In the early records of the St. Landry Parish Police Jury we find the recording of the building of a bridge at the junction of Bayou Teche and Fancier — this is the beginning of Arnaudville. At the same time is noted the name of "Jacques Arnault," from whom the town received its name.

Antoine Arnault (as the name is now spelled) was a very early French settler who acquired a large plantation at the site of the present town of Arnaudville. His son, Jacques, inherited the grant from him, and we see in the early 1810's that he was a prominent settler, being active in matters of that time. His name is noted through the records pertaining to various activities in the Arnaudville area. The clearing of the raft in Bayou Fancier was one of the first acts of the police jury.

Traffic was almost entirely by water in those days, as roads were few. Many of the old roads and bridges of the parish still carry the names of the land-owners who lived at the location, and in this instance "La Jonction" eventually became "Arnaudville.

"King's" bridge, "Debailleur's" bridge, "Carignan's" bridge and "Arnault's" bridge.

Two years ago the town of Arnaudville held a centennial celebration of the anniversary of the establishment of the first Catholic Church in 1853. At this time extensive research was made by Mr. Roger Bau- diez, official chronicler of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Under his direction many interesting facts about Arnaudville and its environs were brought to light, and a most thorough booklet was published in commemoration of the historic event.

Prior to 1853, the French Catholics who made up the greater part of the settlers worshiped at St. Charles Church in Grand Coteau, or St. Landry in Opelousas. Others attended the church in St. Martinville — the Atchafalaya.

St. Charles church in Grand Coteau was established in 1818, and this same Church established two missionary chapels — Plaquemine Bridge and LaJonction. Father Rochfort, S.J., was assistant to the pastor, Father F. Rodin, S.D., and it was Father
Becoffita, who attended the small chapel at La Jouxton. The land for the chapel was donated by Jacques Armand and his wife. Later the Jesuit fathers acquired additional property, where the Little Flower Academy and school and conventary were established.

Eventually they turned all of this property over to the St. Peter parish at the time of its formation. The original chapel is still in use as a convent, adjacent to the new church.

For a number of years the settlement was served by missionary priests of the Jesuit order, until 1868, when Father Valletta became the first resident priest.

In 1871 Father Cristoforo Cuny became the first diocesan priest, following his appointment by Archbishop Ponche, he made plans for the building of a church, and this was accomplished in the fall of 1874, when the church of St. John Francis de Sales was dedicated. Many trials and tribulations followed during the ensuing years - lack of money, an epidemic in 1874, the great flood of 1884, and other hardships.

In 1879 Father Divy did his best to gain the help of the Marist Bishops of the Holy Cross, and construction of a convent was begun. The school opened Jan. 4, 1881.

With the aid of Mother Katherine Prouty, he established a school for the colored children, in September 1893. In spite of threats and interference from the Regulars, the school was continued at St. Joseph's Convent School.

During early years a public school was established, and in 1913 the convent was closed. In 1941 the convent was re-opened in a new building, as the "Little Flower" Convent, under the Marist Bishops. In 1943 work was begun on a new church, under the direction of the present pastor, Father Bernard, who succeeded the late Father Massey, whom he had assisted.

It was dedicated in 1869. In 1873 a church was erected for use of the colored people, who had worshipped with the white people prior to this time. Father Aclair, a Jesuit priest, was administrator of the church from 1874 to 1884, and other hardships.

In 1892 Father Divy was able to gain the help of the Marist Bishops of the Holy Cross, and construction of a convent was begun. The school opened Jan. 4, 1881.

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HOME IN ARNAUDVILLE.

Kiddie and Quebedeaux tracts.

Prior to the establishment of a large public school in Arnaudville there were a number of small one-room schools scattered over the area, and these are listed by Mr. Estoudier as follows: Jerome Taylor taught at Horace Meche's place; Miss Valentine Guilbeau also taught at Meche's; Mrs. Chaplin Salaz and Miss Gabie Allain were teachers at the Ernest school; Miss Helen Cash taught at the DeKeeler's place; Misses Alice Hinckley, Edwina Hudson, and Evelyn Baker taught at Bona Hinckley's place; and Luluee Carpentier, the teachers were Miss Dean, Cecile Durio, and Miss Delange.

The first high school graduation took place in 1922, and four students graduated with honors: Simeon Wright, Ethel Bernand, Helen Lagrange, and Louise Lagrange. W.M. Thom was principal for one year when classes were taught in the old convent building, and he has continued in that post until the present time, having served for 33 years.

The first bank was established in 1904, by citizens of the community. First cashier of the Bank of Arnaudville was Maurice Olivier. It was later sold to the Parish Bank and Trust Co. of Opelousas, and closed during the depression in 1932. In 1931 the W. H. Washington State Bank opened a branch in Arnaudville, with Sidney Dorio as cashier and manager since its founding.

The Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1964. In 1968 it is closed, and reorganized in 1988.

1922 high school graduation took place at the Arnaudville Opera House.

Among the names of prominent early settlers at the Arnaudville station were:

Ambre Dorio, Dr. G. W. Hart, Francine Robin, B.J. and E. T. Roy, Lucien Guilbeau, Jean Ejarre, the DeKeeler's, and the families of Stoll, Brouillette, Dufour, Briedon, Laflapere, Savine, Paymou, Bernard, Guindrey, Lalande, Vareson, Robin, Blanchard, Castille, LaGrange, Mauger, DeBruin, de Lagrange, DeKeeler, Smith, Guilbeau, Allain, Belgrand, Lemiere, Porreca, Thibodeaux, Gille, de Bourgeois, St. Cyr, Thomas, Kiddie, Guilmant, Perroteau, White, Moore, Taylor, Rout, Fayelle, Rivette, LeHoudeur, Pipon, Baloff, Richard, Lureaux, Hay, and

INTERIOR of Jules Darby's Store in Arnaudville.