LAND
OF
EVANGELINE

Home Of The Acadians
Path Of The Teche
The story of Evangeline's romance, immortalized in the epic poem of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, caught the fancy of the world in Longfellow's day, and will continue to hold it as long as there are spring nights, moonlight, and lovers. In Louisiana the memory of Evangeline is especially alive, for here flows Bayou Teche, along which a part of the story is laid, and here lived the real Evangeline, and her lover, Gabriel.

Many people have always considered the romance a fiction, and are surprised to learn that it is, at least in part, true. It had its origin, of course, in the banishment of the Acadians from Nova Scotia by the English in 1755, when the entire population of Acadia was put aboard vessels and deported to America. Families were broken up, parents and children separated, and sweethearts parted. The Acadians were scattered far and wide, many of them never to meet again. Some went to New England, others to New York, and others farther south, all seeking a place to live in peace and contentment.

"Promised Land"

In 1765, ten years following the deportation, the first contingent of the refugees arrived in Southern Louisiana. The Acadians were captivated with its rich alluvial lands, its scenic countryside, and its pleasant climate. They settled along the Atchafalaya, the Vermilion, and Teche Rivers, and the numerous bayous and lakes of the region, but concentrated particularly along Bayou Teche. This placid stream, one of the most beautiful of the state's waterways, had been named "Teche" (snake) by the Indians because of its serpentine windings through more than 100 miles of South Central Louisiana. According to the Indian legend, their tribal warriors once slew a snake of fabulous proportions, and the reptile in its death writhings left the bed through which the stream now runs.*

As soon as word of the new Eden spread to refugees settled along the Atlantic coast, many other Acadians joined those in Louisiana. According to historians, only 4,000 of them reached the state, but today their descendants have multiplied the original number many times, and in spite of later extensive Anglo-Saxon colonization, have given the countryside a predominantly Latin population of 300,000 Acadians.

Longfellow's Version

Longfellow was deeply impressed by the story of the exile, and his poem aroused great sympathy for the Acadians. He based his story of Evangeline on the life of one of the refugees, Emelie Labiche, who was separated from her lover. Research has proved that Emeline actually lived, and that the real name of her sweetheart (in the poem, Gabriel), was Louis Arcenaux.

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In Longfellow's poem, Gabriel was to the last faithful to his sweetheart. Unfortunately, the facts do not agree with this account. The real Gabriel, after* John Phillip Sousa, the noted American band leader, was inspired by the bayou to compose a ballad, "The Belle of Bayou Teche".

Our tour will have its origin at Morgan City on US 90* (the Old Spanish Trail) which bisects the Acadian section from east to west, travels through many areas replete with historic and scenic attractions. Motorists traveling from the east over this route enter the Evangeline Country here in Morgan City about 85 miles west of New Orleans.

"And then", the account continues, "Louis Arcenaux, with quivering lips and tremulous voice, answered: 'Emelie, my dear, I am unworthy of your love. I have pledged my affections to another. Please forgive and forget.' And he turned, and walked rapidly away."

MORGAN CITY

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Morgan City is on Berwick Bay, a widening of the Atchafalaya River, the deepest river in the world and Gulf outlet of the numerous waterways that constitute the Atchafalaya Basin. The imposing bridge connecting Berwick with Morgan City is supported by piers that are among the deepest known. This is the center of the shrimp industry in Louisiana. The fishing fleet tied up at the wharves constitute one of the most picturesque of its kind to be seen inland anywhere in the United States. The town's near 10,000 people are primarily all fishermen — "shrimp town" it has been called. The largest shrimp measure over 14 inches, unequalled anywhere. Morgan City packs more crab meat for the commercial market than any city in the world.

A colorful and unusual event each year is the blessing of the shrimp fleet, usually held in August. Fishermen with their trawlers, seines, and nets stand by to receive the blessing of the Church on this day before they depart on the first catch of the season. The ancient ceremony goes back to Biblical times and is an outstanding event in Louisiana.

**HARRY P. WILLIAMS AIRPORT**

Just seven miles above Morgan City, at Patterson, is located the Wedell-Williams Airport. Once a sugarcane field, the airport is famed as the birthplace of a record-breaking plane and has been officially noted as "A great milestone in the development of modern aviation" by Major General Curtis E. LeMay, Deputy Chief of Air Staff for Research and Development, Army Air Forces.

