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Sanborn maps can be downloaded

December 29, 2003—Sanborn maps for several towns in Vermilion Parish drawn between 1895 and 1927 can be downloaded from the new [Sanborn map page](#). Those who are familiar with Abbeville, Kaplan, Maurice, or Erath may enjoy perusing these maps.

Re-enactment of the Louisiana Purchase transfer

December 20, 2003—The historic re-enactment of the transfer of possession of the Louisiana Territory from France to the United States took place this weekend...[Full story and pictures](#)

Grand opening of the Abbeville library

December 7, 2003—The grand opening of the new Vermilion Parish Library in Abbeville took place today...[Full story and pictures](#)

Volume 2 is almost ready

December 7, 2003—Taylor Publishing Company has sent us the proofs for [Volume 2](#), and they look beautiful. Only minor editing is required, then the final cut of the book will be returned to Taylor, probably tomorrow. Unfortunately, Taylor is closed from December 20 through January 2, so there is no chance the books will be delivered to us before Christmas. However, we should get them in January.

The book will be 620 pages long (including a 40-page index), compared with 485 for the first volume. It will contain family stories, local historical topics written by historians and scholars, many old photographs, tributes, histories of churches, schools, and organizations, and a large section of excerpts from the Meridional (with the French translated into English) from 1877 to 1900 about the people, places, and events of that period.

If you would like to order one or more, go to the [order form](#), print it out, fill it out, and send it in with your check.

Miniature buildings already sold out

December 7, 2003—The demand for miniature Abbeville buildings was so great that the second order of [St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Churches](#) and the first order of [Bank of Abbeville](#) buildings sold out in less than three weeks. At its next meeting in January, the Board will decide whether to reorder these buildings and will decide what the third building in the series will be. Many good ideas have been received, but the polling so far seems to favor Abbeville's magnificent courthouse, designed by the great Louisiana architect A. Hays Town.

If you ordered through the Internet and we did not get your order in time, we apologize.

Keep your eye on this news page for information on the next availability of these model buildings.

Miniature buildings have arrived

November 19, 2003—The second order of miniature [St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Churches](#) has arrived, as well as the first order of miniature [Bank of Abbeville](#) buildings. They are \$50.00 each, plus \$5 per item for shipping and handling. Those on a waiting list should pick up their buildings at the Alliance Center, 108 South State Street, Abbeville, between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Monday through Friday. After that time, buildings may be picked up either at the office of [Theall Law Firm](#), 120 Peace Street (one block east of the Alliance Center facing the courthouse square), or at the office of Darnall, Sykes (near the bridge on Pere Megret Street). If you are not on a waiting list you will have to act quickly, as the shipment is expected to sell out quickly. Order a miniature building by printing out the [order form](#), filling it out and mailing it with your check.

Cannon Odyssey

November 11, 2003—Ken Dupuy has submitted a story entitled "[Cannon From the War for Texas Independence](#)." He traces the path of a cannon used in that famous battle on its journey from the battlefield at San Jacinto to Vermilion Parish and beyond. Find out what Robert Perry of Perry's Bridge and his sons had to do with it.

Model Buildings News

October 19, 2003—We are still awaiting delivery of the second order of model St. Mary Magdalen Church and the first order of model Bank of Abbeville buildings. Delivery had been promised for September after a mixup at the factory caused them to produce a batch of a St. Mary church in Mississippi by mistake. Nothing arrived in September. The last word (October 6) from the factory representative is as follows:

"I apologize for the delay in the shipment of the buildings. I know that your community is eager for their arrival and you need to know what to tell them. Unfortunately, when dealing with overseas suppliers there can be delays with the product.

"The bank building as well as the Church building will be coming on the November shipment. My estimate would be around the 3rd week. We have to see how long it will take for them to be processed when they come into the States.

"Thank you for your understanding with this. As it gets closer to the date I will be able to update you further."

