This booklet Leesburg 1870 to Cameron 1970 would never have been without the cooperation and assistance of many people, too numerous to mention individually. Yet it would be a grave injustice not to name those several people whose efforts in securing, collecting and validating information went beyond the expected—Mrs. Charles Rogers, Mrs. Hubert Smith, Mr. and Mrs. H. Ward Fontenot and Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Hebert. The cover was drawn especially for us by Robert J. Schwark. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation are extended to each of you.

Much of the material used in writing this history was obtained from senior citizens of Cameron with the remainder taken from Cameron Parish Pilot clippings of articles written by the late Archie S. Hollister and Mrs. Bernice H. Stewart, articles from the Lake Charles American Press, Cameron Parish Resources and Facilities magazine, and J. J. Vincent's book A Streak O' Lean and a Streak O' Fat.

The information contained herein was assembled for its historical value and your entertainment as you ride with us through the streets of Cameron in the year of its one hundredth birthday.

Mrs. Braxton Blake
Tour Booklet Chairman
Cameron Home Demonstration Club
ITINERARY
CAMERON PARISH HOME DEMONSTRATION COUNCIL
HOMEMAKERS TOUR
CAMERON, LOUISIANA

8:15 A. M. - Assemble at Cameron Recreation Center to visit, have coffee and some of Roberta's teacakes.

9:00 A. M. - Board buses at center.

A. **HEADING EAST** (out of town)
   1. Cameron Full Gospel Tabernacle
   2. First Baptist Church
   3. Cameron State Bank
   4. Masonic Temple
   5. Cameron Parish Library
   6. Cameron Elementary School
   7. Old Cemetery
   8. Site of William Laurents homeplace
   9. Wakefield Memorial United Methodist Church
  10. Wakefield Memorial United Methodist Church Cemetery
  11. George Wakefield homeplace, now owned by J. A. Davis
  13. Cameron Parish Health Unit
  14. Rogers-Kelley Cemetery
  15. Site of Daniel W. and Georgiana Rogers Kelley homeplace
  16. Site of John Eagleson homeplace

B. **DEWEY STREET** - the road leaving the public highway and winding through Rogers subdivision to the school board building. The street was named for Theodore "Dewey" Rogers, now deceased, who donated the land for the street.
   1. Cameron Parish School Board office building

C. **HEADING EAST** (out of town)
   1. Cameron Construction Company, Inc.
   2. Site of Thomas Bonsall, Jr. homeplace
   3. Site of Cameron Power and Light Company, Inc.

D. **BEACH ROAD** (traveling south)
   1. Site of John Marcelceus Peshoff Boarding House and Resort

E. ** BROUSSARD'S BEACH ROAD** - the road that turns east at the dead end and was named for S. D. Broussard.
   1. Site of Broussard's Hotel
   2. Old Cemetery

F. **BEACH ROAD** (traveling west)
   1. Site of World War II Tower
   2. Site of Theogene Miller homeplace
   3. Old Cemetery

G. ** RATCLIFF STREET** - Mrs. Carlos Ratcliff and Mrs. Henry Ratcliff, sisters who inherited the property from their father John Peshoff, named the street.
   1. Site of George Zero, Sr. homeplace
H. SING'S ROAD - Milford 'Sing' Rogers owns this property and donated the right-of-way for the road; thus the name "Sing".
   1. Site of Captain Milford Rogers homeplace

I. ISAAC STREET - named for Isaac Peshoff, one of the John Marceleus Peshoff heirs. This area is inhabited by Negroes and is called the Abraham 'Black' Peshoff Subdivision.
   1. Macedonia Baptist Church
   2. Evening Star Church of God in Christ

J. HEADING EAST (out of town)
   1. Site of Captain James Hansen homeplace
   2. Catholic Shrine
   3. Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church
   4. Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church Cemetery and Mausoleum
   5. Jefferson Davis Electric Cooperative, Inc. office building
   6. John S. Grunik homeplace and store site
   7. Numa Nunez homeplace, now owned by Mrs. Dorothy Sells Bourgeois
   8. Site of John Sells homeplace

L. PARISH ROAD 353
   1. Peshoff Cemetery
   2. Site of Edward Peshoff homeplace
   3. Site of Howard School

L. OLD CREOLE ROAD heading east
   1. Tom and Molly Marshall homeplace
   2. Site of Adam Daigle homeplace
   3. Site of Christopher Columbus Chadwell homeplace
   4. Site of Savoie School

M. JIMMY SAVOIE'S ROAD south to Front Ridge Road, making the loop, then west on Front Ridge Road.
   1. St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church
   2. St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church Cemetery
   3. Site of old "Swinging Gate"
   4. Willow Island
   5. Ebenezer Baptist Church
   6. Ebenezer Baptist Church Cemetery
   7. First Baptist Church Cemetery
   8. Site of Alexis Daigle homeplace

N. DAVIS ROAD - is named for James Austin Davis who owns the property and donated the road.
   1. Roland J. Trosclair Canning Company

O. JETTY ROAD - the road that leads to the jetties and for a short distance parallels them.
   1. Site of old Biological Station
   2. "The Oaks"
   3. Monkey Island
   4. Site of Jessie J. Rogers Gulf Hotel
   5. United States Coast Guard Station
   6. Old Cemetery
   7. Site of old lighthouse
8. Site of old ferry landing connecting Monkey Island to Holly Beach
9. World War II gun battery site

P. BACK TO THE RECREATION CENTER FOR A BOX LUNCH

Q. MARSHALL STREET (main street) - was named in honor of George C. Marshall who owned the property and left it by will to his second wife Mary Debleux and his daughter Georgia Mae, who executed a right-of-way to the Cameron Parish Police Jury for the street.
   1. Calcasieu-Marine National Bank
   2. Old jailhouse
   3. Adam Roux homeplace, now owned by J. Ashburn Roux
   4. Cameron Drug Store
   5. Cameron Medical Center
   6. United States Custom House

R. STINE ALLEY - the alley going north from Marshall Street to the Cameron Hotel was donated by William Stine, father of John Whitney Stine, who was assessor of Cameron Parish for 24 years, and now deceased. It is only 20 feet wide.
   1. Cameron Hotel

S. REX STREET - named in honor of the stern-wheeler "Borealis Rex" which landed at the end of the street and provided the only means of transportation between Cameron and Lake Charles for several years. It was previously called Rex's Landing.
   1. Steed's Fish Company, Inc.
   2. Old ferry landing site
   3. The Rex and other sea-going vessels
   4. Site of old cotton gin

T. P. E. SMITH CIRCLE - is very often referred to as "the courthouse square".
   1. Site of old Cameron post offices
   2. Site of Cameron's first school
   3. Site of courthouse and jail
   4. Caleb B. Jones homeplace
   5. Dr. Isaac Bonsall homeplace on Henry Street
   6. The "Old Henry Home" (S. P. Henry Estate)
   7. Skelly Oil Company
   8. Site of Thomas E. Gee homeplace
   9. Hebert Theriot homeplace
   10. Cameron's first cemetery
   11. Site of old "Red Store"

U. HEADING WEST (out of town)
   1. Pure Ice Company
   2. Cameron Ferry No. 1
   3. Cher-Ami Seafood Company, Inc.
   4. Site of Civil War battle
   5. Site of Civil War Hospital and Cemetery
   6. Airport
   7. Gulf Menhaden Company
   8. Cameron Ferry No. 2
   9. Cowpen
V. WAKEFIELD ROAD - donated by J. A. Davis and named in memory of James A. Wakefield.
1. The Barge Terminal, Inc.
2. Louisiana Menhaden Company, Inc.

