NOVA SCOTIA, OR BROUGHT OVER FROM FRANCE, ADDED A BRIGHT NOTE OF NOSTALGIA.
"As the Acadians advanced in their building techniques and acquired better tools with which to do the work, the style in the architecture of their homes, out buildings and shops developed into a definite characteristic all their own, and it was from this slow development that the Classic Acadian cottage was born. These, later to become famous, cottages made post card pictures in the shadows of live oaks and Spanish moss along the banks of Bayou Teche."

**The Classic Acadian Cottage**

**A Typical "Maison Acadienne"**

**Side Elevation**

**Floor Plan**

**Whistler's Walk**

So named because cooks, passing through the narrow hall from the galley to the living area with hot food, whistled as a signal to the other members of the household.

"SMALL, CLOSELY PACKED VILLAGES SPRANG UP ALONG BAYOU TECHE. STORES, CHURCHES, WAREHOUSES, OFFICES, ENTERTAINMENT HALLS, SCHOOL'S, BOAT LANDING AND WHARVES MUSHROOMED AS IF BY MAGIC— ALL PRODUCED BY THE HARD WORKING HANDS OF THE ACADIANS AND THEIR DURABILITY, THEIR STRENGTH, THEIR PATIENCE, AND THEIR DETERMINATION TO GAIN BACK...OVER AND ABOVE... WHAT THEY HAD ONCE SO WHOLLY CHERISHED, THEIR UNUTTERABLE LOSS OF EVERYTHING THEY HAD OWNED IN NOVA SCOTIA."

WOODEN DRESS SHOES HAD SILVER BUCKLES AND LEATHER SOLES

FESTIVAL BONNET

HAND PAINTED DANCE SLIPPER

"THE INDIANS, USUALLY THE ATTAKAPAS OR THE OPELOUSAS, DID ATTACK ON OCCASION. HOMES WERE BURNED. GIRLS WERE KIDNAPPED. MEN WERE SLAUGHTERED. THESE TWO TRIBES WERE LESS ADVANCED CULTURALLY THAN THE CHITIAMCHA AND THE CHAWASHA, AND HAD LONG SINCE GAINED THE GHASTLY REPUTATION OF PRACTICING CANNIBALISM. HISTORIANS HAVE BELIEVED THIS TO BE BUT A MYTH, WITH NO EVIDENCE UPON WHICH TO BASE FACTS OTHERWISE. BUT THE ATTAKAPA CAME FROM SAN SALVADOR, WHERE COLUMBUS FIRST LANDED, AND THEY PRACTICED IT THERE—WHICH IS PROOF ENOUGH."
THE ACADIANS WERE CAREFUL PEOPLE CONCERNING THEIR OWN PRIVATE HISTORY AND RECORDS. AN OFFICE WAS SET UP FOR SUCH A NOTEWORTHY PURPOSE. HERE WERE RECORDED THEIR MARRIAGES, BAPTISMS, BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND TITLES TO LAND HOLDINGS.

WHEN A TRAVELING PRIEST VISITED THE TECHE COUNTRY, SEVERAL COUPLES WOULD MARRY AT THE SAME TIME, AND THE CHILDREN OF EARLIER MARRIAGES WOULD BE BAPTIZED.

EVERYONE KEPT DIARIES AND RECORDS, PRECIOUS DOCUMENTS TO THEM... AND NO ACADIAN HOUSEHOLD WAS COMPLETE WITHOUT A DOG-EARED ACCOUNT BOOK IN WHICH WAS WRITTEN DOWN IN MINUTE DETAIL EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED IN THEIR DAILY LIVES. THEY WERE CALLED LICENCIÉS - LETTRES.

AN EXAMPLE: "MAITRE LEBLANC KILL DEER TODAY. WE EAT GOOD FOR A WEEK." OR, "ME'RE ILL. STAY IN BED ALL DAY." OR, "CA GRIMACE. IT'S RAINING."
The Acadian girls were beautiful. They married early and had large families. According to Acadian standards, a girl was a complete failure if she did not marry, and this horrifying possibility caused her constant worry. An old maid was so rare as to be the object of both scorn and pity. They started looking for a husband at the early age of fourteen. If a girl was unable to conjure a bridegroom by the age of twenty she became a social outcast, and had to sit with the old married matrons at parties and social functions.

All was not worry, hard work, Indian attacks and Spanish dominance for the Acadians along the Teche. They loved to play as much as they loved to work and eat. On special outings... fish fries in cast iron pots, fets, goutes on a grand scale, boucheries, courtboullions... they prepared savory dishes out in the open, and everyone ate together. Usually, for everyday meals, entire families gathered around the dining table, from toddling infants to feeble grandparents.
"The story of the Acadians along the winding Teche in the Louisiana Territory would not be complete without mentioning the savory food they prepared. Grillades, Cane Brulot, Calas, Crawfish Bisque, Hot Sausage and Shrimp Jambalaya, Turtle Soup, Hush Puppies, Gumbos, Dirty Rice, and Spoon Bread, to name but a few. They were connoisseurs in the delicacies of the table, and have kept this title to this day."

"The Acadians had an ear for music, and they loved to dance. No matter how weary they were from a day’s toil in the fields, or how exhausted they were from hiking through the swamps searching for game, or from fishing along the bayou, or from cooking, doing housework, or tending to a litter of children, they could and did dance along the banks and wharves of the bayou Teche until the wee hours of morning. There was no age limit when the fiddlers scraped. The youngsters learned to step to the tune of Frere Jacques and L’Alouette, and Grandes Mere tapped her foot as she sat beneath the trees."

"IN DUE TIME THE ACADIANS ADVANCED THEIR CULTURE TO THAT OF OLD FRANCE, THE CUSTOMS, THE OUTINGS, THE BALLS, THEIR MATTER OF APPEARANCE AND DRESS, AND THEY PLACED MORE EMphasis ON MANNERS AND ELEGANCE, AND LESS ON FIELDWORK AND MENTAL ANGUISH.
MORE ELABORATE SHOPS WERE ESTABLISHED, AS FREE SHIPPING LANES BEGAN TO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED IMPORTED GOODS. PRINTING PRESSES WERE SET UP FOR PUBLICATIONS. SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES MUSHROOMED. LAW OFFICES AND SHIPPING WAREHOUSES LINKED ONE TO THE OTHER ALONG THE BAYOU TECHE ... MILE ON SOMBER MILE."

"INDUSTRIOUS TO THE EXTREME, THE ACADIANS GOT BACK THE WEALTH THEY HAD LOST THROUGH THEIR FORCED MIGRATION FROM NOVA SCOTIA. THEY DID SO WELL, THAT, ON LATER TIMES ALONG THE RIVER AND BAYOUS THAT AREA WAS KNOWN AS THE GOLD COAST. THEY, IN TIME, CONTRIBUTED MUCH, OR MORE, OF THEIR SHARE TO THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL WELFARE OF LOUISIANA. FROM THIS RACE OF NORMAN EXTRACTION WERE BORN SENATORS, CONGRESSMEN, GOVERNORS, GENERALS, LAWYERS, DOCTORS, PLANTERS AND BUSINESSMEN."
"THE ACADIANS INSISTED ON LIVING IN THIS NEW WORLD AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE LIKE THEIR LIFE IN FRANCE—BALLS, OPERAS, FETES, BOUCHERIES, COUPE DE MAIN, FAIS-DO-DO, ABIDING THEIR TIME UNTIL RECALLED TO FRANCE. THE TECHE WAS NOT THEIR PERMANENT JOURNEYS' END. THEY THOUGHT THEY WAITED AND WAITED FOR THE CALL THAT NEVER CAME."