

Myrtle Hill is one of the few remaining Antebellum homes in DeSoto Parish. It is one story with a four pillared portico. It opens into a spacious central hall with a stairway descending to two basement rooms. There are four rooms on the first floor (two on either side of the central hall), a living room and 3 bedrooms, all being the same size, with handsome woodwork and a fireplace. The doors are 3 inches thick and 4 ½ feet wide. The walls are six inches thick and ceilings are sixteen feet high. The floors are the original pine floors used in the house. Originally, the walls were plastered onto wooden lathes but are now papered. A two-room, L-shaped wing was added on the rear separated from the main house by a gallery. This addition was made nearly a hundred years ago and houses a dining room and kitchen with long porches on each side. The original kitchen, which burned, was built to the rear of the main house.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Originally the house was built by Edward Riggs. The date of the house is thought to be shortly after 1852. According to family legend, Mr. Riggs built the house for a young lady that did not arrive in the parish until 1852. They did not marry, however, and Mr. Riggs sold the property to James Taylor Means who lived at nearby Roseneath Plantation with his father. He married and purchased Myrtle Hill from Mr. Riggs.

Mr. Means was living here during the Battle of Mansfield. During Reconstruction he became a member of the "White League," a group who formed to circumvent the work of the carpetbaggers.

A Union scouting party called on Mr. Means to arrest him for his activities in Confederate affairs. Friends who were visiting at Myrtle Hill offered to make "short work" of the Union Scouts, but Mr. Means agreed to ride to Shreveport with them, provided they would let him keep his gun and ride at the head of the party. This was agreed upon and he rode his horse into Shreveport, where he and other Confederate Patriots were soon released as the grand jury failed to indict them. Later after Reconstruction, Mr. Means was elected to the State Legislature.

Myrtle Hill has changed hands several times and was bought in 1937 by Mr. and Mrs. Ray P. Oden, Sr., together with 750 acres of land. Later adjoining land was bought.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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3. Plantation Cookbook: by Junior League of New Orleans, La., Published 197 by Doubleday, New York 10022.
4. Shreveport Times Article: Dated April 15, 1923 describing a tour of Myrtle Hill "Picturesque and Historic Tours" by Mary McKeller