V. BACK TO P. E. SMITH CIRCLE
1. Cameron Parish Courthouse to view time capsule
2. Courthouse Annex - tour, have cokes and cookies, announce raffle winners and award door prizes

X. WALK TO RECREATION CENTER FOR CARS

Y. ODDS AND ENDS
1. The Ned Harvey Episode researched and written by H. Ward Fontenot

Z. BOOKS IN THE CAMERON PARISH LIBRARY mentioning Cameron or Cameron Parish

Curving Shore, Leonard Ormerod

Louisiana, a Guide to the State, Writers Program, Louisiana

Here is South Louisiana, Frances Love

Streak O' Lean and a Streak O' Fat, J. J. Vincent

One Mile An Hour, William J. Teurlings

Cameron Parish Resources and Facilities, Cameron Parish Development Board

Prehistoric Indian Settlements of the Changing Mississippi River Delta, William G. McIntire

Atlantic Hurricanes, Gordon Dunn

Early Calcasieu Doctors, Maude Reid

Favorite Recipes from Grand Chenier Kitchens

Trapping, Harold McCracken

History of the Acadians, Bona Arsenault

History of Public Education in Cameron Parish, Wilmer Smith

Geography of Cameron Parish, Archie Hollister

Golden Coast, Harnett T. Kane

Southwest Louisiana Biographical and Historical, William H. Perrin
A unique, mysterious and beautiful land is the chenier country of Southwest Louisiana. Here vast sea marshes stretch away to the limits of sight, and sluggish rivers and lakes wind their way to the Gulf of Mexico. The terrain slopes so gently that even to the experienced observer the surface from horizon to horizon is as still as an inland lake on the stillest day of the year—with one exception. Long, parallel ridges rise above the marshes. These ridges are cheniers, the ancient and stranded sea-beaches upon which we have built our homes, our farms and our businesses.

Cameron is considered one of the younger cheniers with its beach line being only about 1,200 years old. Actually the cheniers comprise only a small portion of land, the remainder given to extensive sea marshes.

We will probably never know who the first white settler was to set foot in Cameron, and very little is known of the Indian tribes who lived here prior to the white man. From artifacts and the burial mounds found in the area, it has been established that the Attakapas (man-eaters) tribe flourished in the area at one time. However little is known of their fate.

A survey of the 1860 census shows names that are largely Anglo-Saxon and Scotch-Irish in origin. Families came from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Maine, Ohio, Massachusetts and Vermont. An interesting feature of the 1860 census is the large percentage of population that were foreigners. A list of the birth places of these men sounds like a roll call of the nations of northern and western Europe.

Considering this, it is understandable that union sentiment was strong in this area at the beginning of the Civil War. However, the rebel cause was supported and battles were fought and won at Leesburg. Federal gunboats patrolled the Calcasieu River.

War has not been the only source of peril to the people of Cameron. Hurricanes, tornados, high water and thunderstorms have devastated Cameron's coast through the years. The postmaster of Cameron, Don Wagner, is in possession of Frank Leslie's New York Weekly newspaper's October 30, 1886 vivid account of a hurricane that whipped through Johnson's Bayou. The storm took 85 lives, and although the town of Cameron is not specifically mentioned, it is evident that Cameron did suffer severe damage also.

We learn of the condition of Cameron Parish after a storm in 1915 through the Lake Charles American Press of August 18 of that year, which informed its readers "Considerable property damage was done, but no lives lost. The water was ten feet deep at the light house."

From the Lake Charles American Press dated August 21, 1918, comes the report that "The governor was greatly impressed with the destruction of the many homes in that parish (Cameron), but was pleased to learn that the people were not discouraged and were getting their affairs in shape rapidly, all seeming to be in good spirits".

Brutal hurricane "Audrey", on June 27, 1957, struck Cameron Parish with a force that was nearly fatal. Over 500 lives were lost and millions of dollars in property damage was left in her wake. A small percentage of
Cameronites moved never to return. The rest remained, with heavy hearts, but with a strength, a courage and a determination to prove that Cameron could withstand and survive that staggering blow. Thus, we not only point with pride to the dignified old buildings, but also to our modern churches and schools, our lovely new homes, the new parish library, the city water system; even the torn-up streets which indicate the laying of the new sewerage system.

We desert our town when warned of an approaching hurricane, for the scars that some of us carry are deep; but we have learned that we are made of the similar virtues that allowed our ancestors to survive and enjoy the bounty of the waters and the marshes, the products of a rich soil, and the glow of a comradship that is still Cameron’s today.
A dream was beginning to materialize when Mrs. Annie Bonsall Granger signed a fifteen year land lease to the Cameron Optomist Club January 1, 1959.

The Cameron Optomist Club, organized in 1958 and headed by Conway LeBleu, proposed recreational facilities housed in a 12' x 12' building.

The next proposal was for a 60' x 120' community recreation center; it was adopted. Letters soliciting donations were mailed to individuals and to businesses in the area. Approximately $8,000.00 was raised. This was a beginning—a very good beginning—but that was not enough money. Private individuals signed personal notes at the bank to get the rest of the funds for complete construction of the building.

A ground-breaking ceremony was held in March 1959 with Dr. Cecil W. Clark, Sheriff O. B. Carter, C. A. "Buster" Rogers, Diel G. LaLande and Conway LeBleu participating in the program.

Civic organizations of Cameron joined with the Cameron Optomist Club for many years in sponsoring the on-shore festivities for the Southwest Louisiana Tarpon Rodeo. The bank notes were paid with the proceeds from the rodeo, and the building is free of debt.

The $40,000.00 recreation center is air-conditioned and features a fully equipped kitchen, ice making machine, rest rooms, tables and chairs.

A-1. CAMERON FULL GOSPEL TABERNACLE

This church began in 1952 when Reverend Rene Saltzman, pastor of the Full Gospel Church of Big Lake, came to Cameron in the hopes of starting a church here. He found a small bank of people and began prayer meetings in the home of Burnell J. Nunez, Sr. Within a short time, the congregation grew to about forty and services were moved to the courtroom of the Cameron Parish Courthouse.

