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RAYNE-BRANCH HOSPITAL in Rayne is one of three such facilities in Acadia Parish. The other two are the American Legion Hospital in Crowley and Acadian St. Landry Hospital in Church Point.
Agriculture Dominates Acadia Land Use

Acadia Parish is located in the west central portion of the Evangeline Economic Development District and the total land area for the parish is 453-700 acres, or 656 square miles. Agriculture is the most dominating land use in Acadia, with 238-458 acres. Rice is the leading principal crop in the parish, followed by soybeans, some cotton and corn. Agricultural areas cover the entire parish except in urban areas and along Bayou Dees and Bayou Plaquemene Branch. Acadia Parish indicates a slight increase in agricultural lands since the 1974 land use survey. Currently, Acadia is one of the leading crop producers in the State of Louisiana. Undeveloped is the second largest land use in Acadia with 78,800 acres, or 18.5 percent of the parish total. This undeveloped land occurs mainly along Bayou Dees and Bayou Plaquemene Branch. This is predominantly forest land-60,000 acres—with scattered wetland acres close to the stream banks. Residential constitutes approximately 8,004 acres and occurs mainly in urban areas, such as Crowley, Rayne, Eunice, Morse, Mornend, Church Point and Iota. Rural residential clusters occur along Interstate 10 west of Crowley, east of Church Point, in the north central section of the parish, due northeast of Bayou, and south of Crowley near the parish line. Industrial-commercial-transportation includes 2,717 acres in Acadia Parish and occurs along major transportation routes and urban areas. Used are located in Crowley and consist of several rice mills and industrial bag (Continued on Page 37).
AGRICULTURE

Continued from Page 261

companies. Other uses are
the Rayne-Crowley Indus-
trial Park-66 acres and the
Port of Mamou-300 acres. In the City of
Crowley is the Crowley
Industrial Park-23 acres.

The major extractive
areas are located in the
western portion of the
parish and consist of oil
and gas extraction. This
account amounts to 86, or
only 0.69 percent. Public-
semi-priate areas constitute ap-
proximately 102 acres and
are located mainly in
urban areas in the form of
educational or admini-
strative facilities. Recrea-
tional activities occur mainly in the urban
areas also, and include
baseball diamonds,
playgrounds and parks.

Major growth areas that
have occurred in Acadia
Parish since the 1974 land-
use inventory mainly of
residential and industrial-
commercial-transportation
land uses. Both categories
have growth in certain
rural areas. South of
Eunice in north-central
Acadia Parish there has
been considerable
residential growth. This
new growth could be at-
tributed to excess
population from the in-
creased Eunice industrial
workforce. Other areas of major
growth are occurring
along Interstate 10, which
is attracting mainly
commercial growth,
radiating in corridors
from Crowley and Rayne,
and in the western portion
of the parish.

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Parish Seat Founded in 1887

As the ages of communities go in Acadia, Crowley is a relative younger, having been founded in 1887. Unlike many towns which just started up, Crowley was laid out according to a uniform plan. Most of its early surge of growth paralleled the development of the rice industry, and it has fittingly been called "the Rice Capital of America."

In 1900 the Louisiana and Texas Railroad line was completed, and in 1887 Crowley became the parish seat. The rapid growth associated with the rice industry is attested to by the fact that in 1900 Crowley had only 40 incorporated businesses, and by 1903 the figure had more than doubled.

Crowley is the traditional home of the present Governor-Elect of the State of Louisiana, the Honorable Edwin W. Edwards, who was recently elected to an unprecedented third term in government. A commemorative bronze plaque honoring Governor Edwards is located at the front entrance of the Parish Courthouse.

**NEED TO KNOW?**
For new residents in the immediate Rayne area, here's a list of phone numbers you may need to know:

- School Board
  334-3332

- Sheriff's Office
  334-993

- City Hall
  334-3277

- Police
  334-3125

- Rayne-Branch Hospital
  334-5897

- Fire Department
  334-2512

- Acadian Ambulance
  1-911-1311

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Historical Sketch, Points of Interest

To those familiar with the parish and its history, it is natural for their first thoughts to turn to the two ingredients which account for so much of Acadia Parish’s history: rice and oil. Both have figured prominently in the making of present-day Acadia. The first rice mill was built in 1889 in Crowley, the parish seat. In 1901 oil was discovered, and the parish became the site of the first oil-producing field in Louisiana. All modern-day Acadia Parish history has largely evolved from these two events.

