

WELCOME TO THE EVERGREEN BUSINESS PAGE

Current Businesses – Former Businesses – Any Type of Commerce Are Welcomed

The Business Page includes the diverse areas of commerce which did and currently exist in the Evergreen area. Business, as defined by William Morris, editor of the American Heritage Dictionary is 1. The occupation, work, or trade in which a person is engaged; 2. Commercial, industrial, or professional dealings – the buying and selling of commodities or professional dealings; and 3. Any commercial establishment, such as a store or factory. For purposes of this website, the Business Page should include any endeavor where the goods, services or commodities produced were sold and/or consumed beyond an immediate family.

When water transportation was the mode, businesses flourished along the banks of Bayou Rouge. At one time, the Evergreen area boasted of having a syrup mill, three cotton gins, several stores, a fish market, service stations, a railroad depot, producers of livestock, and many farmers. In the rich soil, area farmers grew cotton, soy beans, sugar cane, corn, sweet and Irish potatoes, and more. Livestock producers marketed cattle, horses, pigs, and more. Some growers had abundant fruit orchards and vegetable gardens. Carpenters, builders, plumbers, and painters were also part of the business community. These are only some of the examples of some of the area businesses which once flourished and currently exist in the Evergreen area.

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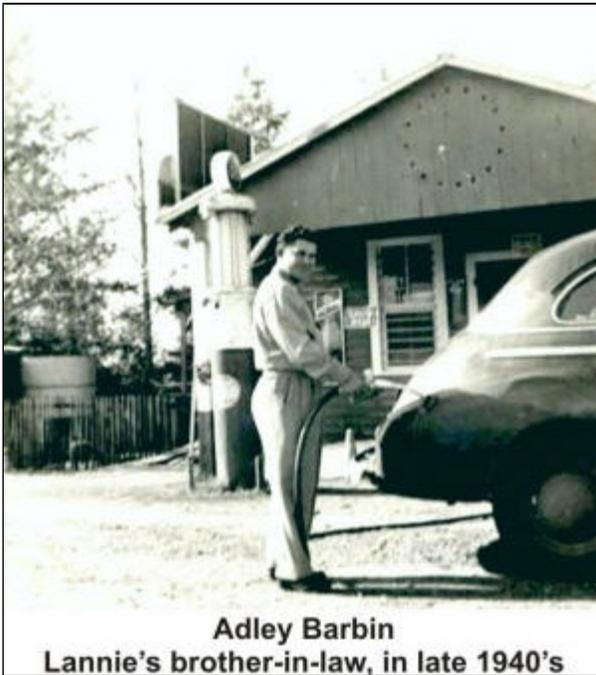
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Lannie Bordelon's Store



Adley Barbin
Lannie's brother-in-law, in late 1940's

Lannie Bordelon's Store by Maurine Bordelon Lacour

The year was 1947. Lannie's Bordelon's Store was located in Bayou Rouge, halfway between the sleepy little town of Evergreen and the community of Goudeau. The distance was approximately ten miles between the two. Lannie and Ollie had four children; Joyce, 13 years old, Maurine, 10, and Phil, 7. Carol was just a toddler. Even though it was a small grocery store, the older kids helped in running it. They knew how to do everything from weighing meat for customers, to fixing the slot machines that graced the entrance of that old country store. One of their chores each night, before closing, was to treat the floors. The store floors were made of rough wooden planks and were very hard to maintain. The weather-beaten farmers formed a steady stream of traffic through the tiny store each day. The red clay dirt fell off their heavy work boots and caused a choking dust to accumulate on those antiquated floors. Lannie bought a

heavy red powder in a large barrel which was like grit. Each night, using a tin metal scoop he would generously sprinkle the compound onto the floors until they were completely covered. It would settle the dust and early the next morning, before opening the store for business, Lannie would sweep it out.

On Saturday afternoons, most of the older farmers would gather at the store just whittling the time away discussing politics and the weather. There were three slot machines conventionally located to catch the eye of the customers. Each of them seemed to beckon and tempt the old farmers as they stood around talking about Huey Long and the new bridges he was going to build. Every now and then, someone would insert a nickel in the slots; everyone would gather around and watch the wheels systematically rolling around. Each man there secretly wishing it had been his turn to waste a whole nickel on something so foolish and yet so exciting. Most of the time, these one armed bandits were only played by the drummers who would visit the store on their weekly rounds of taking wholesale grocery orders.