Later the congregation moved to a building belonging to J. Arsand LeBleu situated on the corner of Ann Street and Highway 27. Regular services were not held as no pastor was assigned to this church. Ministers came and went as possible.

In 1963, Reverend Junius Parfait came to pastor the church in its present location at the corner of Harper and Franklin Streets; John Henson came in 1965 and Albert Dufrene in 1968. The church now boasts a congregation of about eighty.

A-2. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Miss Vena Aguillard of Eunice, Louisiana, was appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention to serve as missionary to the French speaking people of south Louisiana. While vacationing in Cameron at the John Marcelleus Peshoff Boarding House in 1925, she spoke of Christ to many,
thereby earning for herself—according to some—merit as one of the first ministers for the Baptist faith.

Reverend Eugene Broussard began coming to Cameron in 1933, holding prayer meetings in homes or services in the Cameron Parish Courthouse. After the Methodist Church was built, some Baptist families attended worship there. On many occasions, J. A. Davis would ride "up the ridge" and pick up anyone desiring to attend services.

Baptist families in Cameron realized the need for a house of worship; however funds were not readily available. Rev. L. C. Smith, French missionary to south Louisiana, recognized this need also and spoke of it to the Louisiana Woman's Missionary Union. This group donated $1,000.00 toward the purchase of a lot and construction of a church building. During the early months of 1940, the Cameron Baptist Church was built and in April of that year, dedicated by Rev. Eugene Broussard, elected pastor, and Rev. L. C. Smith.

Revival services were immediately begun with Rev. Smith Officiating. During these services, 36 people united with the church and in so doing became charter members. The new converts were baptised in the Calcasieu River at Cameron or the Mermentau River at Grand Chenier.

During the pastorate of Rev. W. Z. Lewis, the name Cameron Baptist Church was changed to First Baptist Church. In 1957, Hurricane Audrey destroyed the church property. With the help of christians throughout the country, the property and home belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Welch was purchased for a new parsonage site and construction on the new church began. It was dedicated March 30, 1958, by Rev. L. C. Smith.

This church has been blessed in many different ways. Its membership has grown from the original 36 charter members to over 300. Three of its young men were ordained into the ministry—Wallace Primeaux, Jr., Kenneth Harris and Malcolm Sharp.

The former Dottie Mae Primeaux and her husband, Baptist minister Herman P. Hayes, were appointed foreign missionaries in 1959. They are presently serving their third four-year term in war-torn Viet Nam.

A-3. CAMERON STATE BANK

Saturday morning January 15, 1966, "Miss Cameron Parish", Susan Kornegay (Mrs. Tommy Watts) snipped a ribbon of dollar bills and the new bank officially opened. The opening coincided with the annual Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival.

The building was designed by Hackett and Bailey, Lake Charles architects. Dyson Lumber and Supply Company of Cameron constructed the $100,000.00 air-conditioned structure which features an attractive glass front, terrazzo floors, a drive-in window, night depository and off the street parking.

Since the opening of the parent bank, branches have been constructed and are being operated in Creole, Grand Chenier and Hackberry.
A-4. MASONIC TEMPLE

During early World War II Thurston Williams, a Mason and soldier stationed at Monkey Island in Cameron started a drive to have meetings among local Masons who belonged to other lodges.

These meetings in 1941-42 were first held in the Courthouse and later in the Wakefield Methodist Church. At this time, Cameron was the only Louisiana parish without a Masonic Lodge. With encouragement from the Grand Lodge and area Masons on September 26, 1946, the Cameron Masonic Club, Inc. was formed to do business. F. B. Kennedy was President; J. A. Davis, Vice-President and Thomas W. Steed, Secretary-Treasurer.

This club was active until a charter in the name of Cameron Lodge No. 439, F. & A. M. was issued in 1952 when the Grand Lodge laid the cornerstone for the lodge building, dedicated the lodgeroom and granted a charter under dispensation in one and the same communication. The Grand Lodge was opened and closed by the Grand Master Oliver H. Debezies on the boat which brought the dignitaries from Lake Charles.

In 1956 the mortgage on the building was burned and in 1960 Cameron had the distinction of hosting a meeting between the Grand Master of North Carolina, Harvey Smith, and the Grand Master of Louisiana, Frank Brown.

A-5. CAMERON PARISH LIBRARY

The dedication of Cameron Parish's new library in memory of the hundreds of residents who lost their lives in Hurricane Audrey was held June 27, 1958.

It was a big occasion for all concerned—the Louisiana Jaycees, the Louisiana State Library and the people of Cameron Parish. The Jaycees raised more than $13,000 in a nationwide drive to construct the library and the state library operated the library free of charge for two years.

Eraste Hebert, President of the Cameron Parish Police Jury at that time, cut the ribbon opening the building; Harry D. Crosby, Jaycee chairman of the library project, and Ralph Hanks installed a metal plaque in memory of Audrey's dead.

Naturally the Home Demonstration Club women were on hand to serve coffee, punch and cookies they made for this special occasion.

Donald Broussard served as librarian in July and August 1958. Miss Lily McGehee assumed the librarianship until November 15, 1958, when she was replaced by Mrs. Mary Brand.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Brand, the library increased its facilities and services. In 1964 the building was enlarged to include 3,000 square feet for additional storage and working space. New furnishings were also purchased.

In addition to the standard service of checking out books and magazines, patrons can borrow LP recordings, art reproductions for home use, and home demonstration materials.
stereo tapes, film-strips and even a record player is available. A bookmobile services the other communities in the parish on a regular route.

The library has recently begun collecting important records available on microfilm. These may be read by patrons on the microfilm reader-printer.

The present librarian is Miss Coral Lee Crain, who replaced Mrs. Brand August 11, 1969.

A-6. CAMERON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The school was moved to this site after two acres of land were purchased from Charles Eagleson on July 28, 1915, for the sum of $200.

The two room school began its first session in September 1915 with 75 pupils. F. B. Kennedy was the principal and Nelly Temple was the only other teacher.

Several additions were made to the original wood-frame structure in the years that followed. In 1938 three acres were added to the school yard by a purchase from J. A. Davis. The extra land was badly needed for playground area.

After the school was damaged by Hurricane Audrey, the present building was constructed. It is made of brick and rests on concrete piling above the flood stage level of Hurricane Audrey. There are 14 rooms with an additional kindergarten building located next to the Cameron Parish Library. There are 382 pupils, a principal, 17 teachers and 1 kindergarten aid. Four persons made up the lunchroom staff and there is 1 janitor.

A music room and a library are being added to the main building. The new brick structure now under construction is the auditorium. Five acres of land were leased from J. A. Davis for the entire expansion program. In September, four new teachers will be added and Cameron Elementary School will be integrated for the first time.

A-7. OLD CEMETERY

At the present school site, there was a Catholic Church and a small cemetery. The only known names of dead buried there were members of a Richard family. These graves were moved away by other family members.

