

Menard, D.L.



Chair maker and Cajun Musician (1932 - 2017)

D. L. Menard was born in 1932 in Erath, Louisiana where he resided with his wife, Louella. They had seven children and fourteen grandchildren. D. L. Menard was one of the most respected music artists in French Louisiana today. His song, "La Porte dans Arriere" (The Back Door) and "Jole Blon" became a Cajun national anthem. In the eighteen years since "La Porte" was first recorded, it sold over half a million copies. D. L. stated, "The singing and music came natural...people said I sang like Hank Williams, but it was just my way of singing." D. L. sang at festivals in Quebec, France, and scores of Louisiana honky-tonks. He has recorded for Louisiana and French labels as well as northern folk labels in the United States.

Along with his music art, Mr. Menard owned D.L. Menard chair factory. The furnishing of Louella's kitchen are the products of his chair factory. D. L. was a master craftsman and his chair factory was as remarkable as the chairs themselves. D. L. concocted a small factory from materials such as old washing machine motors. He made most of the chair parts from the finest ash wood obtained from the local sawmill and his wife weaved the chair seats. He used seasoned hardwood rungs, which were locked tight by drying ash in the traditional way. His inventory included platform rockers, high back rockers, sewing rockers, ladder-back chairs, bar stools, and children's furniture. In 2010, D.L. was inducted into the HOMFA.

Photograph of D.L. Menard courtesy of Rounder Records. The photograph can be found on the cover of Rounder Records 0198, Cajun Saturday Night.