At this tiny field, with a minimum of materials and research, James R. Wedell and Harry P. Williams built "The 45", the plane that broke the world speed record in 1934, attaining a speed of 266 miles per hour. Still intact is the original hangar where "The 45" was built. The airport is now property of the state and in use for small private craft. Also based here are many of the new "dusting" and "planting" planes used in spraying crops in Louisiana and Mississippi, and also employed in the planting of rice by air which has proven an innovation efficient and economical to the rice industry.

**ALONG THE TECHE**

US 90 follows the windings of Bayou Teche, which has its outlet near Morgan City and furnishes a water highway to the Gulf of Mexico for the entire Evangeline Country. On the bayou at intervals picturesque houseboats are seen, and pirogues, the delicately made dugout craft of the Acadians. In many sections, houses of natives are scattered along the bayou's banks.

At Calestas, 4 miles from Patterson, the Old Spanish Trail crosses Wax Lake Outlet, of the Atchafalaya Floodway. This pass is navigable to the Gulf.

This area is an important part of Louisiana's "Sugar Bowl." The route passes mile upon mile of sugarcane fields that extend to the horizon on every side. In the harvest season these fields are dotted with Negro laborers, both men and women, chanting songs as they cut the cane with machetes — oddly shaped, long-bladed knives. This method of harvesting is rapidly being replaced, however, with new harvesting machines that have speeded up this phase of the industry which has grown to proportions overshadowing any other state in the nation.

Abbreviations used in highway directions: "La" denotes Louisiana route; "US" denotes Federal route.

In the larger fields, the cane is loaded on flat cars brought directly into the fields on narrow-gauge tracks, and is hauled to the crushing mills. In the small independently-operated fields, the crop is transported by mule or tractor-hauled truck wagons, which hold from two to five tons.

**FRANKLIN**

Twenty-seven miles north of Morgan City is Franklin (pop. 5,000), known as one of the most beautiful of the nation's smaller towns. Franklin is noted for its neat appearance, its modern "white way", and its lovely overhanging oaks. Here in 1790, Ginny Lewis, a Pennsylvanian, settled, and named the new town for his intimate friend, the illustrious Ben Franklin.

On the banks of Bayou Teche, just above Franklin, is the old colonial home, Oaklawn Manor, built by United States Senator Alexander Porter in 1827. The mansion, which still retains its original classic appearance, now belongs to the family of Captain Clyde Barbour and is open to the public year-round for an admission of $1.00. Barbour was a steamboat captain on the Teche, and after he retired, he made his hobby the beautification of the Oaklawn home and estate. A visit to Oaklawn will long be remembered by anyone with a taste for beautiful things.

Excellent steaks and sea food served in downtown Franklin restaurants; two theaters, seating 850; weekly newspaper, The Banner Tribune; skating at Hanson High School on Saturdays and Sundays; teen-age recreation at Franklin High on weekends; Swimming, fishing, and boating in the easily accessible Gulf of Mexico; Baptist, Catholic, and Methodist Churches.
Continuing, the route enters the attractive little town of Baldwin, whose streets are completely overhung with giant oak trees. Many beautiful old homes are in this vicinity.

**Weeks Island**

Twenty miles of gravel road, LA 59, turning left out of Baldwin will bring us to Weeks Island. Here is located one of the huge coastal salt domes of the area. The mine is located off the western edge of the island. The shaft is already 700 feet deep with great depths of salt nearly 100 percent pure. This is also the site of the Bay Chemical Company which manufactures hydrochloric acid, and numerous other chemicals.

**Jeanerette**

After our return to US 90, we continue eight miles to the north and enter Jeanerette. The principal industries of Jeanerette area are sugarcane and lumber production, the little city boasting three sugar refineries, and a large sawmill. Iberia is the leading sugar producing parish in the Louisiana sugar belt, and Jeanerette is the center of this production. Near Jeanerette is located one of the largest Federal controlled livestock experiment stations in the country.

**New Iberia**

Westward from Jeanerette, after a distance of 12 miles, the route enters New Iberia, known as the "Queen City of the Teche". This town, the seat of government for Iberia Parish, also enjoys a charming location on the banks of Bayou Teche, and has within its corporate limits some of the real beauty spots of the Evangeline Country. Its population is approximately 19,000.