A-3. WILLIAM LAURENTS HOMEPLACE

William and Annie Jones Laurents (sister to Caleb B. Jones) bought this property in 1900 from John M. McCall and Mary Suttles and brought their four boys here to live. Their home was a large one and a half story building with dormer windows and shaded by beautiful oak trees.

William Laurents was Parish Assessor in 1889, Custom House officer in 1900, Parish Treasurer and School Board Treasurer from 1902 to 1904.
Three of their sons chose to make their homes in Texas after marriage, but W. H. "Jum" Laurents was Clerk of Court here from 1906 to 1910. Annie Jones Laurents lived here until her death March 26, 1938. Two years later the house was destroyed by fire. The homeplace consisting of twelve acres was bought by W. J. Broussard in August 1943 and part of it was subdivided into lots.

In 1955 "Broussard's Motel" was built. It is the largest motel in Cameron and situated on the original homesite.

A-9. WAKEFIELD MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The earliest known Methodist congregation in Cameron was organized in 1884 and served by circuit riders. Meetings were held in homes until permission was granted to hold services in the Cameron Parish Courthouse, then a small wooden building. Services were held only three or four times a year.

The earliest members on record were Mrs. Eula Wolfe and J. A. Wakefield, both accepted on a profession of faith by the Reverend Patrick Galvin in 1886.

Cameron's first Methodist Church was a one-room structure built on land purchased from Alexis Daigle and situated on Marshall Street where the fire station is now located. It was built during the pastorate of Reverend A. D. George, who served the church from 1932 to 1935.

After several years additional space was needed. J. A. Davis purchased two lots of the Laurents property adjoining the Wakefield property. Mr. Davis being heir to this land, donated it to the Methodist Church. A parsonage was built on the west side of the property in 1947 and in 1948 under the pastorate of Allie Ellender the new church was started and completed. This building was named Wakefield Memorial in memory of George Wakefield, Mr. Davis' grandfather.

Hurricane Audrey severely damaged the church and parsonage in 1957. These buildings had to be torn down and replaced. Because of a need for additional space, a tract of land about 4 miles east of the church site was purchased from John Ashburn Roux and J. A. Davis. A parsonage to serve the Cameron and Grand Chenier churches was immediately begun. Reverend Taylor Wall and his family moved into the parsonage during the Thanksgiving week of 1957. The educational building was completed in February 1958; the sanctuary, in October 1958.

The newest improvement to the church property was the installation of a bell and tower. The bell was from the old Borealis Rex, the sternwheeler that carried mail, cargo and passengers from Cameron to Lake Charles and hence to the outside world from about 1905 to 1930. The bell was given to Peter Henry, who gave it to W. F. Henry, Jr., who gave it to J. A. Davis for the church. The bell was refinished and the tower built and erected through the efforts of Charles A. Rogers and Sammie L. Warren. The bell sounded after more than thirty years of silence on Easter Sunday morning in 1969, proclaiming the resurrection of our Lord.

A-10. WAKEFIELD MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CEMETERY

This cemetery is located behind the Wakefield Church on church property.
property. The original graveyard belonged to the Wakefield family, earliest settlers here. As the older generation passed on, J. A. Davis became heir to the property. He donated it to the Methodist Church. The oldest grave marker is that of George Wakefield, born in 1812 and died in 1897. His wife, Mary Ellen Welch Wakefield was born in 1833 and died in 1927. Children of these two buried here are: Mrs. Nellie Wakefield Sells, buried in 1909; Miss Dottie Wakefield born in 1863, Mrs. Martha Wakefield Higginbotham in 1864, James Austin Wakefield in 1861.

After it became property of the Methodist Church, the earliest members buried here are Henry and Annie Granger, George B. and Maude Davis, all born in the 1800's.

A-11. GEORGE WAKEFIELD HOMEPLACE, now owned by J. A. Davis

A raft carried George Washington Wakefield from Ohio to New Orleans. There, Mr. Wakefield acquired a more sophisticated craft, a sailboat, and made his way to Cameron to join his brother-in-law.

Among the possessions of this pioneer, were a host of plants: peach trees, plum trees, quince, cherokee, apple trees, and pecan trees. Mr. Wakefield's brother-in-law left to join the California Gold Rush, but George remained to plant his trees and begin an orange grove.

His first wife died, and he later remarried. To house his growing family, he resolved to build a new home. To obtain lumber in those days was quite an undertaking. The usual way was with the cooperation of several families. These families would travel to Lake Charles, or another town where a sawmill was located. The lumber would be purchased and then fashioned into one huge raft. Upon these rafts some sort of make-shift stove was placed as well as a "water barrel" and other necessary supplies. Also attached were the skiff with which the families had reached the sawmill. Then these hardy men and women would float, pole, and push their raft, and future homes, through the river back to Cameron. There the raft would be dismantled and the lumber divided.

J. Austin Davis, Mr. Wakefield's grandson, is our source of information, and recalls having seen this himself. At the time, he explained, there was nothing unusual about the sight of a 40 foot raft.

George Wakefield's home took nearly a year to build. The studs in the home are mortared and reach from the ground to the ceiling. There are no butts, no nails and no splices. The home once contained a double fireplace and boasted three chimneys. As for its sturdiness, one need only glance at the date, written above the windows across the front of the house, which proudly proclaim the year of its birth - 1876!

This means, of course, that it has survived the force of many hurricanes over the years, including Hurricane Audrey. In that 1957 disaster, Mr. Davis informs us that 152 people found sanctuary there. These people were both black and white, from all parts of Louisiana and even on person from California! Some of these people had been staying at the motel, and were invited by the family to spend the storm in the old home.

One must have needed some special determination in those days to make a marshy little coastal settlement his home, and George Wakefield was no
exception. He was an educated, inventive man, interested especially in tree husbandry. He planned to dry fruit and sell them. He designed what he called an "evaporator" which had shelves for the fruit and some sort of coal heat, or stove at the bottom. His attempts were not successful, and the "evaporator" became a toy for little Austin Davis.

The fruit trees he brought with him were planted, and bore fruit successfully. An orange grove which he planted survived until 1920, according to his grandson. The cherokee we see growing so abundantly were probably the results of Mr. Wakefield's original shrubs. The oak trees standing in a row from the house west, to the Methodist Church were planted by George and his little girl one sunny day.

It had been said of George that "whenever he planted a tree, it grew." Cameron is fortunate it did, and indebted to at least one Yankee.

A-12. GOLDEN CHEVROLET, INC.

The first automobile dealership in the town of Cameron was chartered November 29, 1967, with Jerry G. Jones and Francis O. Theriot owners. Prior to that time the chevrolet dealership was in Creole and owned by Dudley E. Fawvor. One might say that Mr. and Mrs. Harold Carter of Creole were the founders of the chevrolet dealership as they owned the first one and the only one in the parish.

