Old Cypress Church Bench
Restored By Local Couple

By MARTHA AYCOCK
Advertiser Staff Reporter

A cypress church bench, thought to be nearly 100 years old, has been restored by a local couple and is the focal point of their dining room.

Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Dozier, 219 Meadow Lane, acquired the bench shortly after Mrs. Dozier’s brother found it in an old house he bought in Avoyelles Parish.

What attracted them to it was the 18 inch solid cypress bench and the band saw marks which indicated that the log had been cut down the middle rather than in today’s quarter-cut method.

24-Inch Log

Comments Dozier, “It must have been at least a 24-inch log to get the 18-inch back...you can hardly find an 18-inch wide piece of cypress today.”

Dismantled when they got it, the Doziers soon had it put back together but not without solving a few problems.

“The carpenters who built the original bench didn’t measure specifically,” says Dozier with a grin. The inside cuts didn’t fit the outside cuts and one leg was three-quarters of an inch higher than the other one. To compensate an inch was added to the armrest on the other side. Other small headaches arose when Dozier found that one “angle” at the back of the bench was thicker than at the other side and when he tried to put the armrest back into the curved side of the bench so that it wouldn’t crack again.

Before Restoration

An inch-thick coat of varnish and yellow paint was removed from the bench before restoration actually began. Then the piece of furniture was sanded to get the stain out of the wood. After putting the bench together, a clear varnish was applied to the wood, letting the grain and saw marks show through.

The pew is thought to be very old because of what Dozier calls the “evolution of church bench building, first they were made of cypress, then of oak and finally of plywood.”

CYPRRESS BENCH RESTORED — Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Dozier, whose hobby is woodworking and making decoupages, recently restored a cypress church bench, which they believe is at least 100 years old. When they got the piece of furniture it was dismantled and in very poor condition. (Advertiser Staff Photo) Daily Advertiser 12-28-68