Vintage gallery: Old-time bars, dancehalls shaped landscape

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The Temperance Society never made much headway in Lafayette and the surrounding parishes. Bars and dancehalls have been a fixture here since the early days when an enterprising tavern keeper put a plank atop two barrels and started selling rum-like liquid called taffa that was made from sugar cane.

Almost immediately after Joaquin Meston donated land for the parish courthouse in the early 1800s, at least three bars went up on or very near the courthouse square, to take care of those who got thirsty during a day in court.

In the years preceding World War II, neighborhood bars such as the Cadillac Bar on Taft Street, Brennan's Bar on Olivier, Sam Bellor's South End Grocery and Bar on Stewart Street, Mahbouk's Saloon on 12th Street and the Glorioso Grocery and Bar on Vermilion, did regular business.

Cadillac's Bar right across the railroad tracks from the depot took care of visitors waiting for a train or regulars who just dropped in. The restaurant next door was an added attraction. Folks who stayed at the Evangeline Hotel might nip across the street to Leiter's for another kind of zip.

The trophy-lined walls of the Buckhorn Bar in the old Gordon Hotel were a prime watering hole for businessmen on Jefferson Street. Or they might drop in at Atelier's, which was across the street from where it is now, for a short swig and a game of pool, or pull up a stool at L'Acadian Tavern, which was where Atelier's moved to.

Mayor's Tavern on College Avenue, Vocettes Roof Garden

Dugas Saloon, seen in 1913, was at the corner of Lafayette and West Main streets, where the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center now stands. Shown are owner Roussana Dugas and bartender Fantasy Veric.

Stutes Grocery, Bar and Barber Shop on Ridge Road was one of Lafayette's favorite watering holes. It was torn down in 1977, but a replica of it has been reconstructed at Acadian Village.

Let us know

If you have photographs of Acadiana's favorite bars to add to this collection, send them to jbradshaw@theadvertiser.com or mail to Vintage Gallery, 690 J.D. Broadway, Box 3289, Lafayette LA 70502, or drop them by the Advertiser at 1100 Bertrand Drive.