A-13. CAMERON PARISH HEALTH UNIT

The Cameron Parish Health Unit was constructed in 1956 on property purchased from the heirs of D. W. and Georgiana Rogers Kelley. The building was badly damaged in 1957 by Hurricane Audrey; but it was repaired and operations continued.

Cameron Parish Health Unit work was first established in the early days of World War II; however these services were discontinued after one or two years. The health office was reopened in 1950 in the courthouse and has been serving Cameron Parish since.

Dr. G. Vasquez of Lake Charles was the first director of the unit, serving both Calcasieu and Cameron parishes. His position was vacated in 1967 when Calcasieu Parish required his services full time. Dr. R. F. Miller of Jennings assumed the directorship.

A-14. ROGERS-KELLEY CEMETERY

This land was given for a graveyard for the descendants of the Milford-Louisa Jones Rogers families, in about 1880. It is located on the highway one and one-half miles east of Cameron, next to the Health Unit in the Kelley sub-division.

The oldest headstone is that of George Jones, born in 1821 and died in 1881. The next oldest is Milford Rogers, born in 1833 and died in 1896. Others are a Mrs. Thompson (sister of Edward Peshaff), Mrs. Louisa Rogers,
Nancy Roux Rogers, Rosana Neoma Rogers Bonsall, Georgiana Rogers Kelley, Forman Rogers, Thomas Bonsall, Daniel Kelley, Jesse Rogers, Theodore Rogers, Ada Peshoff Rogers, Edwin A. Kelley, and Milford Kelley. These were all born in the 1800's. The marker of Captain Thomas Anderson, born in 1858 and died in 1915, is a Woodman of the World memorial emblem, still standing very tall in spite of slight damages in Hurricane Audrey. George "Bud" Kelley was born in 1890 and died in 1959. Wives, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are still being buried here. There are six generations of descendants buried in this cemetery, a span of seventy-five years.

A-15. CAPTAIN DANIEL W. KELLEY HOMEPLACE

This tract of land was the northeast section of the original Captain Milford Rogers' property. Georgiana, Captain Milford's daughter, and her husband Daniel built their first home here about 1885. It had a round hipped roof and was built low to the ground. Their six children were born here, though a son named Milford Rogers after his grandfather died when only nine months old.

In about 1904 this house was replaced by a large two-story house typical of the times with the long front porch and the wide hall down the center. There were three bedrooms on one side, two bedrooms and a parlor on the other. The large 16' x 32' kitchen and dining area—all in one—was on the north end of the house. There was also a side porch. Near the front entrance was the stairway for the second floor.

The house sat several feet off the ground with a chain brick wall for a foundation. Under the house was the storage place for Irish and sweet potatoes, onions and fruit. Their youngest grandson remembers looking under the house for stolen hen nests full of eggs. He said the old hens would invariably hide under there to set.

Captain Daniel had his captain's papers and could go anywhere on the high seas. He had two schooners during his time, the "Georgiana" and the "George Locke". It was on one of these vessels on a return trip from Galveston that he ran into bad weather and rough seas, fell overboard and drowned. His body later washed ashore at Sabine. Aboard the schooner with him at the time was Julius Davis and an Indian.

Mrs. Kelley and her children continued to live here. Another son Edwin died in 1918. The only living son, George F. "Bud", brought his bride, Elder Nunez, to join them. Their six children were born in this house. Mr. "Bud" operated a one-car pay ferry across the Calcasieu River.

After Georgiana's death in 1948, "Bud" Kelley and his family continued to reside there. In 1954 the house was remodeled, making it smaller and more modern. Additional repairs had to be made after Hurricane Audrey. "Bud" Kelley died in 1959, his wife in 1960. The house still belongs to the Kelley children and is presently occupied by the eldest son, Edwin Allen and his family.

A-16. JOHN EAGLESON HOMEPLACE

Originally known as the Joseph Wainwright place, the old Eagleson home owned by John and Jane (Wetherill) Eagleson was standing until
Hurricane Audrey severely damaged it. What remained had to be torn down. It was a two story house with a wide gallery across the front. On the first floor were three bedrooms, a parlor and the large kitchen-dining room in the rear of the house. On the east side of the kitchen was the large cistern which supplied the household water. The second floor with its large rooms, old trunks and dormer windows looking toward the Gulf was a child's joy.

Mr. Eagleson and his wife had eleven children; all were born in Grand Chenier. Two of their children, Ada and Ray, died before they moved to Cameron for the first time in 1916. When Mr. Eagleson bought the house January 22, 1919 from Mrs. Mary D. Pichnic, it was about fifty years old and had previously been rented.

Mr. Eagleson raised cotton. Since he did not own the necessary land to grow cotton on a large scale, he leased farm land to grow his crop from families all up and down the ridge. Behind his house was once white with cotton!

In the spring, the old place seemed to come alive with color from the flowering peach and pear trees, the red amaryllis and the white spider lilies. The huge oaks bordering the south and east sides of the less than two acres yard were planted from acorns by two of the Eagleson boys--Lee and Tom. Perhaps this tree planting experience served to whet Tom's appetite for horticulture as he has owned a nursery in Port Arthur for many years. All of the children upon coming of age left home and settled in Texas except Louise (Mrs. Bert Skidmore); she remained in Cameron and still resides here.

After Mrs. Eagleson's death October 23, 1948, Mr. Eagleson lived alone. "Pa John", as he was affectionately known, was a familiar figure walking along the road to Leesburg, as he still called it. He expired August 8, 1953. The old place was empty and remained so, until its destruction in 1957. Mrs. Hattie Skidmore Nunez, Mr. Eagleson's granddaughter, has a home on the west side of the old place.

D-1. CAMERON PARISH SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE BUILDING

According to available records the first meetings of the Cameron Parish School Board were held in 1871. These meetings were held in the Cameron Parish Courthouse. Members of the first board included: Albert H. Stafford, George W. Wakefield, Samuel P. Henry, Andrew J. Kearney, George H. Cuptill, and J. W. Sweeney.

There was no parish superintendent until 1879. Prior to that time the Board was served by a district superintendent from St. Mary Parish, the Reverend R. K. Doissy. In 1879 John Wetherill was named Cameron Parish superintendent.

The meetings of the School Board continued to be held in the Courthouse until 1952 when a School Board administration building, very similar to the present one, was erected on this site.

In 1958, the present building was constructed to replace the original building which was destroyed by Hurricane Audrey in 1957. The architect was Robert L. Miller and the contractor was the Perrilliat-Ricky Construction Company.
The building houses offices for the superintendent, his supervisory staff, and two secretaries. Space is provided for a Board Meeting room and storage areas.

C-1. CAMERON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC.

This company was started in 1954, doing general oilfield contracting and construction. Their operations consisted of one crew with C. A. Rogers as foreman, one pickup truck and one winch truck. The bookkeeping was done by Mrs. Rogers, nee Roberta Eagleson.