Volume 2 News

October 17, 2003—Volume 2 of History of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, is now in the hands of Taylor Publishing Company of Dallas. We are awaiting the arrival of proofs so that final editing can be done. The book was submitted to Taylor in the form of a CD-ROM, with files created using the Adobe PageMaker program which had been supplied by Taylor. It is completely laid out and indexed, so it should not require any lengthy handling by Taylor. The book contains over 600 pages, which is considerably larger than Volume 1 at 485 pages.

Anyone who pre-ordered Volume 2 and asked that it be shipped should use the mails or the [VHS Feedback Page](#) notify us if their address has changed since their order was placed. The book may still be pre-ordered for \$90 plus \$5 shipping and handling by printing and mailing the order form which can be found on the [VHS Order Form](#) page of this website.

Margaret Chauvin Steen Villemez is 2003 Pioneer of the Year

September 27, 2003—The prestigious Pioneer of the Year award given by the Abbeville Cultural and Historical Alliance this year went to Margaret Chauvin Steen Villemez...[Full story and picture](#)

September Board Meeting

September 25, 2003—The VHS Board of Directors met last night at the Alliance Center in Abbeville. The first order of business was to take a picture of the board members and editing committee for the history book. The attendees retired to Magdalen Square, where pictures were taken in front of the gazebo. (One of the pictures is now on the [membership roster](#) page of this website.) The group then returned to the Alliance Center. After adopting the previous minutes and the financial report, the letter of resignation of O. H. DesHotels III from the Board was accepted with regret. Velta Bourgeois then reported that the model banks and churches have not yet been received, although delivery was promised for September. She will check further. Gary Theall reported that he and Lloyd Doré III will meet with representatives of Taylor Publishing Company on Friday to finalize plans for the printing of Volume 2 of the history book. The book is ready to be placed in line for printing. Ken Dupuy entertained the Board by reading the newspaper report of the wedding of Una B. Evans in 1938. Una was present and enjoyed the presentation. Gary Theall then reported on how he discovered the seemingly reliable evidence that Père Mégret was indeed born in Abbeville, France. The meeting then adjourned.

Père Mégret's Birthplace

September 4, 2003—Many people have assumed that since Père Mégret named his town Abbeville, he must have been born in Abbeville, France. From the time of his death in 1853 until now we could find no documentation to support that assumption. Recently, Gary Theall purchased a pamphlet entitled "Une Autre Abbeville" ["Another Abbeville"] from the late Father Donald J. Hébert's website at www.hebertpublications.com, written by Dr. Mary-Theresa MacCarthy of New Jersey. It is a short article in French about Père Mégret, with translation by Father Hébert. It offers strong evidence that Père Mégret was indeed born in Abbeville, France. Theall's article on this website about the [naming of Abbeville](#) has been amended to incorporate this new information.

July Board Meeting

July 24, 2003—The VHS board of directors met last night at the Kaplan Museum at 5:30 p.m. Gary Theall used a laptop computer and a digital projector to

demonstrate to the board the layout of Volume 2 of the history book. Except for finishing touches and the addition of a few more photographs, the book is completely laid out and indexed. The editing committee will meet within the next few days to decide whether or not to delete portions of the book, which is somewhat longer than Volume 1. The alternative is to pay more money for the publication of a larger book. In any event, the publication of the book is not far away. The board members present seemed pleased with the book and thanked Theall for his work in putting the book together.

Fourth of July Items

July 4, 2003—In honor of Independence Day, Ken Dupuy has submitted two excerpts from his longer works. The first describes the parade in Abbeville on a steamy [Fourth of July in 1889](#), and the second describes the celebration on [July 4, 1898](#), at Magdalen Square in Abbeville, including the raising of a 10x20 foot U. S. flag ninety feet into the air.

New Additions to the Website

June 24, 2003—One new topic and one new biography have been added to the website. The new topic is an article by Patricia Saltzman Heard on a prohibition era [liquor raid in Gueydan](#), Louisiana. Ironically, the raid ended up keeping some of the local residents supplied with fancy liquor for quite some time.

