

## Road Trip to New Orleans

By Marilyn Reeves

Back in the mid-70's my husband Gil and I spent a week's vacation taking a long, leisurely road trip to New Orleans, making numerous stops along the way. One of the most memorable was the beach at Biloxi, Mississippi. The water near the shore was crystal-clear, emerald green, and we were so enthralled by its beckoning beauty that we took off our shoes and waded in, fully clothed, laughing and splashing about like a couple of kids. Then we sat on the sand waiting for our clothes to dry out in the sun before getting back into the car and heading on our way. It was a sort of wild, impulsive thing to do and all the more fun because of it.

Another stop was at Avery Island, Louisiana, where the McIlhenny Company set up shop making its world-famous Tabasco sauce. It is also famed for its massive salt mines, where Gil had made a number of sales calls as a representative for Sullair Air Compressor Company.

But primarily he wanted to share with me the beauty of Avery Island itself, a park-like tourist attraction where pretty little ponds and flowering gardens dot acres and acres of green lawn. Where lacy curtains of Spanish moss adorn the branches of magnificent oak trees, presenting a scene that could have been torn from the pages of *Gone With The Wind*. Of all the places I've ever been, Avery Island has to be among the most enchanting.

When we arrived in the City of New Orleans itself, I was charmed by the graceful old Southern mansions leading into the French Quarter. (This was of course several years before the devastation of Katrina had taken its toll. No doubt many of those old homes were destroyed in its wake.)

I can't remember where we stayed – I think it was at a Holiday Inn on the outskirts of town – but I do remember seeing the famous old Gothic cemetery and wandering around the downtown streets, checking out some of the old-time jazz clubs, and splurging on Lobster Newburg in a famous French restaurant called Tujagues.

But for me, the highlight of the trip was when we went into a bar and the tall, gorgeous blonde who waited on us started making eyes at Gil. Being a normal, red-blooded American boy (or middle-aged man as it were), he was deeply flattered ... until he finally figured out that "she" was, in fact, a "he!" Poor Gil. His naturally red complexion blanched white and then turned *crimson* as he realized he'd been "had." It made for something to tease him about on the long drive back home.