Meat and Potatoes

Largest recreation area for white children is the Co-meaux Park, which has a baseball diamond, barbecue shelters, wading pool and playground facilities. There are also Godchaux Park, with its swimming pool, and the Abbeville High playground, which has a baseball diamond and stadium.

For those who want to learn how to skin a nutria, be a farmer or auto mechanic, study business administration, radio-television or electric appliance repair, or how to handle natural gases in the field, Abbeville has the Vermilion Parish Trade school. Opened in 1953, it started with an enrollment of 242. Both full and part-time students now number 1500.

Although today it is the center of trade education, a growing city with expansion problems, a potential offshore oil boom town, Abbeville had a rather uncertain start in life. It was born because, in 1845, Father Antoine Desire Migret had a disagreement with the board of directors of his parish church in Vermilion (now Lafayette).

He left his church and purchased the land that is now Abbeville to start his own community. He called his town La Chapelle.

When Vermilion parish was created in 1844, another settlement, nearby Perry's Ridge, was named temporary parish seat. By that time "Abbe" Migret's community had a much larger population than Perry's Ridge. An election was held and La Chapelle was the winner but, due to a technicality, the victory was set aside. Meanwhile, the founder-priest died, and the town's name was changed to Abbeville (probably in his honor).

A year after his death, in 1845, Abbeville finally was named parish seat.

Abbeville grew steadily in spite of yellow fever epidemics and a near bankruptcy.

Today, still predominantly French and Roman Catholic, it still has much of the spirit of its founder's first small village. But it also has the joys and headaches of a growing community.

Abbeville is still sauce piquante. It is also meat and potatoes.

State is Abbeville's main street, busy enough to warrant parking meters. Recent bond issue will help town's facilities to catch up with population.

One of town's top amateur cooks is auto salesman Savy Hebert, who hovers lovingly over big pot of chicken sauce piquante. Preparing a treat like this is often the excuse for a big "invite-everybody" party.
ABBEVILLE:

Sauce Piquante Plus

Recently the city has voted a $2,900,000 bond issue, which was passed by a 7-to-1 margin. The money will be used:

1. To expand sewerage facilities and build a new disposal plant, large enough to service one and a half times the present population.
2. To improve the water distribution system.
3. To build a 125-foot water tower with one-half-million-gallon capacity and also a one-half-million-gallon underground reservoir.
4. To repair sidewalks, streets and swimming pools.
5. To expand electrical facilities and to add power substations.

Tentative plans also include a new city hall. The present one is a former bank building. Only a short distance from the gleaming courthouse erected in 1853, the City Hall, most residents agree, looks insignificant by comparison. It is in this old building the mayor holds municipal court.

"This additional duty," Mayor Theriot admits, "is a holdover from the period when Abbeville was a small town. On occasion I come down here at night just to accommodate people. Once I was coming home from a late dinner at about 2 a.m. and I happened to meet a policeman who asked me if I would mind coming down to City Hall and hearing the case of an SLI student who had been caught speeding. "The kid had an 8 a.m. class, so I came down and held court at 1:30 in the morning."

While some public buildings like the City Hall need to be either renovated or replaced and utilities need expanding, Abbeville's citizens feel the school and recreation setups are quite adequate at least for the present.

Large combined grammar and high schools are the fashion in Abbeville. Three out of five of the city's schools are this type. Newest school in town is James A. Herod High School with 29 classrooms for 725 pupils. This Negro elementary and high school combined was opened last September. Nearby is a Negro swimming pool and park, opened last summer.

Informal talks are sidewalk affairs. From left, Police Chief Nelson P. Holler, Fire Chief A. L. Lane, Mayor Roy R. Theriot, Officer J. V. Guillote, Fernand LaBauve

Young people relax beside Bayou Vermilion which flows through Abbeville. From left in foreground: Wayne Summers, Kathy Cade, Jimmy Gooch, Audrey Vezey

New courthouse, completed in 1953, is Abbeville's pride. Town has been Vermilion parish seat since 1845. Standing in foreground: Bill Miller, left, Otto Langilias

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