

travel

CLASSIFIED INSIDES
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travel log

Iris Sanderson Jones

The Ishpeming connection to the Olympic competition

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan has a connection to the past and to the future of the Olympic Games, although few people see the connection when they are watching the games from Lake Placid.

The connection with the past is through the United States Ski Association (USSA), which officially sponsors, the American Olympic ski team. USSA was born out of the National Ski Association, which in turn was born in Ishpeming, Mich.

The USSA celebrated its 75th anniversary in that city last summer at the National Ski Hall of Fame, which is also sponsored by USSA.

The Ishpeming Ski Club, which over the years has played an important part in both USSA and the Hall of Fame, holds its annual ski jumping tournament at Suicide Hill in Ishpeming March 1 and 2.

The Hall of Fame is known among its fans as an exhibit hall for the history of skiing around the world, but it is now earning a new reputation as the home of a seedling research center. The National Ski Library is trying to amass the largest collection in the world of books and films on skiing.

Research materials may not leave the library, but researchers can use the materials and the facilities of the hall.

That's the connection to the past. The connection to the future is taking place down the road in Marquette, where a group of people want the city to be named an official Olympic training site.

A PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT committee has been at work for two years preparing their arguments for a year-round training site in Marquette County. Dr. Roy Heath of Northern Michigan University has been a central figure in the planning.

The committee believes that very few regions in the United States have the terrain, the snowfall required for winter sports, the lakes and the sports facilities found at NMU, at Suicide Hill and in the surrounding countryside, within a 1.3 mile radius.

Dr. Heath and Bertram Boyum of the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Co. have already attended several meetings at which the proposed training site was discussed. They have heavy competition, including an application from Kalamazoo for the same training site.

A decision is expected to be made soon after the Winter Olympics are over and people in the Olympics business have the time and energy to get back to such questions.

Meanwhile, Michigan travelers can take advantage of the Ski Hall of Fame, Suicide Hill and the facilities that are available in the Marquette and Ishpeming area.

Try the local bubbly when touring Europe

If it's true that the best things in life are free, a judicious bit of planning can make this adage work in Europe.

In the course of itineraries that include castles, churches and chateaux, one can vary the aesthetics of sightseeing with a free drink of the local wine or liquor.

Virtually every country in Western Europe affords tasting opportunities.

CHAMPAGNE

Reims, Epernay and Ay all lie within easy driving range of Paris, and the region teams with their establishments, and visitors are offered a short course in history, art and antiquity along with ample supplies of bubbly.

The Mercier cellars, cut into chalky limestone, are so large that Chateaux pagne aficionados travel through the storage vaults on a narrow gauge railroad.

Pomery & Greno galleries are decorated with bas-reliefs chiseled into the overhead stone.

A number of cellars were once Roman quarries, dug out by the ancients in thoughtful anticipation of future needs.

BORDEAUX

In major centers, such as Beaune in Burgundy or Colmar in Alsace, you will find the headquarters of the comite' interprofessionelles (regional groupings representing both growers and shippers).

Any comite' can point you to a place where you learn something about wine and get a complimentary glass or two.

In Bordeaux, the largest of France's

wine-growing areas, the C.I.V.B. (Comite' Inter-professionnel du Vin de Bordeaux) is at 1 Cours de St Julien, near the Opera House.

COGNAC

Take the train from Paris' Gare d'Austerlitz and head for the peaceful farming town of Angouleme.

Drive a short distance to Cognac and the 200-year-old Hennessy distillery. A brief tour through this institution is topped off by a stop in the paradise soon. There, one is offered a broad selection of the local tipples, "distilled" a poet once said, "from the dawn's rays."

CHARTREUSE

For another kind of strong potable, visit Voiron in the Cartbusian Mountains in southeastern France and travel to the distillery which is 18 miles from the village.

The monk's famed liqueur is a secret blend containing 130 herbs and comes in yellow or green.

The formulas are carefully guarded by three monks whose order has taken vows of silence and poverty.

One of their number is permitted to break the silence barrier, although his sentences are brief.

The resident monks are bountiful hosts, serving up an e'lixir ve'ge'tal, a powerful potion of brandy and honey, to all comers.

SHERRY

Another sampling target is somewhat off the beaten track near Cadiz in the south of Spain.

Here is the Sherry triangle formed by the towns of Jerez de la Frontera, Puerto de Santa Maria and Sanlucar de Barrameda.

For the uninitiated, Sherry is produced in above-ground structures called bodegas, with high vaulted ceilings and open windows.

Described somewhat poetically as cathedrals of wine, they are cool and dim, filled with rows of casks from which the unique solera system by which Sherry is bottled.

Stop off at Gonzalez, Byass & Co., Ltd., visit John Harvey & Sons, where you can stop from a solera that may contain a drop or two of 400-year-old wine.



Mass preservation is going on today along the blue bayous

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

If you take the high road and I take the low road from New Orleans to Lafayette, you'll get there before me but I'll have more fun.

The high road is a fast expressway that crosses the Mississippi River at Baton Rouge and goes straight west in four-lane splendor into Cajun country.

The low road is Highway 90, a two-lane that makes a red curved line on the map from New Orleans through the swamp country near the Gulf of Mexico and then northwest to Lafayette.

Along this trail, 20th century Cajuns are rebuilding the sugar plantations, colonnaded houses and old Acadian villages that grow out of their 18th and 19th century heritage. Part of the reason is clear in Morgan City, where offshore oil rigs make a skyline in the local shipyards.

