

Waterproof Plantation Store Oaks

Big Bayou Black Hwy 182
3669 Bayou Black Road
Hwy 182

[Google Maps](#)



The featured Live Oak Trees are located on the left bank of Bayou Black Drive at Minor's Canal. These oaks once hung over the Waterproof Plantation store. The four older oak tree plantings estimated guess to be about the 1850s. Later landowner Russell Brien matched with plantings of young live oaks originating from the Waterproof Ridge in 1974. Brien, born in 1926, transplanted young oak trees from an area near the Intracoastal Waterway and Morgan City. Present owners, Todd and Celia Ledet, purchased the property from Mr. Calvin Ortego who built the present brick home. Celia said that she enjoys "sitting on her front porch and listening to the raindrops as they fall through the leaves and branches." "The sound," she said, "is music to my ears."

The Waterproof Oaks grow on land valued for its unique geologic feature, a high ridge, and its propensity for not flooding. This high, dry land provided additional value for production of sugar cane, corn, and soybeans at Waterproof plantation. Between 1817 and 1828, land speculators, the Bowie Brothers, James, Rezin, and Stephen owned the area. Then by the 1840s, Richard Grinage and Gilbert W. Hatcher purchased the properties for development of sugar cane and cypress. Hatch, a brick maker discovered natural clay on the property, which was ideal for brick making. Constructed with these locally sourced bricks and native cypress lumber, the Waterproof plantation house, the sugar mill, and the outbuildings including the slave cabins functioned in commercial operations.

In the 1880s, Francois Camille Viguerie (1830-1896) having arrived in Terrebonne Parish at the age of 19, in July 1849 from Heches, in the Canton, de labarthe, Department des Hautes Pyrenees, France, operated a mercantile business at the Plantation store. By 1885, he left and became manager of the Alice B. Plantation. He went on to owned several plantations with his brother, Jean Pierre Viguerie. F.C. Viguerie went on donate land for Sacred Heart Church in Montegut.

Tokens from the Waterproof Store are in the plantation token collection of Dr. Christopher E. Cenac, Sr. M.D. F.A.C.S., local historian and physician. Tokens were good only at the plantation store and redeemed and cashed for Plantation workers for merchandise.

The Waterproof Plantation became part of the extensive Minor Family holdings until after the late 1930s. Family history mentions the store along with reports of the sales generated. The old plantation store became the Ormond Post Office on August 31, 1908. In 1936, the Waterproof Plantation mill burned to the ground along with all the out buildings. On May 20, 1942, another fire burned the old Waterproof Plantation. As with many plantations in Terrebonne Parish, Southdown Realty Co., purchased and farmed the property between 1942 and 1953. The group tore down the fire-damaged house on Southdown-Mandalay Road during this period. Today the Oaks Plantation Bed and Breakfast occupies the property. Story written by Trudy V Hebert.



Photos by Trudy Voisin Hebert

