Beau Soleil
Broussard
A Driving Tour

Broussard, Louisiana
Bienvenue
à
Broussard
Welcome to Broussard

• An Acadian Settlement.
• Most historical places in one small community in the State of Louisiana.
• 1st Vigilante Committee.
• Home of the Annual Boudin Festival.
• Population 3,347.
• Fine educational facilities: one private, two public elementary.
• Sister city of Cap Pelé, New Brunswick, Canada.

Originally named Coté Gelee (frozen hills) because of its hilly ridge area and severe winter of 1784, Broussard was founded in 1884. It was named after Valsin Broussard, a prominent local merchant, who formed the first Vigilante Committee when his own store was robbed. Due to limited law enforcement, the Vigilante Committees were formed to protect local residents against organized groups of bandits ending on September 3, 1859, with Major Aurelien Saint Julien and seven hundred men leading the final victorious attack. Valsin Broussard was a direct descendant of Alexandre Broussard de Beau Soleil, one of the first 200 Acadians to arrive in Louisiana on February 27, 1765 aboard the Santa Domingo.

Although the town boasted of other prominent leaders after the Civil War such as Martial Billeaud, Joseph Girouard, Marcel Melancon, J. Gustave St. Julien and Jean Baptiste Malagarie; Valsin Broussard was most generous in donating property for the first church, cemetery, private and public school, the railroad depot and right of way for the railroad, streets and alleys. Because of his vision and generosity, the town was named after him when it was laid out in 1870.

The Broussard name came from Brosse or Brousse...meaning bushy head. One of the first and certainly most remembered were the Beau Soleil Brothers, Joseph Gaurhept and Alexandre.

One might say the town of Broussard’s history began in Acadie, Canada in the 1700's before the actual expulsion of the Acadians. The Beau Soleil Brothers lead the fight in Canada to keep their freedom to practice the Catholic Religion, their French language and their allegiance to their mother country, France.

In the early years, agriculture formed Broussard's economic foundation and cotton was the major crop with sugar cane gaining as a main crop.

Martial Francis Billeaud born in Borgeron, France is credited with introducing sugar cane to this area. A blacksmith as his father, he moved to Broussard from Vermillionville (present day Lafayette) and by 1890 he was a respected land owner having 1,300 acres and a large sugar mill and donated right of way for the railroad.

In 1866 Martial Billeaud began his first mule-driven crushing mill and open kettle cooking then later converted from syrup to sugar processing 400 tons of cane daily. The Billeaud Sugar Factory was incorporated in 1895 and was in full operation until March 10, 1979. The factory employed many Broussard residents and was the largest employer of German POW's in World War II. Remains of the dismantled mill can still be seen at the site (Hwy. 182) and great gears painted and placed on Billeaud property along Hwy. 90 serve as a colorful reminder of the old mill.

After the war, the Town of Broussard prospered having, a cotton gin, several small sugar mills, two hotels, a railway express and passenger depot.

Today, primary agricultural resources include sugar cane, soybean and hay production as well as horse and cattle farming. Principal industries consist of oil and gas service companies, wholesale food distributors, real estate development and manufacturing.

Broussard has gone from a horse and buggy community with large sugar cane plantation homes, to a current day industrial community with over 300 businesses. In Broussard's restaurants, experience charm and atmosphere of elegant and quaint dining, with Creole home cooking and Cajun food.

The people of Broussard are proud to have celebrated its centennial year and to visitors bid a fond Bienvenue (Welcome)!

Festivals/Events

Boudin Festival

Held annually three weeks prior to Mardi Gras. Festivities include the best music, food, and arts and crafts of the area. This festival is held in Arceneaux Park on Hwy. 182. Sponsored by the Broussard Jaycees.

Broussard Community Fair

This fair, held annually the weekend before Thanksgiving since 1933, is two days of fun for the whole family. There is plenty of music, arts and crafts, and games for the whole family to enjoy. This event is held on the grounds of Sacred Heart Church and St. Cecilia School, 200 West Main.

Broussard Heritage Festival

Held annually in the fall. This festival is highlighted by a gathering of Broussard family ancestors. Open to the public.

Broussard Christmas Parade

Annual parade with bands, floats, Santa Claus, and lots of fun. Main St., Broussard. Sponsored by organizations in Broussard.
West Main Street

1. Marcelle Melancon Home 638 West Main
   Built with cypress wood in 1830. Features full length porch and turned wood posts. Restored in early 1940's and recently renovated.

2. Lester Ducote Home 519 West Main
   This house was built in 1924 by Mr. and Mrs. John Reaux Sr. It has full length windows with gallery across entire front.

3. Denis Bernard Home 407 West Main
   Built in 1924 by Denis and Nina Bernard. It has French Acadian influence, full gallery, Doric column blocks of turned wood. Occupied by ancestors of Valsin Broussard.

4. Valsin Broussard Home 408 West Main
   Two story Anglo-American and French design. Built in 1976 by the founder of Broussard and still occupied by family members. He encouraged growth by donating property for the first church, cemetery, public school, Catholic school and train depot. [Featured on Front Cover]

5. W.J. Yongue Home 309 West Main
   Built in 1924 and restored in 1975. Bungalow type with stucco finish. Beautiful 200 year old oak trees grace the grounds.

6. St. Cecilia School 302 West Main
   This Catholic school was built in 1909 on property donated by Valsin Broussard (founder of the town). It was staffed by "Sisters of Divine Providence" of San Antonio, Texas from 1909-1975. Historical marker on site.

