2 First Graduates Recall How It Was in Breaux Bridge Then

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BREAUX BRIDGE — "We didn't have the things that children enjoy today, but we were happy and it is good to remember."

That is how the first two graduates of Breaux Bridge High School, class of 1908, feel about their school days.

The two graduates are Mrs. Nita Fourgeaud, Breaux Bridge librarian, and Mrs. Lucius (Mae) LeDoux.

The Breaux Bridge High School opened its doors in 1905, and by the time Mrs. Fourgeaud and Mrs. LeDoux graduated there were about 25 students. The first several graduating classes numbered two or three.

The school teachers at Breaux Bridge High School in those days all came from out of state and were trained at Peabody Teachers College in Nashville, Tenn.

"There were no Louisiana teachers available then. They were mostly from Tennessee, Kentucky and Texas and were trained at Peabody in Nashville," Mrs. LeDoux says.

Mrs. LeDoux remembers that it was "scary" in the first high school building when the wind blew. It was a rented two-story wooden frame building on Bridge St. near the railroad depot. When the wind blew everything would start to shake, rattle and roll in the rickety building.

Both women remember that the stairway to the second floor was on the outside of the building, and that the school was heated by a potbellied stove loaded with coal.

But those were the "good old days," they insist.

Taught by Nuns

Before the Breaux Bridge High School was established, Mrs. Fourgeaud says the nuns of the Perpetual Adoration order offered some high school courses at the St. Bernard Convent School, but it was impossible to obtain a high school diploma there. The name of the order has since been changed to the order of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Mrs. Fourgeaud completed her high school work in three years and Mrs. LeDoux had had a year of high school at the Mount Carmel Convent School in New Iberia before coming to Breaux Bridge to live.

"I was unhappy at first because I had always attended a convent school, and if Nita had not put her arm around me and made me feel at home, I wouldn't have finished high school," Mrs. LeDoux says.

"There was much less extracurricular activities than there are now; there were no commercial courses, no athletic program as there is now, and no musical instrument instruction. But we did have a glee club, a literary society, and much art," Miss Fourgeaud says, adding that there were only 11 grades then.

"We couldn't choose our subjects. Everyone took Latin and there was no French," Mrs. LeDoux says.

Before the opening of the high school, the convent school operated by the nuns received state funds and was considered a public school under the direction of the school board.

The first principal of the Breaux Bridge High School was Frank Hildebrand. He was a man who came from Pennsylvania to write a book. Part of his duties as principal was directing the glee club. Both Mrs. Fourgeaud and Mrs. LeDoux agree that he was a fine man.

The students of those days were like the ones of today in many ways, but there were no "juvenile delinquents," both ladies say. Some did play such pranks as putting pins on seats, but there was no serious trouble.

Both women remember how they and the other girls used to dress. They wore their hair long and big bows, and their dresses reached their ankles.

They also remember the town as it was then with its wooden sidewalks and muddy streets.

"There were a lot of things we did not have. We had a different standard of living. We were happy with what we had because we knew of nothing better," Mrs. Fourgeaud says.

Mrs. Fourgeaud is proud to point out that her late husband, Dr. Louis Fourgeaud, was a member of the school board and played an important part in establishing the high school. He later served as president of the school board.

Mrs. LeDoux points out that she has two daughters who also graduated from Breaux Bridge High School. Miss Marjorie LeDoux is now a librarian at the Louisiana State University Medical School library in New Orleans, and the other is Mrs. L. T. Ozio.

Both ladies are in perfect agreement that "it is good to remember about their school days and about how Breaux Bridge was then."