

WALKING TOUR

Begin the walk at the Bayou Teche Visitors Center (314 E. Bridge St.). Walk down the steps or walk on our wharf and enjoy a scenic view of Bayou Teche. Notice the beautiful porches and landscaped yards of the nearby bed and breakfasts.

Get a close-up view of the bridge of 1950, the second steel bridge to span the bayou in Breaux Bridge. This bridge was built after the previous bridge collapsed. Note the painted crawfish atop the bridge, celebrating our legacy as the "Crawfish Capitol of the World".

When you look across the street next to the left of the bridge, you'll see the Teche Lounge, which operated from 1950 until a couple of years ago when the proprietor passed away. The lounge was known by locals for its tradition of being a "men-only" establishment.

Continuing into downtown along Bridge St. you will come to the Old Bank Building (300 E. Bridge St.) at the corner of Bridge and Washington Streets. Built in 1901, this was the second brick structure in Breaux Bridge, and it served as our community's first bank.

If you take a left onto Washington St., you will pass the Jules Broussard Building (105 Washington, behind the old bank building). Built in 1885, this building served first as a general store, then as Breaux Bridge's first public school. In 1920 it was moved to its present location by log rollers and a team of oxen. Here it has served as an opera house, a temporary armory hall, a Woodmen of the World meeting hall, and a shoe repair shop.

The next building you come to (107 Washington St.) was built c. 1892. The Boudier House is a one-story frame house featuring Queen Anne-influenced polygonal bay and Eastlake galleries. It presently operates as a bed and breakfast inn.

Continuing along Washington, the next building will be Silvestre Broussard House (205 Washington), built in 1811. A Creole Acadian cottage, the front part of the house is the oldest structure in Breaux Bridge. It has provided room and board to area residents, guests, and traveling salesmen since the 1850's. It features three sets of French doors opening onto the historically restored front gallery. The building is constructed of 4-inch hand-hewn beams, with mortise and tenon joints. It features baton and bousillage walls (bousillage is a mixture of mud and clay that serves as an excellent insulator) with a plaster finish and 12-foot tall, exposed beam ceilings. The back section was added during the late 19th century, as bayou traffic increased. It presently operates as a bed and breakfast inn.

After viewing these homes, return to Bridge St., taking a left on the Bridge to continue the walking tour. You'll pass one of our old theaters before coming to 200/202 E. Bridge St., the Potier Building. Constructed in 1898, this two-story brick commercial building of tin-covered cypress with residential space upstairs boasts an interior that features pressed tin ceilings and longleaf pine floors. The storefronts have housed a restaurant, an infant and children's clothing store, and a hat and dress shop. They currently house antique and gift shops and upstairs continues to serve as residential space.

Cross the side street and continue along Bridge St. to the next building, the Frank Pellerin Building (140 E. Bridge St.) This structure, built in 1925, features pressed tin ceilings, brick walls, and wood floors. It was built by Frank Pellerin who operated a mercantile store there until the 1940's. This was followed by a shop that sold fabrics, lace, ladies' garments, and religious supplies. The store stayed vacant throughout the 1980s and was purchased in 1991 for the café it continues to house. Peek inside because there is always an art exhibit highlighting the work of one of our many regional artists. Also, permanently housed in the café is an Acadiana Sculpture Gardens piece entitled "Le Ladousa Lure".

Look across the street from the café and you will see an authentic Acadian house, the Badon House (129 E. Bridge), built in 1869. The house has recently been restored and is home to an art gallery.

Continuing along Bridge St. will come to Begnaud's Hardware Store (118 E. Bridge) c. 1899. This was the first brick structure built in Breaux Bridge. It is a one-story commercial building with a corbelled cornice and the original wooden shopfront decorated with cast-iron pilasters. It served as a hardware store that also carried carriages, wagons, and buggies. The building next to this hardware store served as a "bouree" hall until recently. Bourrée is a very popular Cajun card game. If you're ready for a break, you can stop by a sidewalk café also located on Bridge St.

When you get to the corner of Bridge and Main St., look across Bridge St. to your right to see the Kidder Building (101 E. Bridge). Built in 1909, this structure stands at the old four-corner intersection. The building, which was originally intended as a saloon, has served as a cock fight arena and a WWII dance hall. It is currently the home of Once Upon a Wing, a children's clothing boutique.

Take a left onto S. Main St. Patin's Pharmacy, c. 1917 (113 S. Main St.) This commercial building first served as the People's Bank of Breaux Bridge. It operated as a pharmacy from the 1920's until the early 1990's. Go to the corner of the block and cross the street to get a good look at the Fourgeaud House (130 S. Main). Built in 1905 the house was constructed for Dr. Louis Fourgeaud, a native of France who began practicing medicine in Breaux Bridge in 1885 after obtaining a diploma from the Tulane Medical School. The house later served as a hotel, a private residence, a gift shop and bridal boutique, and a

reception hall and café. The house stood vacant for many years while local citizens negotiated to save the structure. It has undergone recent preservation renovations and is listed on the National Historic Register.

