

Verret, Ollie



Cajun Foodways, Quilter, and Dancer

Ollie Theriot Verret was born in Breaux Bridge in 1935 to Devine Bijoux and Noe Theriot, and speaks French and English fluently. She now lives in Catahoula with her husband, Rives Verret, Sr. Mrs. Verret is retired from working in the cafeteria at Martin Mills. She is an excellent cook known for her sweet dough tarts and other traditional Cajun dishes. She is also a fine traditional Cajun dancer and quilter as well as an expert on French Louisiana traditions in the Catahoula area.

With her husband, Verret dances every week in the old style of Cajun dancing. She says that she grew up with Cajun waltzes, two-steps, and jitterbugs, and has been dancing since the age of ten. She learned primarily from her parents and friends, and recalls dancing at the Wild Cherry Club in Breaux Bridge with her parents. Ollie and Rives Verret are dance champions who have won numerous awards at Mulate's Cajun Dance Competition, the Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival, the Catahoula Church Fair, as well as other events.

As a girl, she learned to cook from her family, and still cooks with her sister Lillian Blanchard. For a recent folklife tour of the Catahoula area, Mrs. Verret and Mrs. Blanchard prepared sweet dough tarts for a large group of folklorists. She also talked to them about Easter customs in Catahoula, including the tradition known locally as "Pie Day."

Ollie Verret grew up around quilting bees, in which neighborhood women gathered at each other's homes to sew and visit. She vividly describes these old-fashioned quilting bees and how the work was shared. Children were assigned certain tasks, while the women took care of others. Mrs. Verret still quilts using the techniques she learned as a girl.

With her husband, she is actively involved in many of the benefits organized in Catahoula and is regularly involved in many other community activities.