The new biography is that of [Christian George Honold](#), by Kenneth A. Dupuy. Honold was a resident of Abbeville for about 25 years, and was the architect who designed many of Abbeville's most distinctive and beautiful buildings, including the first high school (now the school board office), the Abbeville Rice Mill, the Planter's Rice Mill, the Bank of Abbeville, the Fenwick Sanitarium (Palms Hospital), the People's Bank, the Abbeville Masonic Temple, and St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church. The article includes pictures of his buildings, most of which, although perhaps modified to some extent, are still standing. By the way, our first two selections for the Model Village Project—St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church and Bank of Abbeville—were both designed by Honold.

Latest News About the Miniature Buildings

June 24, 2003—The manufacturer of the miniature buildings has apologized for the delay in shipping the second order of miniature churches, which should have arrived by now. By mistake, the company ran off an order of 312 copies of a building in Mississippi also called St. Mary Magdalen, that had not been ordered by their customers in Mississippi and that we cannot use. The company is working hard to fill our order and expects to ship the little churches to us with their next shipment, which is scheduled for September. Hopefully we will also receive the first order of miniature Bank of Abbeville buildings at the same time. If so, there will be plenty of time before Christmas for those who want to purchase them to give as Christmas gifts.

May Board Meeting

May 28, 2003—The board of directors of the Vermilion Historical Society held its regular bi-monthly meeting at the Vermilion Parish Library in Erath at 5:30 p.m. tonight. Present were Gary Theall, Ken Dupuy, Alberta Winch, Sue Butaud, Heloise Broussard, Barbara Hebert, Velta Bourgeois, Cecile Broussard and guest Donna Garling. Gary Theall presided in the absence of president Rene Breaux and vice-president Margaret Steen. After the reading of the minutes of the last meeting, Gary Theall gave the treasurer's report and pointed out that we have three new lifetime members, Emery Toups, Frank A. Godchaux III, and Patricia Heard. Gary then reported that 400 pages of Volume 2 of the history book have been laid out and indexed, comprising the excerpts from the *Meridional* from 1877 through 1900. Another 150 pages of family stories have been laid out but the pictures have not yet been inserted. Other items remain to be laid out. The book will be too large, and it will be necessary for the editing committee to meet and delete some of the newspaper excerpts. Velta Bourgeois reported that she made the request for the paint on the bricks of the model Bank of Abbeville to be darkened, and has ordered 400 units. Another 312 of the model churches have been on order for some time, and could arrive at any time. The business portion of the meeting being concluded, Ken Dupuy in honor of Memorial Day presented some excerpts from the *Meridional* of letters and articles concerning Vermilion Parish veterans. He first read a 1933 report of a visit home by 21-year-old Louis A. LeBlanc, a son of J. G. LeBlanc. His name is now on the memorial on Concord Street of veterans who died in the service of our country. He then read a report dated December 12, 1942, on the death of Lt. Earl B. Lattier, another veteran whose name is on the memorial. The *Meridional* printed a letter written by

Lattier to his parents three days before his death, as well as a letter from a friend, Lercy Aube. Next was an article about local sailor Joseph E. Bourque who had witnessed the ceremonies for the surrender of Japan. Gary Theall then gave a Powerpoint presentation of the story and pictures of the E. I. Addison family which he received last week from Martha Frederick Sonnier, just in time for inclusion in Volume 2. Martha's mother, Marguerite LeBlanc, was a foster child of Marie Addison, a daughter of E. I. Addison. Martha grew up in the old Addison home on Peace Street in Abbeville, and was in possession of not only a great deal of information but of some very old photographs.

