MODEST HOME ON VAN BUREN STREET

Breaux Bridge Home Still Houses Original Family

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In Breaux Bridge, such a house is on Van Buren Street. W. J. Hoffman was born in New Orleans and his bride, Adelaide Dupuis, was born in Breaux Bridge. The couple moved to New Orleans in 1900 and established a Singer Sewing Machine Agency. Next to it he built a tin smith shop, which he also operated. He built his house facing Van Buren Street and his back yard extended to the back of his store.

The place is more popularly known as "Le Jardin d'une Source" (Court of the one Sister), because of the adaptive use its current owner made of the property. Hoffman built all the cypress house two rooms wide with a door from each front room opening onto the gallery. Each front room also had a window with wooden shutters, opening onto the gallery. The room on the right was used for the front bed in the house back to back thus using one chimney. The kitchen had an iron wood burning stove.

In 1927 the house was remodelled at which time a hall opening from the parlor extending to the back was provided. The bath was relocated between the front and second bedrooms. The fireplace gave way to gas heating and also for cooking purposes and the cypress exterior gave way to asbestos siding.

The Hoffmans had three children: Alon, who resides and is in business in Breaux Bridge; Myrle Platz, who resides in Tabor, Iowa; and Therio Butaud, Crowley, and Anna Belle Dupuis-Hoffman, who decided to hyphenate her name to show her Acadian ancestry. She was the last to marry, not until 1929, and refers to her marriage to Roy Krewski as "My middle age achievement."

"Belle", who has always lived in the house and currently owns it, lived with and cared for her mother until her mother's death.

Meeting "Belle" for the first time is an unforgettable experience. Warm, vivacious Prairies makes one feel that they could convert it to a hot rod.

"Mais, jamais," she would say, "Mots, enfant, these Lincoln or Cadillac passed me during the day, but at night my car was parked right beside them at the tourist court. Endless tales were told of "Belle" and her vintage car by her Acadian friends at "Les velicoles" (get together). When hot rods became popular, she was plagued by the younger generation to sell them her car so that they could convert it to a hot rod.

"Anne T. Quilty went out in a blaze of glory on a late rainy afternoon, when she was struck by a truck. In the overturned car, Belle was pulled to safety. The only thing salvaged from the car was the door bearing the crest, which Belle has put to good use in her adaptive use of the family home.

Cost-Of-Arms

At one stage of her life, "Belle" decided that she should have a coat-of-arms, which is a credit to her imagination and humor. The coat-of-arms became the source of much good natured ribbing from her friends, but Belle was good at returning the jibes.

Very patiently, as she would say, "A coat-of-arms has to have some beginning. Mais oui, I started mine. Why shouldn't I have one?"

Those who know Belle well, find her coat-of-arms fitting and apropos of it. Shaped like a shield, it is divided into four sections. In one are palms, signifying that the Government of France, conferred upon her the distinct honor of the "Palmes Academiques" for her efforts in behalf of French culture. In another the fleur-de-lis, signifying her French heritage. The third shows a rampant lion, suggestive of two things: her Spanish ancestry and the fact that she was considered the social lioness of Breaux Bridge.

In the 4th section is a crawfish, signifying her connection with the crawfish capital of the world. Below her name Dupuis-Hoffman and the motto: "Dieu et Mon Droit."

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