

SEASONS OF LOUISIANA

with
Dianne Cage
April: The Ouachita Citizen way



Happy Easter to all! Last Sunday morning at Saint Paul’s Methodist Church...
EASTER TRILOGY ... A Cantata for Easter
It was truly spectacular! I wish all could have been there.

My old Neville High School friend **CAROL WROTEN**, now living in Houston, shared that her granddaughter, **ISABELLE NAYLOR**, is a Wranglerette at Friendswood. This award winning, outstanding group of smart and beautiful young girls were given the opportunity to tour Pearl Harbor and meet Pearl Harbor survivor Sterling Cale before paying their respects at the USS Arizona Memorial.

The team then moved to the USS Missouri where they performed in honor of the men and women who have served in the armed forces. They were then given a tour of the ship and learned about the infamous attack 75 years ago.

At the end of the day, four of the senior dance officers — Isabelle included — performed the flag folding ceremony. What a grand experience! Carol said this outstanding school reminded her of our dear old alma mater Neville!

I hope all find lots of Easter Eggs and Jelly Beans!
Looking forward to the next time!

Dianne

ASPARAGUS
MOLD

- 1 can of all green asparagus or 2 packages frozen, cooked according to the directions on the package
- 1 cup hot liquid
- 1 tablespoon gelatin, dissolved in 1/4 cup cold water
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup cream, whipped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 cup shelled blanched almonds



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Heat the liquid from the can of asparagus, or water, and pout over the dissolved gelatin. When partially set, fold in mayonnaise, whipped cream, salt and lemon juice. Add asparagus and almonds, cut in small pieces. Pour into a mold and congeal. Serve with mayonnaise whipped with a little lemon juice.
The first time I had this served to me was at the Governor’s Mansion in Baton Rouge — and I was sorry I couldn’t ask for seconds.



ISABELLE NAYLOR, right in above photo and shown below, was among the Friendswood Wranglerettes who recently toured Peal Harbor and participated in ceremonies there.



19th Century port landing evolved into historic district

As a seventh generation resident of our fine parish, I have, since childhood, been interested in the history of our community and the preservation of it.

In 1991, I was honored to be asked by our illustrious mayor, Dave Norris, to chair a study committee for the establishment of historic districts in West Monroe. After two and a half years of research and cataloging all of the old buildings, it was concluded that our city should have two historic districts.

On Sept. 14, 1993, the mayor and board of alderman unanimously approved an ordinance establishing the Don Juan Filhiol Historic District, predominately residential and the Cotton Port Historic District, predominantly commercial.

The Heritage Preservation Commission was established with the appointment of seven members and held its first meeting the first Monday in October of 1993. I again was honored by Mayor Norris to be appointed as chairman.

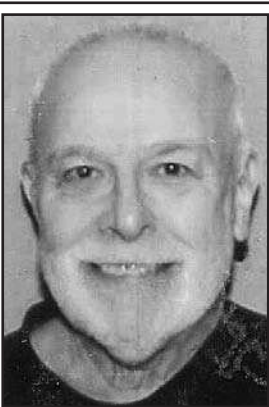
During the two and one-half years the study committee met, I felt that public awareness of

the committee needed to be established. To accomplish this, 15,000 historic calendars were published, followed by 11,000 more over the next two years. All proceeds were placed in the heritage preservation account at city hall. In 2 ½ years, I was able to acquire in excess of \$50,000 in monies, goods, and services for Heritage Preservation projects.

One of the first projects was to find a sponsor to landscape the Lea Joyner and Endom bridges. The Kilpatrick’s very graciously offered to develop and maintain the landscaping, which they have continued to do since 1992. Tex and Carole Kilpatrick have always asked that they be the first to be considered for any preservation project that needs to be sponsored.

Another project was to build a replica of the 1907 City Hall belfry to house the original City Hall bell, purchased in Cincinnati for \$300.00, during the Robert L. Rinehart administration. Troy and Eleanor Culp of Arkansas Stone donated, without hesitation, all of the brick for this project.

At the same time the bell tower was being



Ron Downing, local native historian, is enjoying his retirement with his wife Jan in West Monroe and with their two grandsons, Paul and Garrett.

constructed, another project was in the works. I felt that West Monroe’s Hasley Cemetery, established in 1832, needed sprucing up. I spoke with the mayor about building a memorial on the original site of Hasley Baptist Church, placing columns and gaslights at the entrances to the cemetery and at the memorial and providing landscaping. He agreed and the project was completed at no cost to the city through donations of money and building and landscaping materials from citizens, businesses and churches.

Of the two historic districts, the Cotton Port

Historic District probably has more benefits of the two districts, because of numerous income producing properties. Many buildings in the historic district, which covers fourteen blocks, can qualify for ten year freezes on the assessments and restoration abatement tax credits. Information may be obtained from Eric Hale at West Monroe City Hall by calling 396-2600.

Interest in the Cotton Port Historic District has increased through he efforts of Mayor Norris, the Board of Aldermen, the Heritage Preservation Commission and multi-million dollar investors such as Steve and Rebecca Hall of Arco Builders and Allied Properties, Jim Creel, John Sween, and Sallie Adams Drinkhouse.

This area is really on the grow. Having worked to assist in the development of the historic districts since 1991, I no longer serve on the commission as a member or chairman. My last term expired in 2003, I am just happy to serve as a volunteer advisor to the city and the property owners and continue to get sponsors for historic preservation projects.

I have always believed that we really can’t be sure of where we are going if we don’t know from where we came.

The Cotton Port Historic District origins go back to the Cotton Port Landing on the Cotton Port Plantation established by Joseph Perry and Martha Head Crosley in the early 1850’s. The original plat states, “We hereby certify this to be the true plan of Cotton Port, this the tenth day of December, eighteen hundred and fifty-nine.” It was signed by Thankful H. Bry, H. M. Bry, C. G. Young, J. P. Crosley, and H. H. Slaughter. This area was developed into a nine-block village from the Cotton Port Plantation.

With the completion of the V.S. & T. Railroad Bridge in 1883, the engineers began to refer to Cotton Port as west of Monroe. An effort was made to incorporate and a charter filed with the state only to be denied a charter under the name of Cotton Port. Avoyelles Parish already had a town by the name of Cottonport, although it was one word instead of two. The citizens of Cotton Port then decided to incorporate under the name of West Monroe, a

name that had often been used by the railroad since 1883.

On October 17, 1889, the name West Monroe became official with Z. T. Wright, Mayor and town council R. L. Rinehart, T. C. McLain, J. C. Covington, G. B. Haynes and G. A. Flournoy.

The Cotton Port plat remained the same, but the street names changed. Front Street become Commerce Street, First Street became Trenton Street, Second Street became Cotton Street, and Third Street became Cypress Street, while Pine Street was named Clayton Street for Clayton Crosley Austin. Cypress Street became Pine Street and Vernon Avenue became Natchitoches Street. Wood Street was the only one to retain its name.

The Cotton Port Historic District is becoming a thriving 14-block commercial and residential area. Having looked back more than 150 years, we can now look to an apparently progressive future for the development and restoration in this area. As the “Historic District” sign says, “Welcome to West Monroe’s Cotton Port Historic District, 14 blocks of history.”



LOCATED INSIDE OF
FIESTA NUTRITION CENTER
1211 N. 18TH IN MONROE