New Iberia received its charter as a city in 1835 and is the product of three settlements - French, Spanish, and Acadian. The Spanish who came to Louisiana in 1779, established a colony here, naming it for the Iberia Peninsula of their native Spain.

Hub of the Evangeline Country, New Iberia is an important center of rail and highway transportation. Water transportation from New Orleans is provided by Bayou Teche, and Old Spanish Trail and US 90 run through its main thoroughfare.

Producing oil fields adjacent to New Iberia have been late developments. Also important to the city's industry are the nearby location of three of the world's largest salt mines. Fishing and trapping employ a considerable portion of the area's population, as does the lumber industry, supported by an abundant stand of hardwood and cypress. The most important agricultural products are sugarcane, rice, cotton, pecans, peppers, and corn. New Iberia is the only locality in the world that produces the three standard condiments: salt, pepper, and sugar.

Among New Iberia's tourist attractions is "The Shadows", a mansion built by David Weeks in 1830, and today occupied by Mr. Weeks Hall, one of the builder's descendants. Said to be the most widely photographed privately-owned residence in America, "The Shadows" is a monument to the early cultural development of this section of the South.

"Belmont", famous for having once housed the Spanish governors, was destroyed by fire early in 1947.

New Iberia is the scene of the renowned sugarcane festival and fair held in the fall of each year (late September or early October). This is one of Louisiana's outstanding special events and attracts thousands of visitors for the pageant, floral parade and fair. Livestock and agricultural exhibits highlight the fair. No charge is made for admission. Festival balls and many outstanding social activities punctuate the festival program.

New Iberia offers six hotels and four tourist courts with rates ranging from $1 to $5 per day; tennis, swimming, picnicking, and boating in City Park on Marie Street; golf and tennis at the Iberia Golf Club; three theaters, seating 2,275 persons; one daily and one Sunday newspaper; bowling every day at Deare's Bowling Alley on East Main Street.

Spectator sports including football, basketball, and baseball are furnished by the local schools on local playing fields. Fast pro and semi-pro baseball is played in season with teams from the Evangeline league. Churches representing all faiths, located in town; information cheerfully given at Chamber of Commerce in City Hall.

**St. Martinville Today**

Situated on Highway LA 25, ten miles north of New Iberia, is St. Martinville, a historic town that has been under the flags of four different governments.
and whose people are direct descendants of the exiled Acadians, speaking the old
Acadian tongue. Located here is the Old Castillo Hotel, typical of the exotic archi-
tecture of the early Spanish and French settlers. In the town also, on the banks of
Bayou Teche, stands the Old Government House, where the first French commandant of
the Fort of St. Martinville resided. This latter building now serves as a school.

Andre A. Olivier, a resident of St. Martinville, has been a life-long student of
the Acadians, and is known as their historian. Mr. Olivier operates a
quaint gift store, the rear of which is converted into a veritable museum. His shop
is visited by thousands of people each year and all are delighted to hear Mr. Olivier’s
authentic story of Evangeline, her people, and their settlement in this section.

Evangeline's grave beside a church in St. Martinville has now become a
shrine. It is marked with a life-size bronze statue, given to the Evangeline Memorial
Association by the motion picture actress, Dolores del Rìo, who played the title role
in the film Evangeline, made in this section a number of years ago.

St. Martin Catholic Church, one of the oldest in the state, established in
1765, is another point of outstanding interest. Noted for its quaint architecture,
its replica of the Grotto of Lourdes, and a painting of St. Martin of Tours (for whom
the parish, the city, and the church were named), it stands intact except for minor
repairs. Nearby stands the ancient, moss-hung oak, under which the two lovers are
said to have met again after years of separation. The Evangeline Oak is "America’s
most photographed tree" and its location on the Teche adds to the charm of the history
enveloping this entire country.

Pine Alley, a magnificent avenue of pines and oaks, is two and one-half
miles from St. Martinville on the graveled road LA 86. The trees, planted by slave
labor more than 100 years ago, form a complete arch over the roadway that originally
led to the magnificent plantation mansion of Charles Durand, a wealthy sugar planter.
The house is no longer standing.