Lannie Bordelon's store was typical of most during those days. It was built shotgun-style with just a small dogleg of a room going off to the left. The room had been an addition to the original structure to accommodate the large sacks of seed and grain, needed so desperately by the farmers. These sacks were originally made of unbleached muslin. Frugal farmer's wives found numerous ways to use this material to make pillow cases or aprons. Then one day the distributors started making them in cotton prints and everyone was elated. During those times, women never wore pants but only dresses, even when working in the fields. Therefore, these new prints were perfect for making frocks for everyone in the family. By adding touches of eyelet, lace and making tucks, pleats and gathers, each dress took on its own personality, even though it was the same print as most of the neighbor's clothing.



Leo Barbin
Lannie's father-in-law, in early 1940's

Upon entering the store, one glance could easily sweep the entire area. On the immediate right was a long counter covered with worn linoleum and held a scale, an old adding machine and a green cash register. Right in the middle was the forever-present green ledger which held the majority of the purchases made in any given day. Several pencils were scattered around the book. Credit was always extended to everyone in the community. The welfare checks and old age pensions were

received once a month and accounts were usually paid at that time. The "drummers" were then paid from the receipts and a new month began. Thirty days later the process was repeated all over again. However, the farmers fell into another category. Their credit was extended from season to season or as their crops came in.

Then above the counter, hanging low was a hand-made dispenser where the cigarettes came out in single file. Past the register was a large glass front counter which displayed an array of candies and treats. One of the favorite candies of the Bordelon kids was coconut balls. They were slightly smaller than a golf ball with a moist coconut filling. The outside had a deep red sugar coating which always seemed to come off on your fingers. They came 120 to a box and retailed for a penny a piece. These wonderful coconut balls were always used by the kids for a quick treat, something to eat in a hurry. Sitting on top of the counter were two large plastic containers, about the size of a five gallon paint can, which held those wonderful moon pies and pink-icing stage plank cakes.

Since the traffic in the store was continuously, house flies presented a problem. So, Lannie bought fly paper and scattered it throughout the store. Fly paper was a long strip with an adhesive coating. As a fly became attached to the paper, that was the end of the fly. Every so often, the strip was pulled down and cut off to reveal a fresh strip of adhesive.

Then across from the slot machines, a metal dispenser which held a box of kitchen matches, was securely attached to the dingy door frame. Over time, it had become smudged with fingerprints. Customers would come in to buy their cigarettes "loose" or one at the time from an open pack. They could not afford to spend twenty-five cents at one time on a whole pack of cigarettes. The farmers would then get a free kitchen match to light their smokes. A smaller and more compact version was the "penny box" of matches. These were not widely used because as the farmers worked and sweated in the hot midday sun, the matches would get wet. Times were hard as the country was coming out of a depression so if they could save a penny they would.

The burden of running a store which was barely kept afloat during the depression years caused Lannie and Ollie to reevaluate their choices. The old store was sold to Ollie's brother, Adley and his wife, Louise in 1950. Years went by, but the love of running a store was still foremost in Lannie's heart. He did not like farming. So when Adley closed the store to move to Baton Rouge, Lannie and Ollie decided to build a new store to service the community they loved. It was built across the street in front of their new home. There it remained until 1971 when they moved to Baton Rouge to be near their children. The property was sold and down came the sign "Lannie Bordelon" that for so many years had been a landmark in the community. It was to be no more.

Pelican Footnote: Maurine Anne Bordelon Lacour is a 1955 graduate of EHS.

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Euris Gauthier's Repair Shop

During some of the 1940s and 1950s, Euris Gauthier had a repair shop in down-town Evergreen. Located on Main Street, Hwy. 29 and across from the Post Office, the shop was bordered on the South side by the Ford Robert Grocery Store and on the North side by the Wade Bordelon Grocery Store. George Hollinshed had a Case Tractor business at the location prior to Mr. Gauthier. Repair work was done primarily on automobiles, trucks, and tractors.

Source: Irvin Gauthier, phone interview, July 13, 2009.

Pelican Footnote by Ed Dugas: One memory I have of Mr. Gauthier is of him doing repair work in his front yard. In this particular memory, Mr. Gauthier had the habit of turning off an engine while he was underneath the hood. To accomplish this he simply grabbed a few of the spark plugs and wires with both hands and shortly thereafter the engine died. I was totally in awe of this accomplishment, but never had the courage to try it myself.

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Irvin Gauthier's Repair Shop



Irvin Gauthier Repair Shop, Oct. 15, 2008

Irvin Gauthier opened his repair shop in 1966 at the present location, 3706 Hwy. 29 - between Evergreen and Riche' Road. Irvin learned the art of repairing engines first hand from a master mechanic, his father, Euris Gauthier. Assisting his father at a young age, it was apparent that being a mechanic was in his blood. Irvin has repaired cars, trucks, tractors, ATVs and almost anything automotive over the past four decades. At one time, he accepted repair jobs outside the shop, but now tends to conduct his repair work in his shop shown below.