2003 Annual Meeting

May 1, 2003—The annual general membership meeting was held last night at 5:30 p.m. at the Alliance Center in Abbeville. President René Breaux called the meeting to order. After the reading of the minutes and the treasurer's report, the annual election of officers and directors was held. The following officers were elected by acclamation: René Breaux, president; Margaret Steen, vice-president; Alberta Winch, secretary; and Gary Theall, treasurer. The following directors were elected by acclamation: Velta Bourgeois (Abbeville); Cecile B. Broussard (Abbeville); Heloise Broussard (Abbeville); Sue Butaud (Erath); O. H. DesHotels III (Kaplan); Lloyd F. Doré III (Abbeville); Kenneth A. Dupuy (Maurice); Una Broussard Evans (Abbeville); Patricia S. Heard (Gueydan); Barbara Hebert Hebert (Abbeville); and Meceal Hollier Smith (Gueydan).

Velta Bourgeois, chairperson of the Model Village Project, displayed the prototype model of the Bank of Abbeville. The membership agreed that the model was well done and did not require any changes except perhaps a slight darkening of the brick color. Since the Bank of Abbeville has ordered 100 of the model buildings, the membership decided to place an order for 400 models rather than the minimum order of 312. They should arrive within a few weeks.

Gary Theall reported that he had met with representatives of Taylor Publishing Company to discuss the cost of making Volume 2 of the history book larger than Volume 1. After examining the costs of publishing a book today compared to publishing a book twenty years ago when Volume 1 was published, and comparing the value of a dollar today to the value of a dollar twenty years ago, the membership voted unanimously to fix the price of Volume 2 at \$90.00 per copy, which is still considerably less than the cost-of-living adjustment to the \$60.00 price of Volume 1. Of course, those who purchased the book pre-

publication at \$50.00 got a considerable bargain. Pre-publication sales have now been stopped, and all future sales will be at \$90.00 per book. The book is in the indexing phase, which is time-consuming and is proceeding as fast as time will permit.

After the business portion of the meeting, Gary Theall demonstrated some of the features of the website which had been added since his last demonstration. Then Theall and Ken Dupuy made a presentation of the Sanborn maps of Vermilion Parish towns. These maps were made at various times in the past showing the locations and outlines of the buildings in the towns for fire insurance purposes. The maps have become important historical documents. Dupuy and Theall pointed out many of the interesting features of the early maps of Abbeville, after which Theall handed out computer CDs containing the following Sanborn maps: Abbeville 1895, 1899, 1907, 1912, and 1923; Erath 1927; Kaplan 1921; and Maurice 1921.

Bank of Abbeville prototype

April 16, 2003—The prototype for the Bank of Abbeville model building came in today. Upon approval by the board, the first batch will be ordered and should be here in a few weeks. Print out the [order form](#) and order one today. Click on the image below to get a better view of the model.

Gueydan Museum Holds Grand Opening

April 6, 2003—A large crowd attended the Grand Opening of the Gueydan Museum last night...[Full story and pictures](#)

Delhomme/Delhommer Reunion Announced

April 6, 2003—A reunion of the Delhomme/Delhommer families will be held June 13 to June 15, 2003, in Lafayette, Rayne, and St. Martinville. For information contact either [Danny Delhomme](#) or [Eula F. Delhommer](#).

2003 General Membership Meeting Announced

March 29, 2003—The annual meeting of the general membership of the Vermilion Historical Society will take place at 5:30 p.m. at the Alliance Center, 108 South State Street, Abbeville, Louisiana, on **Wednesday, April 30, 2003**. Officers and directors will be elected, and reports will be made on finances, on Volume 2 of the history book, on the Model Village project, on the website, and on other matters of interest to the membership. After the business portion of the meeting, Gary Theall with the assistance of Ken Dupuy will make an overhead computer presentation of the "Sanborn maps" of Vermilion Parish. These maps were made for fire insurance companies and show the shape and location of each building in a town. The maps to be presented are Abbeville in the years 1895, 1899, 1907, 1912, and 1923; Erath in 1927; Kaplan in 1921; and Maurice in 1921. A free CD-ROM containing these maps in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format will be available to anyone present who has access to a computer with a CD-ROM drive.