The reputed home of Louis Arcaenaux (Gabriel) is also in St. Martinville,
standing on the plantation he once owned. The locality has been made into the
Evangeline Memorial State Park, a beautiful oak grove on Bayou Teche. The house has
been restored, inside and out, to resemble as nearly as possible its original appear-
ance. Its interior has been converted into a museum, with exhibits designed to show
the furniture, clothing, and implements of the early settlers.

The park, like all the Teche locality, has great scenic beauty. As one
stands beneath its trees, watching the lazy Teche, the words of the poet come to
mind, recalling the time when Evangeline herself, in a small boat rowed by her
countrymen, first saw those waters.

Thus, ere another moon, they emerged from the shade;
and before them
Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the Atchafalaya
....
Faint was the air, with the odorous breath of magnolia
blossoms.

With such a prelude as this, and hearts that throbbed
with emotion,
Slowly they entered the Teche, where it flows through
the green Opelousas.

Fishing in Catahoula Lake (12 miles) include perch and trout - boats 50¢.
summer is best time of year; camping facilities, lights and water, Evangeline Park;
city offers specialties in French and Acadian cuisine in six comfortable restaurants;
movie theater; churches serving all denominations; information - Evangeline Auto
Company, local AAA representative.

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Known as a city of beautiful gardens, Lafayette has a unique celebration in its annual Camellia Pageant and Mid-Winter Fair sponsored by the Southwestern Louisiana Institute. The camellia, blooming in the dead of winter, provides flowers of exquisite beauty, varying in color from snow-white to a deep rose-pink. The Camellia Pageant is held on the campus of the Institute, whose beautifully landscaped grounds are almost as famous as its halls of learning. Climax of the celebration is the coronation of the queen, who with her court of attendants is selected from the student daughters of South Louisiana families.

As the camellias reach the height of their blooming season, that of the azaleas begins. With the opening of its Azalea Trail, Lafayette is transformed into an immense, enchanting garden.

Another Lafayette floral attraction is "Les Jardins de Mouton", admission $1.10. Opened in 1939, these gardens comprise a formal rose garden, an outdoor theater with a backdrop of moss-draped oaks, sunken gardens, a cypress garden, and a formal "parterre", the latter planted in many species of camellias, azaleas, and boxwood. A replica of the Grotto of Lourdes also has been built here.

Located on St. John Street is the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, erected in 1916 on the site of a chapel built in 1822. It is one of the most beautiful cathedrals in the South. The structure is easily recognizable, painted a bright red, with a white stone trim.

Many beautiful ante-bellum homes are to be found in Lafayette, among which the Charles Mouton House is outstanding. Erected in 1848, by Charles Homere Mouton, jurist and lieutenant governor, the home originally stood in the midst of a large plantation on the outskirts of town. The house has been restored many times but the original architectural features of the exterior still remain. The oak trees extending along Sterling Avenue once formed part of a large grove in front of the Mouton home. No admission is charged for a visit to these homes and they are open year-round.

In this area the sportsman may satisfy his every whim. Up in the highlands there is an abundance of quail, doves and snipe - bear and deer are to be found in the adjacent swamps. The neighboring streams, lakes, and bayous are excellent locations for the angler with his fly rod or casting plugs. The Atchafalaya basin, 15 miles to the east offers good fresh water fishing in the spring and in the Gulf area to the south, both fresh and salt water fish are abundant.

The city has an outstandingly organized recreational program - community centers, game courts, athletic fields, swimming pools, gymnasiums, city parks and playgrounds. One may tee off on the beautiful municipal golf course and following a round of the scenic fairways, take a dip in the refreshing water of the pool located in the park (admission 25¢ - bathing suit rental 15¢).

Lafayette's Girard Park is an excellent spot for recreation. With an amusement lodge, ten barbecue pits, benches, tables, water and lights, sanitary facilities, swings and slides - it facilitates an enjoyable day for the entire family.

Football, baseball, and basketball in season, provides spectator sports all year, either at S.L.I. Stadium or City Park. Two race tracks hold spring and summer seasons. Admission 50¢.

Four clean, comfortable hotels with rates starting at $1.75 and seven tourist courts with minimum rates of $2.00 offer fine accommodations.

