

Gibson Cypress

Big Bayou Black
Hwy 182 At 90
Gibson, LA

[Google Maps](#)



For miles along Bayou Black and into the city of Houma, magnificent Bald Cypress trees grow along the right and left descending banks. Gibson's natural Bald Cypress trees adorn much of the length of Bayou Black but are best viewed, naturally displayed, near Bayou Black School (built in the late 1910s), post office, and the Gibson Branch of the Terrebonne Parish Library. Full-grown bald cypress trees are capable of rising to 75-100 feet, and the wood is valued for its beauty, resistance to rot and insects, and longevity.

Beginning around 1880, the cypress lumbering industry provided the majority of lumber used to build Terrebonne Parish homes and businesses. The industry continued to cut the old-growth cypress trees until about 1925 when the trees played out from over 50,000 acres. One of the large mills, located in the Bayou Black area, was capable of processing over 100,000 board feet. Less than 5% of the old-growth trees remain in the swamp, secluded areas of the parish. Scientist now worry that continued harvesting would damage Louisiana's fragile ecosystem.

Prior to 1830, Tobias Gibson settled his family in the Bayou Black area of Terrebonne Parish. The Gibson family later developed several plantations, Oak Forest Plantation, Magnolia, and Greenwood. In 1888, the post office named for Tobias's son, Louisiana Senator Randall Lee Gibson (1832-1898) served the area.

The area, previously known as Tigerville, was a large cypress swamp stretching for over miles in today's Atchafalaya Heritage Area- Cultural Zone. Included in the area is the Mandalay National Wildlife Refuge, which features some of the most beautiful large bald cypress trees. Although not visible from the highway, these trees are included in local waterway tours leaving from various points along Bayou Black. Ecology professors say cypress play a pivotal role in the swamp forests in coastal Louisiana. Cypress swamps prevent flooding by stormwater management, collecting storm waters, and clean by filtering pollution. The cypress tree provides habitats for a large variety of animals, such as migratory songbirds.

Gibson remains a rural area in northern Terrebonne Parish. In Gibson, in the Fandal Street neighborhood, cypress trees developed in the area of the Chitimacha Indian mounds.

The old Gibson Methodist Episcopal Church in Gibson listed on the [National Register of Historic Places in Terrebonne](#) sits quietly among the old trees and alongside a graveyard. Story written by Trudy Voisin Hebert [Battle Brews story](#) Cypress logging processes filmed in 1925. See Links: [Youtube part 1 on logging](#) and [Youtube part 2 on logging](#)



Photos by Trudy Voisin Hebert