Volume 2 News

March 29, 2003—The materials submitted for publication in Volume 2 of the History of Vermilion Parish are now 95% on the computer, ready to be laid out using the software supplied by Taylor Publishing Company. Some proofreading and editing still must be done, and it will take some time to create a complete index even with the aid of the computer. The timing is unfortunate, in that Taylor Publishing Company mainly publishes school yearbooks, and is just getting into its busy season. Our book project may be given a low priority until after the yearbook season.

Dr. F. F. Young Biography

March 29, 2003—Ken Dupuy's article on the life of [Dr. F. F. Young](#), founder of the Fenwick Sanitarium, is now on the website. In addition to presenting Dr. Young's life and family ties, this article contains a great deal of information about the Fenwick Sanitarium/Palms Hotel/Palms Hospital, and is complementary to [B. B. McClellan's article](#) on the Fenwick Sanitarium.

Grand Opening of Gueydan Museum Announced

March 29, 2003—The grand opening of the Gueydan Museum will take place at the museum on Saturday, April 5, 2003, at 6:00 P.M. The old 1902 Bank of Gueydan building on Main Street has been restored and refurbished and will house the museum.



Summary of VHS Board Meeting of March 26, 2003

March 26, 2003—The board of directors of the Vermilion Historical Society met in Gueydan on Wednesday, March 26, 2003. Present were board members Rene Breaux, Margaret Steen, Gary Theall, Ken Dupuy, Patricia Heard, Heloise Broussard, Barbara Hebert, Meceal Smith, Cecile Broussard, and Lloyd Doré III, and guests Velta Bourgeois and Donna Garling. In the absence of secretary Alberta Winch, Ken Dupuy acted as secretary for the meeting. Treasurer Gary Theall delivered the financial report. It was decided that the annual meeting of the general membership would be held at the Alliance Center in Abbeville at 5:30 p.m. on April 30, 2003. Acting as a nominating committee, the board recommended that the present officers be offered for re-election at the general meeting, as well as the present board members with the addition of Velta Bourgeois as a new board member to fill a vacant seat. Gary Theall reported that 95% of the material for [Volume 2](#) of the history book is now on the computer, ready to be laid out using the software provided by Taylor Publishing Company. Because of the highly technical nature of the process, this must be done by someone with considerable computer experience. This task naturally falls to Theall as the only board member with an extensive background in mathematics and computers. Velta Bourgeois reported that the second building of the [Model Village Project](#), the Bank of Abbeville, has been on order for more than a month now, as well as the second order of the model St. Mary Magdalen Church. Gary Theall reported that the website is coming along nicely, and that it has finally been "crawled" by Google, one of the most popular search engines. Some of our pages come up first in line on searches such as "Antoine Desire Megret." Also, Theall said that he had successfully prevailed upon Dr. Alecia Long of the [Louisiana State Museum](#) to link their website to ours. Patricia Heard announced that the grand opening of the Gueydan Museum will take place at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 5, 2003, at the museum. The board was invited to attend. After the business portion of the meeting, Ken Dupuy presented photographs and information on [Lastie Broussard](#) and his children, which was much enjoyed by

those present and in particular by those who are descendants of Lastie Broussard.

Fenwick Sanitarium (Palms Hospital)

March 19, 2003—A paper written by Beatrice B. McClellan and delivered to the Abbeville Woman's Club in 1974 on the history of the [Fenwick Sanitarium \(Palms Hospital\)](#) has been added to the Topics in History section. A fine photograph of the magnificent structure accompanies the story. Many of the people in Vermilion Parish were either born there, treated there, or had relatives who died there. Mrs. McClellan is the widow of one of the doctors who owned an interest in the hospital for a time. The hospital was situated on the site of the new Vermilion Parish Library currently being built in Abbeville.

Two New Biographies

March 2, 2003—Two new subjects have been added to the [Biographies](#) section. The first is Ken Dupuy's article on [Eugene Isidore Guegnon](#), the founder of the *Meridional* newspaper. Read about his interesting life, his contacts with Pere Antoine Desire Megret, and the origins of our nearly century-and-a-half-old newspaper.