As business increased, facilities were expanded. Property north of their home was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Nick Pichnic for additional work and equipment storage area.

In 1967, property was purchased from the Thomas Bonsall, Jr. heirs. A new shop, office for the workers, and large new office building for the secretaries was built. They employ between 75 and 100 men year around.

C-2. THOMAS BONSALL, JR. HOMEPLACE

As one stepped along the red brick walk, with both sides lined with "higher than your head" hedges and shaded by beautiful oak trees, the date of the old house was visible on the steps just ahead—1902. On the front porch was a swing and an old slat settee where one could wile away a hot summer's day and feel the cool gulf breeze.

The old house was weatherboarded with cypress lumber and painted white. On the north end of the house was the large kitchen. To the west of it was a side porch with the water cistern just beyond. There was a water pump away from the house, but the water was brackish. This was used for the cattle.

Thomas Bonsall, Jr. built this house for his wife, Rosana Neoma Rogers. Their seven children were born here. Mr. Bonsall was a fur buyer and a farmer in the early years. He planted a large fruit orchard—peach, plum, orange, quince, pear and fig trees. He also planted salt cedar trees all around the house for protection against debris brought in by rising gulf waters during a storm.

After Rosana died, he remarried Mary Ella Nunez. In addition to his other duties, Mr. Tommy, as he was known, was elected Justice of the Peace for Ward three, Cameron. He was sworn into office January 29, 1926. He served in this position until his death March 16, 1948, 22 years. His daughter, Tommie Edith Alexander, was commissioned Justice of the Peace February 25, 1969, and sworn in March 5, 1969.

After Mr. Tommy's death and the property was divided, the old house was rented. It was destroyed in Hurricane Audrey. What little remained, was torn down and removed from the premises.
On the south side of the highway in the Bonsall subdivision was a power and light installation.

Thomas Bonsall, Jr. and his heirs leased 2½ acres of land November 23, 1940, to the Cameron Power and Light Company, Inc. through its president Thomas N. Carnahan.

The installation was terminated by surface lease cancellation in September 1946.

The Peshoff Boarding House and Resort, complete with cabins and bath houses, was a popular vacation spot in the early 1900's.

It was a must in those days to soak in the therapudic gulf waters, pack one's self in the black gumbo mud and lie in the sun. It was good for what ailed you and miraculous cures were experienced.

The main attraction of the old house was the huge dining room table—always laden with numerous delectable dishes and seated 40 people! Passers-by were often invited to "come in and eat". John Marceleus and his wife Elizabeth Breaux were hospitable folks.

The boarding house was operated for 27 years from 1910 to 1937, one year after the death of Mr. Peshoff.

In the early 20's, S. D. Broussard acquired 2 or 3 acres of land from Fulton LeBoeuf and built a home on the ridge. After his marriage to Eugenia "Miss Tenee" Nunez, they operated their home as a hotel, taking in roomers.

They built several cabins on the beach in front of their house in the early 30's. A dance floor was also built—no sides—just a floor! Later a dance hall was built on stilts. One stormy night a tornado roared through and destroyed it.

Gradually more cabins and bathhouses were added to form the long, rambling motel, partially on stilts, that most of us remember. The last addition to be made to the complex was a combination cafe and dance hall built off the ground on piling and located at the west end of the motel.

Broussard's was the latest rooming house and resort to be added to Cameron. During these early years the beach was beautiful with its white sand and clear gulf waters. Cars, what few there were, could be driven alongside the water on the hard, sandy beach.

In 1953 or 1954, a levee was built extending from the beach into the edge of the gulf, forming a horse-shoe drive. A long wharf beginning in the center of the loop and going far into the water was added.
Hurricane Audrey left no evidence of these buildings or the once beautiful beach that attracted tourists. All that remains is the horse-shoe drive—and it is overgrown with weeds—and the gulf waters beyond. Alas! Broussard's Beach is no more!

F-2. OLD CEMETERY

East of the old hotel was a small graveyard. No information is available as to the people buried there.

F. BEACH ROAD (traveling west)

This road was once lined with salt cedars and mosquito trees. A dirt road trailed off the blacktop to the southwest and paralleled the Gulf to the jetties.

One could look to the horizon and see magnificent snow tipped billows rolling toward the shore. At low tide ecru sandbars appeared. Seagulls soaring through the air occasionally dipped down to snatch fish from the water for dinner.

It was a common sight in the late afternoon to find a family seining for rockfish, redfish and trout for a fish-fry on the beach or later at home for supper. When the tide was low, clams and mussels were dug from their bubbling homes in the sandbars.

F-1. WORLD WAR II TOWER

During World War II a look-out tower was erected to assist the Coast Guard in land reconnaissance of the gulf for German submarines known to be hovering offshore.

The tower was 50 to 60' high and built in style similar to an oil derreck. At the top was a room about 8' square with a southern exposure.

Soldiers were also stationed here and bivouaced in the courthouse. They marched through the streets of Cameron and did callisthenics on the grassy lawns surrounding the courthouse. The soldiers were here only for a short time, possibly to patrol the beaches until the horse patrol could be organized.

The horse patrol was comprised of local men who patroled the beaches at night on horseback. Because of serious threat from the enemy, Cameron experienced a black-outs at night for a long time.

F-2. THEOGENE MILLER HOMEPLACE

A pretty lawn with lots of flowers and huge oaks provided the proper setting for the Theogene Miller home. The two-story yellow house facing the gulf had decorative railing around the several large porches. It burned in 1934 and was rebuilt in 1935.
One can visualize the lush, green pastures with cattle grazing—or a filly drinking water provided by the old windmill gently turning in the breeze. In the back yard one could usually find cheese cloth bags filled with cottage cheese makings hanging on the clothes line, dripping.

At one time, it was a boarding house and had cabins and beach houses for its guests. There was an old path or road that led from the Beach Road and passed in front of the Theodore Rogers and Wallace Primeaux homes, leading to the Miller place. This half mile stretch from Primeaux's to the Miller's was lined on both sides with wild grape vines. These vines, the old house and the cabins were destroyed in Hurricane Audrey.

Some of the older families living on the Miller farm were the Henry Marshalls, Martial Peshoffs, Tom Rabinos, Tobee Broussards. This was the boyhood home of a former Cameron Parish Sheriff, Johnny Miller. The last family to live here was Mr. and Mrs. Victor Miller and the property is now owned by their heirs.

F-3. OLD CEMETERY

About a half mile west of the Theogene Miller homeplace is an old cemetery. The only known names of the seven buried there are Mr. and Mrs. Philogene Cormier, parents of Mrs. Theogene Miller, and Alfred Miller, son of Mr. and Mrs. Theogene Miller. Alfred was the last to be buried there seventy years ago.

C-1. GEORGE ZERO, SR. HOMEPLACE

Prior to his coming to Cameron, George Zero, Sr. was a resident of Opelousas, Louisiana. He purchased 254.11 acres of land under original patent dated September 11, 1872, and signed by the President of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant. He was married to Ann Morris.