Spectacular parades, masking and balls mark the celebration of Mardi Gras in Lafayette. The carnival season is observed as it is in New Orleans. Crowds amounting to 40,000 have participated in the colorful festivities.

One daily and one weekly newspaper - radio station with NBC affiliate - churches representative of all faiths are to be found in town. Information office is located at Lafayette Chamber of Commerce in the City Hall.

SUNSET

Leaving Lafayette, our travel is on LA 5 for 14 miles to the north, arriving at Sunset. This village is the largest single sweet potato shipping point in the world. Famous "Sunset Yams" are grown here and shipped to all parts of the country. Cotton is the other main money crop of the village.

GRAND COTEAU

Located at Grand Coteau, approximately 2 miles from Sunset, are two of the oldest educational institutions in the South - St. Charles College and The College and Academy of the Sacred Heart.

St. Charles College at Grand Coteau is set in a beautifully landscaped area shaded by century-old live oaks.
Founded by the Jesuit Fathers in 1838, St. Charles functioned as a boys' college for many years until in 1922, it was converted into a Jesuit Seminary. The sons of many prominent Acadian families received their education at St. Charles. Built amid century-old towering oaks of the St. Charles College campus, it is the most beautiful Catholic Retreat House in the South.

The College and Academy of the Sacred Heart, about one mile north of St. Charles, is known as "a hallowed spot in the heart of Louisiana". Here, a shrine, the only one of its kind in the United States, marks the spot where Blessed John Berchmans appeared twice to Mary Wilson, a young aspirant to the religious life in the Religious of the Sacred Heart. On the day that the new St. John Berchmans appeared, a miracle was performed, completely healing the young postulant, stricken with a deadly malady end for whom hope through medical aid was completely abandoned. This miracle was subjected to careful scrutiny of an ecclesiastical tribunal, and furthered the canonization of Blessed John Berchmans.

This oratory has been visited by numerous persons on pilgrimages, beseeching intercession of the Saint who appeared at Grand Coteau.

The college grounds are exquisitely landscaped and many beautiful buildings, some over a century in age, make it one of Louisiana's loveliest beauty spots. A fully accredited college, long recognized as a very select girls' school educating daughters of many leading families in the Teche country.

OPELOUSAS

Ten miles from Sunset is Opelousas (pop. 14,000), a Louisiana-French community that has preserved its distinctive character. The customs, appearance, and manners are representative of a true French settlement. Nearly two centuries old, founded originally as an old trading post, one may hear the hoofbeats of the horses drawing the buggies which remain a familiar sight on the streets of Opelousas.

The center of town life is old courthouse square around which are lined many streets with one and two story brick buildings, erected more than a century ago by early planters as town offices and interspersed with buildings constructed in recent years. An imposing half-million dollar courthouse stands in the center of City Square. The residential streets are lined with trees and comfortable but unpretentious homes, usually with large front lawns.

Opelousas has the largest dehydrating plant in the United States and is fast becoming the center of the Louisiana Sweet Potato Industry. The "Yambilee", national sweet potato frolic is to be an annual event in this city. Parades, floats, and gala festivities highlight the event held in October.

Vast stands of hardwood timber surround the area. Sugarcane and rice are other predominant crops in the Opelousas area.

Opelousas harbors a unique industry - that of growing and preparing paprika for the American market. Before 1939, all the paprika consumed in this country was imported from abroad, principally from Austria and Yugoslavia. Arthur Denes of Yugoslavia, is the man who introduced the method of growing; and chose this area for its suitable soil and climate conditions.

English has never quite replaced French as the court language in this community. A large percentage of litigants and witnesses, and occasionally the attorneys, present their cases in both French and English.

The city has a beautiful sixty-two acre City Park with tennis courts, swimming pool, picnic grounds, barbecue pits, housing for meetings, and other social functions. Two country clubs - Cedar Lane for Golf, dining, dancing; Delmas Pines for dining and dancing.

Two hotels ($1.50 up) and seven tourist camps ($2.00 up) offer excellent accommodations for a stop here if rest is desired; or appetite for savory French cooking may be satisfied in one of the several restaurants located in the downtown area. Two theaters seating 1,400 - admission 40¢; four newspapers, one daily; Rotary Club meets at noon on Tuesday and Kiwanas meets on Wednesday at noon. Local information cordially given at Court House or Opelousas Chamber of Commerce.

