Beau Soléil Broussard
A Driving Tour
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 schools
- Sister city of Cap-Haitien, New Brunswick, Canada

Originally named Côte Gélee (frozen hill) because of its hilly ridge area and severe winter of 1788, Broussard was founded in 1844. It was named after Vasin 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 Mayor Aurelien Saint Julien and 700 men leading the final victorious attack. Vasin Broussard was a direct descendant of Alexandre Broussard de Beau-Soleil (pretty sun), 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 Mortar Billeaud, Joseph Grisham, Marcel Melanson, J. Guislain St. Julien, and Jean Baptiste Malgarey, Vasin 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 comes from Brouse or Brousse...meaning bushy head. One of the first and certainly most remembered were the Beau Soleil Brothers, Joseph Gauthier and Alexandre.

One might say the town of Broussard’s history began in Acadia, Canada in the 1700s 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 Borgneut, France, is credited with introducing sugar cane to this area. A blacksmith as his father, he moved to Broussard from Vermilionville (present day Lafayette) and by 1885, he was a respected land owner having 1,500 acres and a large sugar mill and donated right of way for the railroad.

In 1886, Martial Billeaud began his first mulatto sugar mill and open kettle cooking. He 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 POWs in World War II. Remains of the dismantled mill can still be seen at the site (Hwy. 192) 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 home 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 Arnaud Park on Hwy. 192. Sponsored by a non-profit organization.

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 food, 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 Christmas Parade
Annual parade rolls down Main Street in December with bands, floats, Santa Claus, and lots of fun. Sponsored by organizations in Broussard.