Pursue Liberty,' Historian Tells Bastille Day Celebrants

By JIM LaCAPPINIE

Be always in the pursuit of liberty, a New Orleans historian of colonial Louisiana told a gala Bastille Day celebration here Wednesday night.

Sidney L. Villere, New Orleans printing salesman who delves into Louisiana history and genealogy, delivered the major eloquence for the celebration staged by L'Assemblée Française to commemorate the French national holiday similar to the American Independence Day.

The strictly French affair was a gourmet’s delight from the aperitif of Vermouth de Chambery to the Bordeaux wine, Roc Rouge of 1961.

Anything but French was taboo. French was spoken during aperitifs, at the table while members relished the main dish of Tournedos Henri IV, special rib-eye steaks done in a heavy wine sauce and continued throughout the program which followed — a program of music, poetry and eloquence.

Explains Bill of Fare

Even the chef at the Baton Rouge Country Club where the elegant affair was held sounded a few notes of eloquence as he was introduced to the gathering to explain just exactly what he had prepared for the guests.

George Ruppeiner, formerly of Switzerland, told the gathering to preserve the French cooking above all. "Vive la France; vive les Etats Unis et vive la cuisine française."

His side dishes of Courgettes Dauphinoise and Pommes Robespierre drew special comment. The courgettes were fancifully stuffed cucumber cups into which were cooked chopped spinach capped with small cocktail onions. The Pommes Robespierre were potatoes done in a style to honor the famed Robespierre of the French revolution.

The Salade Madame Recamier was especially attractive, done so to recapture the attraction the famed Madame Jacques Recamier had for her admirers almost to her final days. Madame Recamier presided over a salon which attracted the great from the literary and political worlds in the early 19th Century.

The salad, incidentally, included hearts of Roumaine, avocado, tomatoes laid out on a bed of lettuce and touched delicately with a sauce.

The dessert was the eyecatcher, Coupe Tricolor, cream whipped, ice cream and sherbet of varied colors capped with a French tricolor in miniature.

Appetites were whetted with a dash of vermouth and group singing to include the French national anthem, "La Marseillaise."

Curiously enough, the soup was done in the order of Bouillabaisse, Marseillaise, a dish famous in the city of Marseilles, great seafood center of France.

Monseur Louis Cusachs, president of the assemblée, welcomed the guests and served as master of ceremonies.

First to appear on stage was Madame Alicia Colon, who read from Victor Hugo, great French poet and novelist. She chose one of his poems, "O Soldats de l’an deux." 1/4

Madame Claude Kirkpatrick captured the delicacy of French music with her rendition of several selections, the first, "Gavotte" from the opera Manon by Massenet and the other, "Chanson de Marie-Antoinette," arranged by Jacobson. She was accompanied at the piano by Mademoiselle Edna Beth Moss.

Villere’s discourse which followed the music touched on the fight for liberty in colonial Louisiana and traced especially the role played by Jacques Philippe Roy de Villere, who became the second governor of Louisiana after gaining statehood.

Sounded in N. O. . . .

His thesis was that the first declaration of independence was actually sounded in New Orleans and not in Philadelphia.

"We Louisianians must remember that the first declaration of independence did not come from Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, but from New Orleans the document that without liberty, there is no virtue."

He concluded his discourse with a toast to France, to the United States and, above all, to liberty.

On this eloquent note, the assemblée adjourned its Bastille Day celebration.

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