Longfellow State Park in St. Martinville Is Location
For Genuine Replica Of An Acadian Farm House

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ST. MARTINVILLE — In picturesque setting on a green lawn with gracefully arched trees, and with Lake Boudinot behind, Longfellow State Park in St. Martinville, stands a genuine Acadian farm house. It is a genuine replica of the homes built by the Acadians many years ago, when they first settled in the Evangeline country. Here, in a truly prairie setting, vivacious Mrs. Hugh Daspit acts as guide for throngs of tourists.

"Out of all my various professions," states Mrs. Daspit, "attending to and guiding people through this house is the one I enjoy and love the most. As I guide tourists through this house and show them the arts and crafts made by descendants of the first Acadians, I get a feeling of deep satisfaction in the work I am doing."

Mrs. Daspit affectionately known as "Dinkie" was born at Bayou Cheze, in St. Martin Parish, and is graduate of St. Martinville High School and Northwestern College. She taught school for several years, worked for the Department of Welfare and was a tutor at one time a counselor for the Louisiana State tourism committee to develop ways to attract tourists to the state of Louisiana.

First Lesson
"My first interest in arts and crafts," says Mrs. Daspit, "came about while I was visiting a client during my welfare work. I was calling on Miss Ultima Benoit, whose house was in the rear of a cornfield. When I arrived there Madame Benoit and her neighbors were having a "carding party." Carding was the combing of cotton fiber preparatory to spinning. This was done by hand, using an instrument known as a card.

I became enthusiastic about the carding and asked Madame Benoit if she would teach me the art of carding. I would return the next day. Happy over my desire to learn this almost forgotten art, Madame Benoit instead came to my house the next day. Through her teaching I became able to teach classes in carding, weaving and spinning.

Through the generosity of André Olivier, Evangeline Park's Northeastern College, a spinning wheel was donated to the Acadian house and Mrs. Daspit demonstrated how to use it. Tourism Planning Commission has seen fit to sponsor the work of perpetuating the art and crafts and have given money for the project.

The Acadian house, built by the workers of the Evangeline Park State Park in 1950, is a room of Vincent, who did the physical work, and Tom Greig, who was and still is responsible for all the materials. It is a replica of a farm house built in the late 1700's and early 60's.

Louisiana swap meet express, used in the construction of the house came from mill at Chicot State Park. All materials used in the building are exact reproductions of the materials used in the building of the old Acadian homes, including the chimney, which is made of mud and moss.

When driving through the front entrance of the Longfellow State Park, you must hear the singing and laughter of the old Acadians, as the first view of the worldwide renowned house appears. A split-cypress fence with a picket fence. Attached to the fence is a swinging gate.