Spring on Bayou Lafourche Is Recalled from Headlines

April, May Provide Many Area Happenings

By CLAIRE PUNEKY
(T-P Bayou Lafourche Bureau)

Donaldsonville, La. — Through poets and romantics spring has come to have an idyllic connotation, with the song of the birds and the budding of trees and flowers symbolizing this season of warming toward summer.

That is all part of the spring scene, but as headlines point out in these modern times, these designated months present other images, also. This is not something peculiar to the modern age, but a part of history. A look at some local spring history will suffice.

It was on a spring day in 1805, April 10, that approval was given the Legislative Council Act creating Acadia County, comprising the parishes of Assumption and St. James.

The community of Donaldsonville in April, 1873. Called Consolidated Bonds, they totaled $25,712. This debt was undertaken mostly to equip the Donaldsonville Cannoniers and to provide material for a bridge across Bayou Lafourche.

A news account of that day reports that the bridge "was never built."

A barge of fine ice was unloaded in Donaldsonville in the springtime of 176 for the area's summer supply of coolant.

John Burns, known as "The Sugar Prince," who owned vast sugar interests in Ascension Parish, added New Hope Plantation to his holdings in the spring of 1881 at a cost of $30,000.

An institution of learning was about to be constructed here in April of 1885, a new high school at the corner of South Houmas and Opelousas Sts. The home of Joseph Fervier was purchased for $1,000 to house the school's principal, and Fervier moved his blacksmith shop to another area.

Again, springtime saw local youth leaving for war. In April, 1896, a contingent from here marched down Mississippi St. and boarded the steamer "Gracie Kent" for the start of their journey to the Spanish-American war.

Spring is birds and blossoms and beautiful skies with a lot of varied events in between today and through the decades of the past.

The following spring, on April 27, the village established here by William Donaldson of New Orleans was formally dedicated, with his father-in-law, B. F. Van Pradelle of New Orleans the notary public before whom the ceremony took place.

It was spring, May 11, 1811, when Daniel Clark of New Orleans transferred to Gen. Wade Hampton, his interest in his sugar estate at the Houmas Point in Ascension. Roads were on the spring, 1823, agenda with Samuel Webb and Samuel Tait named to view a road from Gen. Hampton's plantation to Baton Rouge.

Springtime 1827 found planters from Natchez acquiring holdings along Bayou Lafourche, described in a local news article as "the most beautiful part of Louisiana."

There was tragedy in the spring of 1833 when the "Reaper," a steamer headed for Pittsburgh from New Orleans hit a snag in the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville in the early night hours and went down. Several persons died and no merchandise was saved.

April, 1840, ushered in the racing season in Donaldsonville, with a large crowd in attendance and "the ladies stand all but filled with the fair ones of Donaldsonville and the ad-

An 1866 issuance of bonds was causing some difficulty for the