Click here <http://www.evergreenla.org/News/Signage.htm> for his business sign, which includes the July 2, 2009 addition of [EvergreenLa.org](http://www.evergreenla.org) to the Gauthier Repair Shop Sign.

Source: Interview with Irvin Gauthier in his shop on October 15, 2009.



Irvin Gauthier Repair Shop, Oct. 15, 2008

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Edison and Vera Rabalais Descant Store



My sister, Vera "Bee" Rabalais Descant, and her husband Edison, built and opened a grocery store in September, 1956. It was located on their property at the corner of the Goudeau Road (Hwy. 361) and Spring Bayou Road (Hwy. 1180). They were both very active in the operations of the store, clerking, visiting with the customers, stocking shelves, cleaning and pumping gasoline.

They sold the usual groceries, cigarettes, drinks, and household necessities. They had a small kitchenette in one back corner so they could fix their meals, allowing them to spend more time in the store.

My Dad loved to sit on the porch and rock and visit with customers when they came for gas or groceries, or just

stopped to visit him. He knew everyone in the area.

In 1976 they sold the store to Judy Rabalais Gaspard. Judy later sold it to Robert Rabalais, and a short time later it was sold to Mr. Fisher, who closed it in the early 80's.

Since the building was vacant and in the corner of their yard, Vera and Edison soon decided to have the building torn down.

Since that time Edison has passed away and Vera still lives there.

Submitted by Ryan Rabalais, Vera's brother and a 1951 EHS graduate.



Descant Grocery Store
Edison & Vera Rabalais
Descant Owners
Vera in inset

Elmer James "Boulet" or "Bullet" Riche' Grocery Stores

Elmer James "Bullet" or "Boulet" Riche' Grocery Stores by Larry Jude "Pete" Riche'

The first store that we owned was purchased from Mr. Walter Dugas in October, 1948 and was located facing main street and on the left side of the bridge/road going to Rabbit Lane. Mr. Ford Robert's store was on the right side of the bridge/road. Across main street was the Post Office and Robert Tanner's store.

Other than regular groceries, sales consisted of 50# sacks of potatoes, rice, flour, and corn, 25# cans of lard was also a big seller. Some of our customers had credit which was paid once a year after their crops were harvested.

Some of the tobacco products were the roll-your-own named Bugler, Bull Durham, Prince Albert in the can (let me out, please), Target and Kite. You needed a book of papers to roll the cigarettes. The package cigarettes were Camels, Viceroy, Lucky Strikes, Kools, Winston's - to name a few. You could buy 2 cigarettes for 5 cents or a pack for 25 cents.

In the meat department, round steak and ground meat were the most popular cuts. You could get hand sliced lunch meat, bologna, ham, and hoop cheese. Smoked sausage was sold in bulk. Don't forget the salt meat and the slab bacon.

The POP'S of the day were the Nehi BELLY-Washers (grape, strawberry, orange) RC Cola, Nesbitt Orange, Squirt, and Coca-Cola which came in returnable bottles (1cent a bottle). A contest was held to see which coke bottle was distributed the farthest distance by city and state (ex. Seattle, Washington) from Evergreen. I remember the bottles of pop were cooled in a water circulating enclosed pop box which would smell of rust and well water.

On the counter sat clear Jack's cookies tubs which you reached into to get moon cakes and red coconut balls. Remember the taste of moon pies, stage blanks, ginger bread snaps, Ms. Tuckers pecan pies, honey buns and lemon squares? All types of candies were available, Milky Ways, Mounds, Snickers, jaw breakers, and kits.

Loaves of bread were left in bread boxes in the front of the store before the store opened. You did not have to worry about any one stealing in those days!

I remember the coal oil tank in the front of the store. If a customer needed coal oil you would go out and pump the fuel into a container which would always spay out on to your clothes and the smell would last all day.

Remember the years of the slot machines, aka, one-armed bandits? Every store had one or two machines. We had an older player who was a little shaky and I would put his coins in the slot machines and he would pull the handle. What a team! I was 7 years old and he was 70. Graven berg, with the Louisiana State Police broke up the Louisiana slot machine industry around 1954.

Another fond memory was when a politician came into town doing a stump speech. When Earl K Long chose our store, he gave daddy \$5 for the cost of electricity and passed out nickels to the kids to buy pops. I remember when Dudley Le Blanc came into town and sold us ten cases (240 bottles of HADACOL) which would have lasted us for ten years!

Do you remember the contracted field hands (picking or hoeing cotton) coming out of the fields to buy their lunches which consisted of bread, lunch meat, bologna, potted meat, sardines, moon cakes, crackers and a big belly washer?

