THE BEAUTY OF CAPE JASMINE, azaleas, pittosporaceae and other shrubs planted by several generations now grace the aged Big Cane Cemetery, where also are buried members of several generations of families of the vicinity, beneath headstones of cast-iron, marble and granite, as well as some of concrete. Some early ones of wood have entirely disappeared, it is said. In the foreground of this photo, showing new church and portion of Sunday School now rising on the historic site, to the right is grave of A/IC Henry L. Simmons, 1936-57, whose headstone carries photo of the deceased. Left foreground shows grave of Grayson couple, Hollie, 1878-1957 and Ludie, 1882-1962. White picketed enclosure is plot of the Roy Sanders family, while in the left background are headstones of E. L. Fogleman, 1841-1916 and Irene L. Fogleman, 1861-1909 and small grave of one of their children. Some of the older members of the church remember, as children, some of the occupants of the older graves when living. They also remember pleasant, old-time occasions on the church grounds, such as "all day meetings", with as many as four preachers, and "dinner-on-the-ground." — (Staff Photos)
PRICELESS OLD PHOTOGRAPH, circa early 1900's before the days of autos, pictures the front of the second Big Cane Baptist Church built on that institution's historic site at Big Cane on Bayou Rouge. Picture was made immediately after dismissal of congregation from services on a pleasant Sunday morning, judged from shadows falling toward the west, obviously in the spring, from sun's position revealed by shadows and from straw hat worn by white-suited gentleman leaning on fence rail. Note typical ladies dress of period (Long, wide skirts, high button shoes, full blouses and "sailor" hats), as well as saddled horse and buggy horses hitched to rail. Dirt road in foreground is same road, later graveled, now widened and blacktopped, which connects Big Cane with Morrow to the west, Goudeau, Bayou Jacque and Plaucheville to the east.
EDWARD PICKETT (left) co-chairman of building committee and active supervisor of construction for new Big Cane Baptist Church, while to his right is W. Caldwell Fisher, the other co-chairman, shaking hands with the church's pastor, the Rev. Clovis Cole. In background to the left above may be seen workmen putting coverings on roof of new church, while at right is east end of Sunday School structure. Some of the window apertures in outer brick wall of edifice's west side are shown behind church officials.
'Old Time Religion' Inherent With Baptists of Big Cane

By GEORGE BARKER

BIG CANE -- A contrast of Modernity with History is being effected in the construction of new, modernistic Big Cane Baptist Church on a venerable site alongside an aged cemetery. It begins a new chapter in the annals of this historic seat of religion, the church having been organized in 1846.

No living member remembers the start of the church. Some of the older ones do recall building of "the old church," sound churchies, or grandparents. The grandfather of Mrs. R. D. Fisher who lives with her husband "Mr. Dunc" in nearby Fisher Lane, they being among the oldest members, has always remembered that his pastor on the church's annual meeting. Among early pastors, besides the Rev. O'Quinn, were Rev. E. K. Branch, whose services were voluntary, and Rev. A. L. Boyd, a missionary who was paid $30.00 per month. Another John E. O'Quinn, a prominent early deacon and worker, lived in God's work and the church's service until July 19, 1966, following which he was buried in the churchyard.

The first building of Big Cane Baptist Church was built on the present site on land donated by Isaac R. Jackson, grandfather of John R. Jackson, Jr., in 1846. That church was burned by Miss Maud Jackson. Thus there has been a church on this hallowed ground for 120 years and the cemetery adjacent to it for almost as long, where members of many families rest in peace.

The church now under construction, built on laminated archways with double brick walls, will replace the old church built on a site on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. D. R. Talabas, lacking a church. Members began that night cleaning out a building formerly occupied by the O. Foster Store at Big Cane for use as a place of worship the following Sunday.

THROUGH USE of three school buses, the Talabas home for Sunday School classrooms and the Foster store building as a church, a full program of worship services and Sunday School classes since has been carried without interruption. School buses involved were those of Shirley L. Lowrey, Floyd Fogleman and Edward Pickett.

The Big Cane Baptist Church was received into the Louisiana Baptist Association in 1847. Four years later for the first time, in 1851, the church held its annual meeting. Among early pastors, besides the Rev. O'Quinn, were Rev. E. K. Branch, whose services were voluntary, and Rev. A. L. Boyd, a missionary who was paid $30.00 per month. Another John E. O'Quinn, a prominent early deacon and worker, lived in God's work and the church's service until July 19, 1966, following which he was buried in the churchyard.

Three other Baptist churches in St. Landry Parish have been started by Big Cane Church members through the years: on March 18, 1911, one group was formed in the town of St. Landry, and it has been serving the community with a program of worship services since then.

