Founder of Abbeville 1/27/1977

By LLOYD DORE, JR.

Abbeville High School

Rev. Monsignor Antoine Desire Megret, or l'Abbe Megret, as French priests are called, was born in Abbeville, France. Little is known of his early life, when he was ordained to the priesthood, or when he came to Louisiana as a priest in the Diocese of New Orleans.

In 1842, he was appointed pastor of the Catholic Church of St. John the Evangelist, at Vermilionville, as the present city of Lafayette was then called. The church properties and financial affairs were in the hands and under the control of a board of directors, called "marguillers," consisting of seven members. This board was very authoritative and at times very annoying to Father Megret as they had been to his predecessors. As soon as Father Megret arrived, they showed their displeasure at being sent a Frenchman as a pastor, instead of a native born American. They threatened to reduce his salary and even told him to pack his trunk and leave. Father Megret declared that he was independent of their authority and subject only to the Bishop. He promised, that if persecution was not stopped, he would quit their church and build another over which they could not set foot as wardens.

Matters came to a climax, according to Father Megret, when, as he was on the street, a ruffian came up to him, hurled foul and slanderous insults at him. The ruffian then beat him in the presence of a number of people, and the chairman of the marguillers, who, it was rumored, had paid the ruffian fifty dollars for the beating.

Father Megret promptly stopped paying Mass there, and devoted his time to his missions. One of these missions was at Perry's Bridge. He went to Mr. Robert Perry, who owned the land, and around Perry's Bridge, and asked him to give a suitable site whereon to build a church. Mr. Perry pointed out to him a low, marshy spot, and told him he could build his church there. Father Megret refused the site and sought one further north on the property of Mr. Joseph LeBlanc. Mr. LeBlanc suggested to him that he buy his place, that if he did not have the money to pay for it, he would sell it on terms of credit. This he accepted and on July 25th, 1843, l'Abbe Antoine Desire Megret purchased a tract of land in the Parish of Lafayette, (now Vermilion) on the Bayou Vermilion, measuring four arpents on the bayou, by forty arpents deep, with all improvements thereon. The consideration was $900.00, payable $400.00 in twelve months, and $500.00 in eighteen months. The land bought is that portion of the Town of Abbeville, lying between St. Victor Street on the north, and Lafayette Street on the south, and extending from Bayou Vermilion to the public road on the eastern limits of Abbeville.

He converted the residence of Mr. LeBlanc into a church and presbytery, and lived there, free from the troublesome and disgraceful rule of the marguillers. He plotted the land which he had bought into town lots and named it Abbeville, after the city of his birth. He began to sell the lots and Mr. LeBlanc was soon paid.

In 1845 he began the construction of a church which was completed in December of that year. The church was built where the present Catholic Church now stands, and placed under the patronage of St. Mary Magdalen. He then transferred to the Diocese of New Orleans, the church and the lots on which it stood. This church was destroyed by a storm in 1856.

In 1846, when the people of Vermilionville saw what Father Megret was doing in Abbeville and fearing that the lake road in Vermilionville would be abandoned, they summoned l'Abbe Megret back to Vermilionville and presented him with a deed transferring the property of the parish to the Bishop of New Orleans thus ending the rule of the marguillers.

From then on, Father Megret directed the attention and time between Abbeville and Vermilionville. He resigned the position of pastor but remained on duty pending the appointment of his successor.

In the fall of 1855, a yellow fever epidemic swept this section, and Father Megret attended to the endless sick calls and funerals. He contracted the disease and was one of the last to die of it on December 5th, 1855. He was buried at Abbeville but after his body was transferred to Vermilionville and it rests today under the main altar of the Cathedral at Lafayette.

Steamboat Era in Vermilion

By LENIS MOSS

Henry High School

This information is about the large steamboats which used to travel up and down the bayous of Vermilion. The chief method of transportation during these days was by steamboat. Many of them were held together by pegs instead of nails. They were used for heavy loads. The red-cypress logs were being carried to New Orleans and other towns to be sawed up. Large cargoes of passengers were taken aboard.

These boats came down from the Mississippi and pushed through the Gulf up to Schooner Bayou. From there, they traveled the Vermilion until Perry or Abbeville was reached, where they unloaded their cargoes of finished clothing, flour, and furniture. Corn, cotton, wood, and sugarcane were traded in turn for their loads.

The steamboats were the cause of the growth of Abbeville. When Abbeville first started it was just a small cow town. Horses were used along the roads and cars were not known then.