Oil has brought new money to southern Louisiana. The Cajuns are using some of it to restore reminders of old money in this sugar plantation country.

THE CAJUNS, or French Acadians, have been here a long time, ever since the first refugees from Nova Scotia, in what is now Canada, arrived here in the 18th century. Surprisingly, a bus or car drive through this country will give you the feeling you discovered at it before the main run of tour buses got here.

Highway 90 is the Old Spanish Trail, now a divided highway thru through country and cypress forests. This is good hunting country for everything from waterfowl to woodchucks, armadillos and raccoons.

Steps should include the old plantations of Thibodaux, the oil rigs and swamp gardens of Morgan City, the mansions of Franklin and New Iberia, and the legendary reminders of Longfellow's Evangeline, before you get to Lafayette, called the capital city of Cajun country.

The Raceland Sugar Mill, the largest in Louisiana, is your landmark for the brief detour into Thibodaux and the Bayou Lafourche. Bayou Lafourche is called the longest main street in the world, because it runs through villages from Donaldson to the Gulf of Mexico and was once a major outlet of the Mississippi.



A guide in period attire takes visitors around the impressive Oaklawn Manor on the Bayou Teche. Overnight accommodations are available there.

THIBODAUX HAS three main points of interest. You can view, but usually not tour, old plantation houses that are still occupied by families, including the Acadia Plantation where Jim Bowie built cottages in the 1820s, and the Acadia Rieni Plantation, said to have been built as a retreat for Queen Maria Luisa of Spain in 1786.

If you are lucky enough to be in Thibodaux during the firefighters' fair, you will see all 500 firefighters of the biggest volunteer fire department in the world. Residents recommend you don't have a fire that day unless you can put it out with mugs of beer.

The town's most famous point of interest may someday be the Laurel Valley Plantation, now open to visitors by appointment, but still a long way from being fully restored.

LAUREL VALLEY looks now like a gently dilapidated leftover sugar plantation from "Gone With the Wind," but there is no big plantation house and the brick sugar mill has collapsed. It wasn't always so.

Marie Louise Lepine, who came to Thibodaux during the Sugar Depression of 1927, remembers it otherwise.

"When I first came to this plantation as a bride, all the buildings were painted white, with white fences around them," she said. Someday, if the money can be raised, the plantation will be restored for posterity.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Lepine and her family, who still farm 600 acres, will give tours to anyone who stops at the plantation office. They would prefer you call first: 447-7352. They won't ask for, but they will definitely appreciate, a donation to the foundation which is restoring this plantation.

Laurel Valley represents old money. It once took 100 families to keep the plantation's operations running. A few miles down the road in Morgan City, you'll see new money in the shipyards that built the first oil rigs to float on the gulf.

Most tourists are surprised to learn that floating oil rigs make a natural fish home, and that fishermen love to tie up to the floating rigs for a day at the reel.

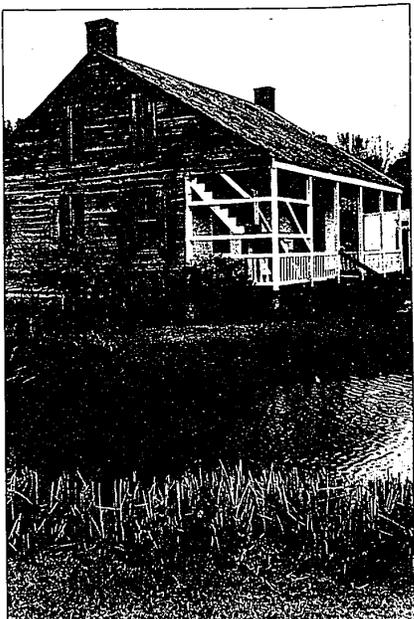
Morgan City, on the Intercoastal Waterway in the Atchafalaya River Basin, has had a municipal auditorium as the center of its social life for 17 years. A few feet away is a 3 1/2-acre park called the Swamp Garden. I have never seen a museum park quite like it.

INSIDE THE GATE, a stump is carved with words, the story of the Great Swamp. There are not many of the original 600-year-old cypress left, even here, but they have saved a genuine swamp full of cypress, cypress knees, and hanging vines. Real alligators sleep in the water and mannequins show how people lived, fished and boated in this setting.

It was in this swamp country that the first movie of Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan was filmed. Tarzan is represented in the trees, along with his famous yell recorded.

The Brownell Memorial Park and Carillon Tower, with its view of Lake Palourde, is also worth a visit in Morgan City.

One of the most interesting lessons for a first-timer in this area is that a swamp or a cypress lake is nothing like the steaming jungle setting so often shown in old movies. The water is sluggish but there are fish in these swamp waters and the setting is picturesque.



New money is restoring what old money built, including this house in an Acadian village in Lafayette, La. From New Orleans to Lafayette, sugar plantations, villages and even the swamps are undergoing reconstruction or restoration. (Photos by Iris Sanderson Jones)

Morgan City is different from the rest of the bayou country because it is not based on nostalgia. The old houses in the town of Franklin definitely are. Oaklawn Manor, on the Irish Bend of the Bayou Teche, is just off Highway 90 west of Franklin. You can now rent the bedrooms on the second floor for overnight accommodations.

Your first view of Oaklawn, from the road, is through stands of live oak rising with muscled trunks out of the grass, spreading moss-hung branches over acres of lawn toward a great, white-pillared house.

From the riverboat landing on the Teche, you will see at once that the

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