Unique Museum Seen In Crowley

By MARIA GALL

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CROWLEY — When thinking of museums, most people conjure up images of dusty, nearly-arranged shelves of articles covered with a thin layer of dust. Museums are usually the last place one would go to on a school outing.

The Crowley Rice Museum does not fit this description. The Rice Museum does have a collection of tools, machines, and pictures relating to the industries of the area, rice, oil, and farming. But the layout of the museum doesn’t conform to other museums.

Located just outside of Crowley, the museum is in a house originally built about 1900. The LSU Rice Experiment Station used to be located there and moved to its present location on Hwy 90 between Crowley and Rayne in 1955. Mrs. Antoinette Jenkins, superintendent of the station, lived in the house.

Rice — the Museum Visitors to the museum can see the process of growing rice, from the seed to the finished product. “People from other places, and even some from Crowley, don’t know much about how much of the rice is actually grown and milled,” said Mrs. Ruth Creighton, curator of the museum.

The museum was started by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Wright, who are now retired. The museum has been open to the public since 1974.

VARIETIES OF RICE

The museum displays a variety of rice, from the long-grain rice to the short-grain rice. The rice is grown on farms throughout Louisiana.

Old Tobacco-Hang-On Wall

The room has old tobacco hanging on the wall, which looks like toil made of Spanish moss and worn by horses for playing. A mirror and a table made from a cypress trunk is also displayed. It was used for cutting rice, and machines, took over.

A “batonian” which was used in 1990 to package cloth in the bayous, is also in the room along with cut-off corn, which were used to stuff bedrolls.

The Oil Room contains a working model of the No. 1 oil well in Evangeline Field, the discovery oil well in Louisiana in 1901. The model is built to scale complete with separators and storage tanks.

Acadian Room Furniture

The Acadian Room features furniture used in the old days. A canopy bed made of woven cotton, arranged and decorated, is a centerpiece of the room. People always had a table in the center of the living room in those days. Mrs. Creighton explained, “Before the advent of radios and tv, they would look at clock and at the old wooden clock (we called them stroboscopes) for entertainment.”

The museum is open to the public every day of the week. The museum is located on West Highway 90 in Crowley. (Staff Photos by Paul A. LaFontaine)