Some of the school children would leave school at recess or at lunch time, walking on the well-worn path and head to the stores to buy treats. The older ones might sneak in a quick cigarette!

On a rainy September night in 1959, a speeding car hit the gas pumps, starting a fire which burned the front of the store. Mr. Willis Rachal (Town Marshal) purchased the store and operated it as Rachal's Grocery. We purchased an old dance hall in Plaucheville, which we moved to the front of the house on Hill Street (across from the park) and operated it until 1970. Later on T- Robson opened it as Robson's grocery and it is still in operation in the year 2009. It is the only grocery store operating in Evergreen today.

Thank you for allowing me to share my memories with the Evergreen Pelicans!

Submitted August 19, 2009

Pete Riche'

EES Class of 1959 and BHS Class of 1963

More of Pete's Memories - Submitted August 20, 2009

Momma's full name was Ollie Rabalais Riche'. The children would call her "Ms. Boulet" if she was with daddy on the school bus. In the store, everyone would call her "Ms. Ollie".

Daddy's name was Elmer James Riche', but was always called "Mr. Boulet or Bullet". It seem that if he was driving the bus (because he would drive a little fast) he would be called "Bullet." In the store he was called "Boulet" by children and adults.

Thank you for the hard work and time that you and the staff contribute to make this such a memorable web site. I want to help in anyway that I can.

Pete Riche'

EES Class of 1959 and BHS Class of 1963

Pelican Footnote: "Boulet" was our chosen bus driver for the Junior and Senior trips in both 1957 and 1958. In 1957, the classes went to Galeston and the next year spent the weekend at Gulf Hills Dude Ranch in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. "Boulet" made both trips fun and enjoyable, as he did for other EHS school trips. (see Anecdote about Sea Gulls on Galveston ferry).

Ms. Ollie was pleasant to their customers and we chatted daily while I was a newspaper boy. I needed one of those bars of candy Pete referred to before starting my paper route. Once I purchased it, I moved across the street so Dorsey Williams could place my newspapers in the basket of my bicycle, then cut the wire holders. He and Billy West took a break from their daily conversation, while Dorsey loaded the papers which Mr. Normand, mail truck driver, had unloaded in front of the post office.

Virgil Tanner's Store by Carolyn Tanner Rabalais



Virgil Tanner's store served Tanner Hill and the surrounding area from the early 40's to the early 50's. It was located about 2 miles from Evergreen at the intersection of the Goudeau Road (Hwy. 361) and Indian Bayou Road (Hwy. 362).

Virgil was my Dad. Virgil, Jr. and I helped with many of the store duties, especially clerking, as Dad also ran the farm. Mom, Sylvia Gagnard Tanner, was also very busy. As teaching was her profession, she was occasionally called to substitute teach in Evergreen. Also, it was during these years that my younger brothers, Michael and Lyle were born.

When we opened, ration stamps were still necessary for items such as sugar. Besides the staples of sugar, rice,

flour, and dried beans, we stocked lunch meat, cheese, bread, moon pies and soda pop for workers who stopped in for a quick lunch. We also sold sausage and canned goods, cigarettes and candy, gum, and cookies.

Army surplus clothes were popular. They were cheap and sturdy work clothes. Of course, we sold kerosene and you can see the pumps on the porch, along with the bread box for the salesman to put the fresh bread in before we were even awake.

Later we had what-nots...some made in occupied Japan. I really enjoyed sorting, pricing and displaying them. I still have my miniature dog band that Dad let me keep. I also have the small kerosene lamp I bought for 25 cents from the Lannie Bordelon store.

The slot machine was a popular attraction, until we were robbed one night. That is the only thing I can remember being stolen. We found it across the road in the bushes, broken and minus the money.

By the early 50's, Virgil Jr. and I had left home. Lyle and Michael were still too young to help, so Dad, needing to spend more time on the farm, found it necessary to close the store. He used the building for farm storage and later moved it farther back from the road onto the property, where the remains still stand.

Submitted by Carolyn Tanner Rabalais, EHS Class of 1952



**Virgil G. Tanner Sr.
(At the counter inside his Store)**

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Adley Barbin
Lannie's brother-in-law, in late 1940's



Leo Barbin
Lannie's father-in-law, in early 1940's



Irvin Gauthier Repair Shop, Oct. 15, 2008



Irvin Gauthier Repair Shop, Oct. 15, 2008



Edison Descant inside the store

My Dad in inset



Descant Grocery Store

Edison & Vera Rabalais

Descant Owners

Vera in inset



**Virgil G. Tanner's Store 1948
(with sign inset)**



**Virgil G. Tanner Sr.
(At the counter inside his Store)**