A unique characteristic of the "Cajun" country is the horse and buggy which is still used as transportation.

RAYNE

Our turn is now to the west on US 190, and traveling six miles to Lawtell, at which point we swing in a southerly direction to Church Point, a distance of ten miles. Leaving Church Point our route continues south on LA 40 to Rayne, the center of the Louisiana frog industry.

The Louisiana Frog Company, located here, is the largest shipper of edible frogs in the world and is also the supplier of biological specimens to numerous hospitals, experimental laboratories and colleges of the nation. Visitors are admitted to the frog plant and the interesting process of gathering, slaughtering and shipping are cheerfully outlined by the employees.
Rayne is another typical Louisiana-French town. The first move of the rice buyers from the North or East is to learn French when coming into this section. French is the predominant language even among the negroes—some of whom do not speak or understand English.

**ABBEVILLE**

This circle of our tour completed, we return to Lafayette on US 90—the distance is 44 miles. Twenty-one miles from Lafayette on LA 43 is Abbeville (pop. 9,000), a pleasant little town built around the Church of St. Marie Madeleine. Abbeville is the center of a rich rice growing area.

Abbeville's first building was St. Marie Madeleine Chapel, built by Abbe Megret, a Capuchin missionary, in 1845, its first settlers were principally descendants of Acadians, and for a while the village was called La Chapelle. Later it was given the name of Abbeville in honor of Abbe Megret.

Originally the principal industry of the Abbeville area was cattle raising, but in the early 1890's rice culture began to make noticeable progress. Today, it is the chief occupation of the farmers in the vicinity, and one of the state's largest rice mills is located in the town. Abbeville also is an important oyster center. Boats maintaining a regular schedule travel up and down the Vermilion River between the city and the oyster reefs of the Gulf. The trapping industry, too, adds to the wealth of the locality, the rich marsh lands south of Abbeville producing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of furs yearly.

An interesting fact about this area is that more than one-third the nation's production of buggies are sold here. The horse-drawn vehicles are a common sight on the highways of the section. The townsfolk of Abbeville are noted for their hospitality, which invariably includes the serving of delicious drip coffee to guests.

A visit to the Colomb Bakery, 200 No. Washington Street will prove a pleasant interlude. This shop has passed the century mark in age and to this day, that delicious French bread is mixed and baked by hand. The old hand-hewn counter, a mixing trough of red cedar, and mixing boards of red cypress are still in use.

Swimming at Godchaux Memorial Park—golf, Abbeville Country Club—boating, Shell Morgan Boat Club, 20 miles south of Abbeville—skating, one-half mile from town, Abbeville Skating Rink—theaters, three in the city seating 1,600—Churches representative of all faiths. Information office, Abbeville Chamber of Commerce.

**VERMILION PARISH**

We are now in Vermilion parish which borders entirely upon the Gulf of Mexico and Vermilion Bay. Before the arrival of the first white settlers it was the hunting ground of the Attakapas tribe of Indians. The early Acadians settling here found game without limit along woodland streams, and fish in abundance in the lakes, bayous, and rivers with which the parish abounds. The Vermilion River flows through the parish from north to south, and is navigable from the northern boundary to the Gulf.

Some of the largest game preserves in the United States are found in Vermilion Parish: the Rockefeller Foundation Wildlife Refuge, (85,000 acres), the Russell Sage and Audubon Society Reserves, the Firman State Preserve, the Mallibney Preserve, and the Gulf Coast Club—all located on the Gulf or bordering bays.

Vermilion Parish produces nearly 12 per cent of the rice grown in the United States, maintaining for its rice industry one of the best irrigation systems in the world. An annual 15,000,000-pound sugar crop makes sugar manufacturing also one of the parish's basic industries.

**ERATH and DELCAMBRE**

Leaving Abbeville on LA 25, we travel eastward to Erath, a typical Acadian village, located on the line dividing Vermilion and Iberia parishes. Continuing eastward from Erath for three miles, the village of Delcambre is reached. Both Erath and Delcambre are settled almost entirely by the descendants of the original Acadians, and there are but few people of other descent in or surrounding these towns. Erath is principally a trapping and agricultural community.

