Cypremort recollections stir more memories

SAM WALKER's recollections last week of the Cypremort community and of Cypremort Point stirred several memories, as did a mis-recollection.

Sam remembered the family that ran the old sugar mill as the Bourgeois family, but was the first to call to make the correction: It was the Burguieres family, not Bourgeois.

HAROLD JUNCA, now of Lafayette, was one of the men who purchased that mill in 1963, but he and his partners couldn't get enough cane to grind and eventually sold it to the Patout family.

Harold says the old Burguieres family home is still at the Cypremort community, as is the old commissary building — long closed.

In the early 1940s, he worked at Walker's Restaurant, which may have been the first at Cypremort Point. It was up the road from where the Bayview is now, near the bridge that crosses the little canal at the point, and had bathhouses and a long pier extending into Vermilion Bay.

Harold was a lifeguard at the pier and so was BARBARA DUMESNIL DelaHOUS-SAYE's brother. She lives in Crowley now, but was reared at Glencoe and remembers the area from her youth.

She says that, before it was dammed off, Cypremort Bayou ran from Bayou Teche to Cypremort Point, and "the whole area along the bayou was known as Cypremort."

She also remembers two "very old" people known to her only as "Payee" and "Aunt Harriet," who lived at the point. Both of them were former slaves and "over 100" when they told her stories of how the Union soldiers came up Bayou Cypremort and occupied the Bonvillain family home at Home Place plantation.

Hollywood found the point in the late 1930s. Barbara said that she remembers one of her cousins coming in from a fishing trip out into the bay and being invited to act as an extra in the 1938 movie "The Buccaneer," which was the story of JEAN LAFITTE and the Battle of New Orleans.

In those days, the point probably did look a good deal more like the wilds of Grand Terre, the island below New Orleans that served as Lafitte's headquarters.

"Today, it doesn't look at all like it did when we were children," Barbara said. "In fact, it doesn't look at all like we'd grown up."

(Jim Bradshaw is a columnist for The Advertiser. He can be reached at 289-6315 by fax at 289-6443, or by e-mail at jbradshaw@theadvertiser.com.)
She's younger than Sam and remembers camps belonging to a number of well-known families, many from the Jeanerette area, at the point in the middle 1930s. By that time, there was "something like a road" going to the point, but it was hardly more than a dirt track winding through the trees, she said.

The Intracoastal Canal had been built by the time both Harold and Barbara arrived on the scene, or at least were old enough to remember it. Harold remembers a ferry crossing the waterway. Barbara remembers a wooden bridge tended by a Mr. Rawlins.

There was a railroad section house at Florence, near Louisa, where L.E. THIBODEAUX and his family lived, Barbara remembers.

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