Years later, Mr. Zero sold his homeplace—a forty acre tract of land and his house—to John Marceles Peshoff. When Mr. Peshoff's property was divided after his death, his son John inherited this same tract of land and the house.

The old Zero home originally had seven rooms, including a large kitchen in the rear and a long front porch. Through the years the following families lived in the old house: Martial Peshoff, Isaac Peshoff, Wallace Primeaux, Demostan LaRove, John E. Mougier, Sr., Eli Aubey and Laura Mae Pradia. When Mrs. Pradia's lease expired in 1953, the Henry H. Ratcliff family moved there. With the help of Mrs. Ratcliff's father, the old house was torn down except for the kitchen. A two-room addition was built in front of and attached to it. The Ratcliff's were living there when Hurricane Audrey struck in 1957. The only thing that remained was the old kitchen whose boards were put together with pegs and square nails.

By virtue of John Peshoff's death March 29, 1958, the 40 acre tract of land was divided between Mrs. Wanda Ratcliff (the east 20 acres)
and Mrs. Effie Lois Ratcliff (the west 20 acres). The old Zerohome
was situated on the approximate location of Mrs. Effie Lois Ratcliff's
home.

H-1. CAPTAIN MILFORD ROGERS HOMEPLACE

Milford Rogers was 14 years old and his brother Forman 12 when they
left England to come to America. Their family was a prosperous one,
owning waterfront property in Southampton. Each boy was given $1,400
for his sojourn.

After landing in America, the brothers parted company. Milford
took to the sea, acquired his captain's papers and purchased a schooner.
In the port of Cameron the tall and handsome Milford met and married
Louisa Jones, daughter of George Jones and Neomie Grinsell. The Joneses
came to Cameron in 1859 and was one of the first families here.

Captain Milford made regular trips to Galveston and Mexico in his
schooner hauling a cargo of cotton, cattle, oranges, or whatever anyone
had to sell, barter or trade. Hence on his return, if possible, one's
order for supplies and other necessities along with those frivolous
articles of a new people in a new land—pretty bric-a-brac, furniture
and bolts of elegant cloth and dainty lace.

Captain Milford and Louisa had a beautiful home. It was a two-story
house, approximately 50' wide and 75' long, and painted white. There
were many windows in the house; they were wide and long, extending from
the floor to the ceiling, and covered when necessary with green storm
shutters. Across the front of the house which faced the south and the
gulf breezes was a porch. There was a look-out on top of the house with
a railing all around it. Here Mrs. Rogers would walk and gaze toward
the horizon, hoping to catch a glimpse of familiar sails which would mean
the soon arrival of her husband. Rogers' Bayou or Rogers' Reef was a
deep cut on the east side of the river. This was where Captain Milford
docked the schooner, it being just a short walking distance from his home.
Because of the many oysters Captain Milford opened on the edge of the
bank there, a natural reef—Rogers' Reef—was formed.

The grounds immediately surrounding the house were planted in oak
trees. Beyond that was the orange grove, comprising many acres of orange
trees. Some of the finest oranges available on the Galveston market
were grown in this area. All but a few of these trees perished in the
drought of the early 20's.

The old Rogers home, according to Milford "Sing" Rogers, Milford
and Louisa's grandson, was built at the time of the civil war and Captain
Milford was a confederate. He said Grandma Rogers had often told him
of the Mexican ponies his Grandpa had brought from Mexico on his schooner.
The regulators would come in the yard, round up all the ponies, select
the ones they wanted, and leave with them. There was nothing they could do.

Captain Rogers died in 1896; Louisa in 1925. The old house, having
withstood the elements of the years, was torn down in 1965 by "Sing" and
Joe Rogers.
I-1. MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

The Macedonia Baptist Church was organized in 1948 by Reverend C. S. Keyes. It was destroyed by Hurricane Audrey in 1957 and rebuilt in 1958 under the pastorate of Reverend H. C. VanDyke. The cornerstone was laid August 30, 1959, by the M.W.G.M. J. G. Lewis, Jr. of M. W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge, F. & A. M.

I-2. EVENING STAR CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

Raphael Bargeman of Cameron founded the Evening Star Church of God in Christ. It was built in February 1959. Reverend W. H. Samuel of Lake Charles pastors the church.

J-1. JAMES HANSON HOMEPLACE

Captain James Hanson was six years old when he and his mother arrived in Galveston, Texas from Alberg, Denmark. He became a sea-faring man and obtained his captain's papers. In 1900 he married Maggie Rogers and in 1901 purchased 80 acres of what was originally a part of the old George C. Hyde place.

He promptly built a large two-story house that set off the ground about 3 or 4 feet on a brick wall. The green shutters bordering the windows was the only trim on the white house. Their four lovely daughters--Cecilia, Dorothy, Lorena and Gertrude--were born here.

Maggie loved pretty flowers--especially roses. So, artfully placed in and around the large china berry tree and the oak trees were the rose beds, and when in bloom, a lovelier sight could not be found!

Cotton and corn were the major crops harvested. Of course, acreage was reserved for pastures to graze the cattle.

Captain Hanson was one of the captains of the schooner "George Locke" and had been since he was 21 years old. The schooner was built in 1882 by Simon Baker and the lumber for it was donated by George Locke. Evidently this is how it got its name. The 'George Locke' was one of the first of a fleet of schooners that sailed from Lake Charles to Brownsville, Port Isabel and other gulf ports. In 1898, Captain Hanson bought the schooner. They parted company in 1915, when he sold it to Captain Laurents.

He then began to captain the Borealis Rex, making the trip from Lake Charles to Cameron three times a week. Because of the Rex's schedule, it became necessary for he and his family to move to Lake Charles, which they did in 1921. Except for pasture land to graze his cattle, Captain Hanson rented everything else--the house and the farming rights. In addition to captaining the Rex, he was also river pilot, and would take ships to Orange, Texas and ride the train back to Lake Charles.

After his death July 25, 1927, things continued much the same until Valian J. Theriot and Yvonne Savoie Theriot purchased the home and the property March 26, 1946. For some years, Mr. Theriot ran a dairy there.
He now resides in Grand Chenier and his daughter Mrs. Lillian Mouton, has her home in the old location.

J-2. CATHOLIC SHRINE

The Shrine to the Mother of God, Protectress from Storms was built as a memorial to those who lost their lives in Cameron Parish during Hurricane Audrey in 1957. It bears the inscription, "Do not harm my children", and says, in effect, "We remember the past and beg the Almighty to spare us in the future."

The seven foot marble statue of Our Lady and a child was ordered by Most Reverend Maurice Schexnayder, Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, while he was attending the Ecumenical Council in Rome in 1962. It was built by the Bruno Tavarelli Marble Company of Carrara, Italy. Mr. Enrico Randi was the sculptor.

