

Hope Farm Plantation Oaks

Lower Bayou Terrebonne
237 Hwy 55
Bourg, LA

[Google Map](#)



In 1907, on a portion of Hope Farm, Wallace Ellender Sr. and his twin brother, Ernest built their cypress homes along Bayou Terrebonne surrounded by sugar cane fields across the road from one another. Wallace planted three live oak saplings that came from the woods behind his fields as shade for this new home. Two saplings were planted in front of the house and one in back but only the two in front remain.

The Hope Farm live oaks survived many hurricanes protecting the home under their canopy. The limbs appear to be reaching out to hug and shelter it. One wonders, if these trees could tell stories, they would describe the many changes that took place in their 90 years.

In the beginning, only a shell road existed along the bayou close to the water's edge. Over the years, the road was widened, paved and gradually moved closer to the house. This resulted in large limbs being trimmed away to accommodate passing trucks. Families lived, ate and gathered together for special events. They laughed, cried, loved and told stories.

One of those family stories is about why the tree to the right is the prettiest. This story begins with the owner of Hope Farm and his friend who helped him dig up, haul, and plant the live oaks. Ellender decided to celebrate their hard work with a few swigs from a whiskey bottle, but when he spotted his concerned wife coming out to check on their progress, he quickly hid the half-full whiskey bottle in the soil next to the newly planted tree; where it has remained to this day. . . "Good and well-aged!"

When these trees were young, sugar cane was grown, cut and hauled out by mule-drawn wagon, followed later in years by tractors to the closest sugar mill located in Montegut, down the bayou from Hope Farm. Extracted raw sugar was then loaded on barges and pushed up the bayou past Hope Farm to Houma and headed for New Orleans. Once there it was transported to New Orleans for refining.

This yearly cycle continued until the mill in Montegut was sold in 1972 to a cooperative group in Guatemala where it is in operation today near Guatemala City. Presently, all the sugar cane grown in Terrebonne is hauled away by large cane trucks to mills in Lafourche parish.

Since Hurricane Gustav, the canopy has thinned. Some limbs growing too close to the house have been trimmed. And in the future, one large limb may need bracing to prevent the branch from splitting due to its girth and weight.—Story written by Sandy Wright Ostheimer.

[Find a Grave T. Ellender](#)

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Photos by Trudy Voisin Hebert