Acadia, of course, takes its name from the exiles who came from Canada, and so many of whom finally settled on this flat prairie. During the decade 1766-1776, the Spanish government made land grants to the exiled Acadians. And among the first newcomers to settle in this part of South Louisiana, many chose the banks of Bayou Plaquemine Brulee. With “Cajun” ingenuity, the early settlers used the streams to strengthen the mud that went into the making of the simple dwellings. Prior to 1880, Attakapas Indian villages existed along the Mermentau River (three of them). Bayou Plaquemine Brulee, Bayou Wicoff and one just north of Bayou Queue de Tortue.

Legend holds that Jean Lafitte’s brigands found refuge in the great expanse of these lowlands.

(Continued on Page 20)

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Local Governments Are Structural Units

This body may also enact ordinances and levy taxes within the parish territorial limits to the extent authorized by the Constitution. Members of the police jury are elected by districts for terms of four years. Each election district is entitled to one representative. Acadia Parish has sixteen police jurors.

Unlike the municipalities, the parish does not have a central governing board which is responsible for all parish activities. Instead, authority is divided among a number of elected officials—the sheriff, clerk of court, tax assessor, school board, coroner, justices of the peace and constables for the most part are independent of the police jury.

The unincorporated areas of the parish fall under the jurisdictional responsibilities of the police jury in providing public services. The incorporated municipalities of Acadia Parish are: Crowley, Church Point, Rayne, Iota, Mermentau, Maurice, and Estherwood. These municipalities generally provide their own public services.

State and Local Taxation

Local governments have responsibility for providing a variety of public and quasi-public services. (Continued on Page 21)
STRUCTURAL UNITS

(Continued from Page 2)

Standardized accounting procedures fall under the statutory requirements of the State Constitution.

The following section depicts the revenue components of Acadia Parish tax structure:

a. Property Tax

The 1974 State Constitution established the following percentage of fair market value for classification of property in the assessment process.

- Land—10 percent of fair market value.
- Improvements for residential purposes—10 percent.

(Continued on Page 2)

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Industrial Facilities

Within Acadia Parish, there are three major industrial areas:
- City of Crowley Industrial Park, located with the city limits of Crowley, the City of Crowley Industrial Park site has easy access to Interstate 10. This 25-acre complex was completed in 1961 and presently accommodates several light manufacturing industries. It is administered by the Crowley Industrial Development Corporation, 1303 N. Avenue J, Crowley, La. 70528. (Continued on Page 24)

STRUCTURAL UNITS

(Continued from Page 21)

percent of fair market value
- Agriculture, horticulture, marhsal and timberland—10 percent of fair market value.
- Other property—15 percent of fair market value.

Louisiana, however, allows up to a $5,000 primary homestead exemption on a person's primary residence. Thus, a home with a fair market value of $50,000 or less would have an assessment of $5,000 (or 10 percent of the fair market value) of which $5,000 is exempt; hence, no tax is due. This provision allows Louisiana to have one of the lowest property taxes levied by any state.

Assessed valuation is a dependable, yet conservative indicator of economic growth. It is from this source that funds for financing improvements are derived. The valuations have increased over the 16-year period. It should be noted that the taxes assessed amount are not necessarily taxes collected.

- Sales Tax

In addition to the State of Louisiana three percent sales tax, Acadia Parish levies a sales tax of one percent on all sales not exempt from this provision. Sales tax collection began 15 years ago in January 1961. Each year, there has been an appreciable gain in revenue.

- Additional one percent sales tax was levied in 1965 to provide for parish-wide garbage collection.

The parish Court House is located in Crowley and houses the offices of the Police Jury, the Clerk of Court, Sheriff, Tax Assessor, Registrar of Voters, District Attorney, and District Judge.

Police protection is provided by the Sheriff's Department.

The department employs 50 deputies, support personnel, and school crossing guards. Acadia Parish is included in Troop F of the Louisiana State Police.

Fire protection is provided by the municipalities of the parish. Crowley has a full-time fire department while the other towns have volunteer departments.

Acadia Parish has a Planning Commission. Nine members are appointed by the Police Jury.

A permit program began in the parish in April of 1962. The Police Jury office in the court house handles the building permits.

Library facilities in the parish are provided by the Main Library in Crowley and 10 branches in the parish. As of March 1962, there were 109,727 volumes in the system. The library also subscribes to a large number of current periodicals and business publications.

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