The 36-foot high concrete Shrine, designed by architect Perry Sigura of New Iberia, was erected east of the town of Cameron on Louisiana highway 27 on church property. The statue was set in place September 11, 1963, facing the Gulf of Mexico, only a mile away.

The Shrine was built in response to a suggestion made by Bishop Schexnayder during his visit to Cameron after the 1957 disaster. He appointed Norman McCall and Albert Colligan to coordinate the efforts of all communities in Cameron Parish, whose donations made the Shrine possible.

J-3. OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC CHURCH

The decree establishing the parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea was issued June 21, 1950, by Most Reverend Bishop Maurice Schexnayder of the Diocese of Lafayette.

Although the parish is young, the Catholic faith had an early beginning in Cameron. Two acres of land located on the corner of Marshall Street and Davis Road were purchased from George C. Marshall December 11, 1893, by Archbishop Francis Janssens of New Orleans. Later in 1937, these same two acres were traded to J. A. Davis for an irregular lot approximately 60' wide and 120' long on the east side of P. E. Smith Circle. The first Catholic Church was built here in 1938. The original building, smaller than the existing structure, was made possible through the donations of Mark and Rudolph Richard and John Daigle. A man from Orange, Texas, Mr. Phelan, donated the altar. The new church was known as St. John's Chapel and Holy Mass was now celebrated every Sunday with a pastor coming from the Sacred Heart parish in Creole to conduct the services. Prior to that time, services were held in Cameron only once a month in the courtroom of the parish courthouse.

Rev. A. L. Gilbert, M. S. was pastor of the Sacred Heart parish and therefore was conducting services at St. John's Chapel in June 1957 when Hurricane Audrey struck Cameron. The building floated off its pillars and water stood about four feet deep in it. The necessary repairs were made and services continued as usual.
The first pastor for the new parish was Rev. Eugene Senneville. During his time of service from June 21, 1958 to June 15, 1968, approximately ten acres of land (plus two acres for a cemetery) were purchased about two miles east of Cameron from Valian J. Theriot, Lillian Theriot Mouton and Peter C. Henry. A new rectory, a Shrine and the mausoleum were constructed.

After Rev. Senneville’s transfer, he was replaced for a short time by Rev. Whitney LeBlanc. Rev. Alcide Sonnier became pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea parish August 10, 1968. Many accomplishments have been made since his coming and perhaps the one of most significance is the actual construction of the new sanctuary which began September 16, 1969. Its completion, schedule for the fall of 1970, is eagerly awaited.

J-4. OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC CHURCH CEMETERY AND MAUSOLEUM

In 1958, Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church purchased fifteen acres of land from Valain J. Theriot and Lillian Theriot Mouton. The west end of the property is for the church (now under construction) and the Shrine. On the east end there are 2 - 2½ acres for cemetery grounds.

In 1964, a 23-crypt (56 spaces) was built. Five spaces have been used to date, with the first being a Senior Citizen, Hubert Theriot. The first burial in the cemetery was the infant of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Kelley. To date, there is the grave of Donald Aubey and the memorial marker of L. G. Watkins.

J-5. JEFFERSON DAVIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. OFFICE BUILDING

Jefferson Davis Electric Cooperative, Inc. had its beginning shortly after passage of the REA act of 1936. A group of prominent local men secured a charter under Louisiana law September 17, 1941.

Cameron Parish, after having tried to form and operate its own cooperative, requested affiliation with Jefferson Davis Electric and was accepted. Rural Electrification Administration required a minimum of three members per mile of line to insure loan feasibility. The first REA loan, $60,000, was received by the cooperative on May 15, 1944 for purchase of Grant Utilities in Cameron and for construction of new lines in the Jeff Davis area.

One of the most historic events in the history of Cameron followed that same month when the first lines of the Jefferson Davis Electric Cooperative were energized. On hand for the celebration were pioneer board members Joseph L. Tupper, President; Henry N. Hatch, Vice-President; Charles M. Davis, Secretary-Treasurer; Harry E. Jester, William Jester, John J. Martin, Jr., C. A. Miller, Ralph Potter and C. J. Todd. That momentous year, the members used an average of 57 kilowatt hours per consumer per month with an average bill of $4.95. There were just four employees and one maintenance vehicle.

Today the cooperative has 1,100 miles of modern distribution and 72 miles of transportation lines serving 5,168 members with an average con-
sumption of 1,029 kilowatt hours per month; average bill of $21.11 in 1969 per consumer; the average cost per kilowatt being 0.023 or 5.7¢ less per kilowatt hour than the first year. There are 34 full time employees.

J. Shubal Robbins, a native of Jennings and a veteran rural electrification specialist, has served the cooperative as manager since 1947. His assistant is J. H. deCordova.

The cooperative maintains full service, maintenance and construction crews and personnel in Cameron and has a modern brick, concrete and steel office building. Jackie Richard, supervisor, is assisted by Lurchel Fontenot in the office. M. H. "Rusty" Fulton is superintendent and Ray Theriot is foreman of the work crews.

Gone are the days of the kerosene lamps. The dream of a few endowed with determination, a pioneering spirit and a fighting heart became a reality!

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6. JOHN S. GRUNIK HOMEPAGE AND STORE

In 1890 John S. Grunik left his wife, Katherine Duris, and their four children in Rovna, Czechoslovakia to seek his fortune in America. A peddler by trade with his pack of tinware and hardware strapped on his back, he traveled on foot from St. Louis to New Orleans to Cameron to who-knows-where? During the two or three years he did this, it was often necessary for him to sleep outdoors, being in-between settlements. On these occasions he slept with one eye open because of the cut-throats roaming the countryside. "Bootsie" Carter recalls being captivated by her grandfather's hair-raising tales of these nights he spent in the wilderness.

After deciding Cameron was where he wished to settle and make his home, Mr. Grunik sent for his wife and family. They lived in east Creole until their home was built in 1895. Four more children were born, so a large addition was made in 1908. Several rooms were destroyed by Hurricane Audrey in 1957; however much of the house remains the same and it contains many pieces of furniture seventy-five years old or older.

Just east of the house (where the garden is today) Mr. Grunik planted a large orange grove in 1905 or 1906. The trees were planted in such a way that no matter from which angle one looked, the trees were straight and in perfect line. To add to the beauty of the grove, the trunks were whitewashed. The orange trees were ruined for the first time in 1915, when a tidal wave brought the gulf's salt water on the ridge. Mr. Grunikundauntedly replanted the grove, only to again see it devasted—this time by the 1918 hurricane. He planted a third time; however Cameron experienced a severe winter and the trees were unable to withstand the low temperatures and froze. This ended the Grunik Orange Grove for all times. Cotton was later planted here.

In 1900 Mr. Grunik built a store west of the house and right on the road. General merchandise was sold here for many years. After Mr. Grunik's death in 1949, the store, having deteriorated from being closed, was torn down.