SACRED HEART CHAPEL in Belaire Cove, pictured on the left, has remained relatively unchanged since its dedication on March 3, 1940 by Bishop B. Jeanmard. The branches of the large tree that now stands in front of the chapel are the only immediate signs of the intervening 50 years. Loyalty has never waned during those years and many area families are planning family reunions to coincide with the golden anniversary celebration this Saturday afternoon.

Chapel to mark 50th year

By PAUL KEDINGER
Editor

On March 3, 1940, Bishop B. Jeanmard, head of the Lafayette diocese, dedicated the new $3,500 Catholic chapel in the Belaire Cove community.

Fifty years later, to the date, the rural congregation is expected to fill the modest wooden structure to observe the golden anniversary of that dedication.

For many months, the anniversary committee's efforts have focused on Saturday, March 3, when Msgr. Irving A. DeBlanc, P.A., will be the principal celebrant and homilist of the 4 p.m. Mass which is expected to attract an overflow audience. Msgr. Mike Jarrell will serve as a concelebrant. The Sacred Heart Church choir, directed by Margaret Fontenot, will perform. A reception, hosted by the anniversary committee, will follow in the church hall.

Msgr. DeBlanc served as assistant pastor under Msgr. J.M. Bourgeois when the chapel was opened on March 3, 1940. He now is pastor of Our Lady, Queen of Heaven Catholic Church in Lake Charles.

The 300-seat church was built by popular subscription and a $2,000 gift from the Catholic Extension Society of Chicago presented in memory of Daniel and Elizabeth Sharkey.

Before the church was completed, area families attended church services in the neighboring seven grade public school building, remembers Cammie Lafleur, 68, whose father, Horace Fontenot, served on the original church committee.

Mass was offered once a month; "You had to come in buggies or walk on foot," adds Aline Fontenot, 75.

Belaire Cove traces its name to "Joseph dit Belair" Fontenot, son of Jean Louis Fontenot die Colin and Louise Angelique Henry. Many presentday residents of the area are his descendants.