Some of the choicest pelts produced in the nation are shipped out of this area. Marsh Island, directly south on the Gulf is one of Louisiana's three game and wildlife preserves. This wildlife sanctuary, consisting of 79,000 acres may be reached only by boat and is the source of a large proportion of valuable pelts.

The Trappers' Ball, held at the close of the trapping season, usually in Abbeville, during April, is a festive occasion for these men from the marsh-land. A particular highlight of the event is the crowning of the king and queen of the ball.
JEFFERSON ISLAND

Approximately eight miles from Delcambre, a turn to the left over about two miles of good surfaced road which is marked Jefferson Island, will lead us into this huge dome and mine. This is one of Louisiana's huge salt deposits which are known to contain enough salt to supply the whole world indefinitely. Uses of salt for industrial purposes are becoming more numerous each day. Louisiana is one of the four large salt producing states in this country.

AVERY ISLAND

From Jefferson Island, our route takes us back to New Iberia where, before continuing on our journey southward, it is most important that we turn southwestward at Center Street on LA 25 and continue eight miles over an excellent gravel road to Avery Island, site of a huge salt mine and the famed Jungle Gardens. Avery Island, owned by the Avery and McIlhenny families for generations, originally was a Spanish grant.

A toll gate marks the entrance to the island. Cars are admitted for a 25¢ fee, with a charge of $1.00 per person.

Hills on the island rise higher above sea level than any other Gulf coast land between Florida and Mexico.

The Avery Island mine produced the first rock salt to be mined in the western hemisphere. Geologists are of the opinion that the whole of Avery Island is one huge "plug" of salt thousands of feet deep and narrowed at its top to a six-mile circumference. The uppermost tip of the mountain of salt, which rises 190 feet above sea level, has a tossoil of firm ground which forms the island. There is said to be enough salt in this mound to supply the needs of the world for 1,000 years.

Making of tabasco (pepper sauce) is an industry belonging to the McIlhenny family, and the well-known condiment is manufactured on the island.

Next to the salt and tabasco industries in importance are the home and private gardens of Edward Avery McIlhenny, the owner, comprising some 300 landscaped acres of "the rarest specimens of plants to be found in any single location in America." Also located here is "Bird City", the McIlhenny bird sanctuary, the first refuge of its kind to be established in America.

Jungle Gardens

One writer has called Jungle Gardens the "Garden of Eden." As such it is well named, for, so exotic is its atmosphere, it is easy to forget that the garden was largely built by the hand of man. Rare specimens of plant life have been combined with natural growth to present an orderly, yet jungle-like, appearance which invites exploration.

In the gardens are bearded live oaks in profusion, Chinese wisterias, giant wisterias from Japan, and flame-colored daisies from the "Mountain of the Moon" in Equatorial Africa. Siberian irises are only one species in an enormous iris garden half-a-mile long and containing 1,700 varieties; a bamboo garden boasts more than 60 varieties of Oriental bamboos. There are hybrid grapefruit and finger bananas from China; lilies and papyrus from the upper Nile; soap trees from India; and junipers, arbor vitae, and hosts of vari-colored and curious trees and shrubs from Asia.

Here also is the world's most complete collection of camellias, comprising more than 10,000 plants, and 500 varieties, imported from France, China, and Japan.

The temple of Buddha in Jungle Gardens houses one of the finest Buddhas ever enshrined in America. The sacred statue dates back to the year 960 and the Shonfa Temple near Peiping, where it was placed during the Tsung Dynasty.

Other portions of the garden contain 30,000 azalea plants, oriental holly, and orange groves. The place also has sunken gardens, a Chinese garden, a rare Buddha from the interior of China enshrined in a temple, and alligator ponds, in one of which is "The largest alligator in captivity."

The bird sanctuary created by Mr. McIlhenny is described in Bird City, a book written by him in 1934. An authoritative work, this book has had wide circulation among lovers of birds throughout the world. The story of Bird City also has been told in an article by Hassis Dickson in the Saturday Evening Post, and by others in many publications.

Our tour ends as we return to New Iberia, US 90 stands ready to return you to Morgan City, our point of origin, or north to other interesting points in the Pelican State.
1947
Centennial
Of The Poem
EVANGELINE