7. Charles Billeaud Home 303 West Main
   Victorian structure with semi-octagonal bay windows and expansive front galleries. Was used as a convent by Sisters of Divine Providence.

8. Sacred Heart Church 200 West Main
   Although a church was established in 1883, attempts at completing a parish failed for lack of interest until 1904. The original structure was destroyed in a scandalous fire involving an unpopular priest. The present day church (third) was built in 1956, and remodeled in 1985. Visit the gravesite of Valsin and his family in the center of the graveyard. Open to the public.

9. Ulysse Bernard Home 203 West Main
   Built in the late 1800's this house has numerous turn of the century features. There are large bay windows and beveled leaded glass doors.

10. Ducrest Home 203 West Main
    Built in 1903 by Lucien Ducrest, a local pharmacist who operated it for 35 years. Upon his death his son, also a pharmacist, bought and operated it for another 30 years. Remains a pharmacy today. For many years a portion of this structure served as a U.S. Post Office. Open to the public.

East Main Street

11. Andre Billeaud Home 203 East Main
    Built in 1903 and occupied by the Billeaud family until 1958. This two and a half story with 14 ceilings and 12 windows was also the site of the first public school. Occupied by William and Mildred McKnight in 1965 and operated as "Three Fold Studio" until 1989. Now operated as Kimboll's Catering and Maison Andre Billeaud Bed and Breakfast.

12. Alphonse Comeaux Home 208 East Main
    Built in 1910 by Eulalide Billeaud Comeaux, daughter of Martial Billeaud. Elaborate woodwork, balcony pediments in the entrance are finished with the "sunburst motif." Once served as a bank branch and is now refurbished by the ancestors. Inscription in rear side walk (1910 Mrs. Comeaux).

13. Paul Billeaud Home 202 East Main
    Built in 1911, this home is one of the largest and most flamboyant Victorian structures in Lafayette Parish. Several architectural styles, irregular floor plan and contrasting shapes combine to make this home both stately and whimsical.

14. Joseph Breaux Home 312 East Main
    Victorian structure built in the late 1890's, was extensively remodeled in the 1920's style. Remaining Victorian features are semi-octagonal bays on either side of the building.

15. Finaux Home 306 East Main
    Built in 1914, this house was restored in 1955. Having broad galleries, boxed columns on masonry pillars, it still belongs to Finaux ancestors.

East Madison Street

16. A.A. "Joe" Comeaux Home 205 East Madison
    Built in 1912, this bungalow style home features an unusual stucco and masonry railing around the front porch.

North Morgan Avenue

17. St. Julien Building 207 North Morgan
    Formerly a store, the building has been restored as the Lafayette County Courthouse.

18. Alesia 108 North Morgan
    Built by Hebert Billeaud for his wife Alice (for whom it was named) during the early 1900's. Rich in applied ornamentation. It is among the finest examples of Victorian residences in Lafayette Parish.

19. Martial Billeaud, Jr. Home 118 North Morgan
    Built in 1903 by a son of the founder of Billeaud Sugar Factory. It was the only house built with a basement and also features elaborate wood work, stained glass and leaded glass. Its third owner was Father John Kemps who used it as a retirement home until his death in 1982.

20. Janin Store 121 North Morgan
    Built in the late 1800's by Francis Janin of Frangy, France in partnership with his father-in-law, Joseph Grouard. After Janin's death in 1926 his family continued to operate the general store until the late 1960's. Now leased as Morgan Street Dance Studio.

21. Francois Janin Home 123 North Morgan
    This house was built in 1893 and although built at the same time, every room has a different height ceiling. Features solid cypress porch columns.

East Second Street

22. Edmond Comeaux Home 406 East Second
    Now Vive La Difference Restaurant. Built in 1908 and completely remodeled in 1979, this symmetrical Victorian home is a must to visit. Step back in time and enjoy a wonderful dining experience. Open to the public.

23. Marguerite Roy St. Julien Home 203 East Second
    Built in 1910 by the widow of Roy St. Julien, this home is nearly identical to the Edmond Comeaux Home next door where her daughter lived. After five owners, the home was donated to the Lafayette Council on Aging and is now a Senior Citizens Activity Center and used for wedding receptions. Now named La Belle Maison. Open to the public.

*Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Photography by Larry Blanchard
History by Marcie Duhon
Map by Grooms Engineering
Attractions

Zoo of Acadiana
One mile from Highway 90 and 182 intersection. Located on 25 acres of tree covered country side among century old oak trees. See animals in their natural habitat at one of the world’s most unique zoos. For more information, call (318) 837-4325.

Dining

Chef's Fried Chicken 401 N. Morgan Ave.
Choplin's Seafood Steakhouse 517 E. Main St.
Jo's 107 N. Morgan Ave.
Norbert's Highway 90 E.
One Little Pizza/Donuts 103 E. Main St.
Poor Boys Riverside Inn 240 Tubing Rd.
Ton's 101 W. Main St.
Vive La Difference 406 E. Second St.

Accommodations

Bel-Air Motel
815 E. Main
Broussard, LA 70518
(318) 837-6631

Maison Andre Billeaud Bed & Breakfast
203 E. Main St.
Broussard, LA 70518
(318) 837-3455

Maxie's Mobile Valley Overnight Camping
4150 Hwy. 90 E.
Broussard, LA 70518
(318) 837-6200

For More Information Contact:

Town of Broussard
612 East Main St.
Broussard, LA 70518
(318) 837-6681

(318) 232-3808
(800) 346-1958 U.S.
(800) 543-5340 Canada

The Capital of French Louisiana
Convention and Visitors Commission
Post Office Box 52066 • Lafayette, Louisiana 70505