The new church, of modern architecture, is 40 by 90 feet in size, the exposed arches and beams rising to a peak of 30 feet above the floor of the nave, recessed double glass doors, with glass-in sides, will form the front entrance, Bible classrooms equal in size to the door's recession on either side, these rooms opening into the main auditorium through large folding doors. A balcony, for additional seating, will be built above the recessed door and these two rooms, illuminated through a part of the front wall with stained glass. Behind the Baptistry at the front of the nave, two other classrooms for adults, a dressing room, an office and the pastor's study. It will be built into the church, with the doors on opposite sides.

Erection of the new building on this 120-year-old location is under direction of Big Cane Baptist's building committee; W. Caldwell Fisher and Edward Pickett, co-chairmen; Mrs. Doris Fogleman and Leo Talabas. The women's Missionary Society is also active, at present in cleaning up after construction for seating. Many of the present older members remember both the old church and the bayou was a small community, and nearby residents. Some of it was used in an addition to the Louis Hicks' home and in construction of this.

This second church had a novel low partition installed down a center aisle and the usual custom of seating ladies and girls to the left of the partition, men and boys to the right. Families divided according to sex and age, and the seaters were beveled, adzed on one side, whipped sawed on the other and hand fitted into beveled grooves. lumber and timbers of this ancient building were salvaged from floated shingles, called boards, covering the roof, according to Charles C. Witty. He remembers it from attendance at services there as a small boy some 70 years ago. It had a small steeple at the front above the roof's apex, centered single front door and windows, covered by a small door above the building and two windows, covered by a small door above the building and two windows, covered by a small door above the building and two windows. It also contained a large, fully equipped kitchen and two baths.

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PEACEFUL, SYLVAN resting place of many former citizens of a wide area of northern St. Landry Parish is the century-old cemetery of Big Cane Baptist Church. In the portion of it shown here, with the modern church under construction on the 120-year-old site in the background, is the oldest identifiable grave, the above ground crypt directly beneath spreading limbs of a large pin-oak, burial place of an infant of the W. F. Swords family, dated March 6, 1856. Beyond in right background are headstones of Smith and Hudson families, while beneath pine lies Charles Deshotels Jr. Obelisk type memorial dated Dec. 1, 1890, marks grave of Morgan Waller Heath, while in right foreground are graves of Rena Heath Cole, Oct. 19, 1865-May 11, 1944; Nettie H. Foote, July 15, 1868-Aug. 31, 1951; William H. Haw, May 17, 1862-July 26, 1890 and wife Lulu M. Haw, July 21, 1864-Aug. 18, 1940. In the immediate foreground is the headstone of Victoria Poland, May 25, 1843-March 12, 1908. The leaning headstone in the left background before the cape jasmine is that of Evaline Scarborough, born in Lawrence County, Miss., Jan. 21, 1838; married John C. Dunbar Dec. 22, 1850; departed this earth Oct. 28, 1912. On the broken headstone partially hidden by azalea may be faintly read the Biblical quotation, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, saith the Spirit ——.”
and north and Lebeau to the southeast. It still runs for some
distance along the south bank of the bayou, just as it has for
scores of years. At right is scene of "Baptizing" in Bayou
Rouge's waters in front of church, made in 1917, looking down-
stream. Congregation lines south bank of bayou for ceremony,
while minister, assistant and candidate for baptism proceed
with it in the bayou. This was in the time of the first auto-
mobiles in the area, two examples of which may be seen at
right, parked alongside dirt road at top of bayou bank. Church
site is on right, across road from parked cars. Shadow of
moss-hung cypress reflected in the bayou shows time to be in
morning, since sun was in the east. Foliage of trees suggests
summer, as does dress discernible on persons shown. Styles
had changed little since left photo was made.
Old Time

(Continued from page 23)

and Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Fisher. They range in age from 90 down to 75 years. Mrs. Annie Afman, 92, of Morrow, nee Annie Jacobs at Big Cane, mother of Mrs. Katie Miller and for some years now a member of Morrow Baptist, is the eldest living former Big Cane member.

SOME YEARS after the Jackson donation of land for the first church, Judge Frank Vannoy donated an additional area for cemetery use and a strip on the west side of the church was purchased from the Summers.

Use of the cemetery at Big Cane Church was begun with burial of an infant of the W. F. Swords family in the spring of 1856. At least, the infant's grave is the oldest identifiable one, although there may be some older, unmarked. Rev. W. A. Derrington, born Sept. 15, 1861, died Aug. 14, 1906, is the only one of the church's former pastors buried there.

While names of families which have had a part in the church's activities down through the years appear often on tombstones (Viz: Jackson, Pickett, Foster, Hicks, Haw, Fisher, Vannoy and Toler, to name a few), the cemetery is really a community affair. Persons of all denominations have been interred in it. Church affiliation is no consideration therein. In the past there have been no restrictions in the cemetery and few reservations of burial sites. In its cemetery policy lies one of Big Cane Church's answers to the age-old religious query: "Am I my brother's keeper?".