Heading back towards Bridge St. you will come to Farmers-Merchants Bank on the corner of Bridge and Main. Cross the Bridge and continue along N. Main. The first building you will come to is Broussard's Hardware Store, built in 1921 (105 N. Main). This large two-story galleried corner frame building clad in rusticated metal designed to resemble stone retains its original pressed tin ceiling and much of its original hardware store accouterments. The two-tier gallery has simple posts which rest on brick bases on the lower level. A hardware store went into business here beginning in 1925 and remained in operation until the mid-1990s. The store has since housed an antique and Victorian gift shop and presently houses a Tattoo Parlor and Tante Marie is a restaurant that operates on the side of the building.

Continuing along N. Main, you will walk past the old Simon's Drug Store, which was one of the oldest family-owned businesses in Breaux Bridge, having continuously operated since 1938. You will then pass an old flower and gift shop which was once Mim's Restaurant, world famous for originating the Crawfish Dogs.

When you get to the corner of Bridge and Courthouse St. You can look across the street to see St. Bernard Catholic Church (204 N. Main). After the deterioration of a previous church built in 1857, Rev. P. A. Borel identified the need for a new church. Construction began on this twin-steepled, French-Roman architecturally styled building in 1933 and was completed in 1934. Artifacts from the previous church were moved in and materials used in the construction came from the Breaux Bridge area, including the exterior bricks, which were made by a former brick company in Breaux Bridge. Many of the local craftsmen participated in the construction of the church.

Turn left onto Courthouse St. and you will pass the library, and the parish agriculture building. When you get to the corner of Courthouse and Berard St., look left to see City Hall, and to your right is City Parc. The oak trees are registered with the Live Oak Society and are over 200 years old. Before a Catholic church building had been built in Breaux Bridge, residents would meet under these trees for mass.

If you turn right onto Berard St., you will pass the Veterans Monuments and a statue of Scholastique Picou Breaux, our founder. To the rear of the park is the old bandstand. The bandstand was constructed with bricks collected when each family was asked to send a brick to school with one of their children. The bricks came from a Breaux Bridge brick factory. The bandstand served as a public gathering spot that hosted frequent outdoor concert performances as well as political speeches, including a speech by the late Huey Long.

When you reach the corner of Berard and Martin St., look to the left to see the Jaeger House (305 Berard St.). Built-in 1896 by Victor Jaeger, this 2-story Queen Anne home with Eastlake details features a 2-sided wrap-around gallery, a large bay room, and a large dormer above the gallery with a door and private balcony. The home has been painted in its original colors of gray, dark green, and burgundy. The ground floor has handmade glass windows. Jaeger was a noted salesman and businessman and was known as the first Breaux Bridge citizen to own an automobile. An operational windmill once stood on the property making this the first home in the parish to have running water. It is presently a private residence.

Turn right onto Martin St. and you will pass the junior high school on the left and headquarters of one of our state's finest Volunteer Fire Departments on the right.

Cross over Main St., continuing straight onto St. Bernard Dr. Notice St. Bernard Cemetery No. 1 (200 block of N. Main St.) to your right. This unique cemetery featuring many above-ground tombs, dates to the mid-1800s when it was opened after the establishment of the St. Bernard Catholic Church Parish. Before this time, families buried their dead on family properties. Buried in the cemetery are the remains of families who settled in the area, several prominent citizens, and veterans of the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Tombstones feature many Cajun and French names.

Continue along St. Bernard Dr. and you will come to Parc des Ponts de Pont Breaux (park of bridges of Breaux Bridge). The old oaks that stand along the bayou side were likely the oaks that provided stability to the first footbridge across Bayou Teche in Breaux Bridge. This first bridge was built by Firmin Breaux and is probably where the name of our city evolved. (When giving directions, people would say "Go to Breaux's bridge. . .".) The footbridge was likely a suspension bridge made of rope and small planks. The ropes were tied to the oak trees for stability.

Along the bayou side, the bridge of 1855 has been converted to an outdoor cultural stage that doubles as a fishing pier. This was our first turn-table bridge. During the Civil War, confederate troops set the bridge ablaze to slow down Union troops. The Union troops successfully put out the fire and were able to repair the bridge for temporary use. In 1891, the bridge was moved to the neighboring community of Ruth, where many of its wooden timbers were replaced with steel beams, but the turn-table mechanism was retained. When a newer bridge replaced this bridge in Ruth, the City of Breaux Bridge had it reassembled along the bayou side for public use.