These steamboats were very large and powerful. They were powered by steam engines, which were connected to the paddle wheels. The paddle wheels were connected to the paddle wheel. The water would churn in the back of the steamboats and the labor was hard and dirty. The men were not paid well and the machinery would often break down in the middle of a long voyage. This would slow down transportation.

Many passengers were on these boats, and some lasted the whole voyage. Beverages of all kinds were brought aboard, and the end of the voyage found all the bottles empty. These boats also carried a market for the distant markets, where cattle could be sold. The shipping companies became rich at the top of the freight and the chief method of transportation was by steamboat.

Large homes were built along the bayous from Abbeville to Lafayette. Most of the houses then were built along bayous at that time, because the bayous were the chief method of transportation.

Large steamboats were used to load these boats which required a day to load. A voyage only to New Orleans would require from two to four weeks, because of the long journey. Many times these large boats would go up small bayous and take sugar cane and other goods, made by the people of Jeanerette and other towns, along the way.
Superstitions of South Louisiana

By JULIA APPLE
Perry Junior High School

Louisiana is a place where "wise-saying" superstitions and "treatments" mostly from the French. There is hardly a part of the Southwestern Louisiana's life that doesn't have superstition connected to it.

One of the most common superstitions is to throw a coin on the floor of a horse and then you will have good luck. There are also some treatments that will bring you good luck. Take a day off to look at four leaves on a horse and you will have good luck.

Old people believe in "trash". If you are not fortunate enough to have a wart, just take water from a hollie and put it on your wart. It will disappear. If you fall in both directions, you might go looking for a rabbit to kill so you can save one of the few dollars you have. You will then have your share of good luck.

There are also many superstitions that will bring you good luck. Take a day off to look at four leaves on a horse and you will have good luck. If you fall in both directions, you might go looking for a rabbit to kill so you can save one of the few dollars you have. You will then have your share of good luck.

Vermin Gold Pot

Published by The Times, a ten grade public high school, this essay was one of the winners in the essay contest.

It was during the days before drainage was made when a great portion of the Vermin parish was still under water. It was said that Mr. Boulie Stelly, the sheriff of the parish, was walking along the bank of a river with a large box with his name on it. He was looking for a place to dig for gold. He found a great deal of gold and he brought it up to the sheriff. He said that he had found it in the bottom of a river. He then said that he would go looking for more.

He found a great deal of gold and he brought it up to the sheriff. He said that he had found it in the bottom of a river. He then said that he would go looking for more.

Most of these exercises were taken over by the night of the light by the lanterns. They had as much equipment as the other hunters, and they used it as the name implies. It was used during the night for the purpose of detecting any gold material. Whenever it struck something, it was used to make the wrong. There was no man who could find more than two things, and those were the only things that were more famous than others. There was the inevitable place known as the "Evil Place." There were many things such as lights, sights, and sounds that were seen and heard. Countess people went there whenever these crew were digging-just to see and hear-to satisfy their curiosity. From these exercises come these tales. Long-horned cattle moving at their utmost speed and noise, same charging from unforeseen places ready to charge upon the intruders. To vanish at the slightest spoken word or scream. Beautiful women seen descending upon the clouds; black and white, a voice spoke strange words as the air filled with the wind. A voice could be heard, "I am John Fontenou from Pine Prairies." At another place, the "whistle" was famous. When these crew would go down the road with the intention of digging, the whistler would be heard a mile off, the whistle was the same doleful whistle forever. When the digging was in progress, the whistle would be heard. While the digging was in progress, the whistle would be heard. In the particular part of the parish, it was heard walking around. In the particular part of the parish, it was heard walking around.

There is a place where a huge fish was found. It was in a grove of pecan trees. It was believed that at one time, a fish was found there. It was found in the water and the blood in the fish's veins would chill. It was in a place where a huge fish was found. It was in a grove of pecan trees. It was believed that at one time, a fish was found there. It was found in the water and the blood in the fish's veins would chill.

The only faithful searches, as he had many friends, were his many friends. Maybe he had found the fabulous fame of his treasures were to create, he could have undertaken a few perilous trips to the marshland where the treasure had buried a few trunkfuls of his loved Spanish treasures.

Source of information: Mr. Clevon Dell, Lebeau, sixty-seven years old, always of the Vermin parish. He got his information from his grandfather, who was a pirate, and a seaman of these tales.