The second is the life story of [Jean-Pierre Gueydan](#), whose force and energy were responsible for developing the western half of Vermilion Parish, as told by Patricia Saltzman Heard, using both public and nonpublic sources.

The Masonic Lodge

March 1, 2003—Ken Dupuy's article on the [Abbeville Masonic Temple](#) is now on the website.

Louisiana State Museum links to VHS Website

February 22, 2003—Thanks to Alecia Long, Ph. D., writer and historian for the

[Louisiana State Museum](#), their website is now linked to ours. Dr. Long visited our website at my request and tells me that she spent some time on it and learned a great deal. She is preparing an exhibit which will touch upon the conflict between Pere Megret and the *marguilliers* (trustees) of St. John's Cathedral after his arrival in Vermilionville (now Lafayette). She would like to borrow the portrait of Pere Megret which hangs in the Vermilion Parish Courthouse for that exhibit.

Recent Additions to the Website

Feb. 11, 2003—Two more articles by Ken Dupuy have been added to "Topics in History." One is a list of the [early sheriffs](#) of Vermilion Parish, complete with documented references for verification. The other is an account of the devastating [1903 fire](#) on Concord Street, which destroyed numerous buildings and made way for the buildings we now have.

Website Slightly Restructured

Feb. 9, 2003—When Ken Dupuy submitted a biography of Lastie Broussard, the time had come to implement something which was under consideration for some time—a section on biographies. Check the [Site Outline](#) on the home page to see how this section was worked in. The biography of Judge William Kibbe has been moved to the new section, as has Mike Bradford's biography of Martin Bagley. As time goes on, we hope to keep adding biographies of particular individuals of importance to the history of the parish.

Joe Daze Blacksmith Shop Exposed:

Jan. 31, 2003—At the invitation of Dr. Chip Young, Ken Dupuy and Gary Theall poked around in the dirt exposed by the recent demolition of the McClellan building...[Full story and pictures](#)

News about the Website

Jan 29, 2003—The feedback feature and the site search feature are now installed and working. As of January 28, 2003, a new Topic, History of Abbeville by John W. O'Bryan Jr., has been added. O'Bryan was an Abbeville hero whose plane was shot down in WWII. As a student, he had put together a booklet of the history of Abbeville, using picture postcards of old Abbeville as illustrations. The booklet is presented in the form of a slideshow of each of his 27 handwritten pages. To see it, go to [O'Bryan History](#). As of January 29, 2003, Ken Dupuy's account of the [trial of Martin Bagley](#) for the murder of John Ford has been added, and as of January 30, 2003, Dupuy's re-creation of the [celebration](#) upon the completion of the railroad to Abbeville on December 15, 1892, has been added.

Summary VHS Board Meeting of January 22, 2003:

Jan. 21, 2003—The VHS Board of Directors met January 22, 2003, at the Abbeville Alliance Center. After the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and the treasurer's report., the Board heard a report that about 120 persons were on a waiting list for a re-order of our first model in the Model Village Project, namely, the St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church. On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously passed, the Board authorized a reorder of the model church. The board further decided to send out a questionnaire to the mailing list to elicit suggestions as to future model buildings and to find out how many people would be interested in buying the different models.

Gary Theall then used a digital projector and a laptop computer to demonstrate the website to the Board. After visiting all of the pages of the website, the Board voted unanimously to authorize Gary Theall to maintain the website on behalf of the Vermilion Historical Society and to list it on the various Internet search engines.

History of Vermilion Parish, La., Volume 2

Jan. 15, 2003—The material submitted is being edited and prepared for the printer. We hope to have the finished product from Taylor Publishing Company by April, 2003. We thank all of our friends who submitted material for the book and especially those who purchased the book in advance, thereby enabling us to pay for the initial printing.

Abbeville Model Village Project

Jan. 15, 2003—Another batch of 312 model St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Churches has been ordered. The original shipment sold out in a short time, and there is a waiting list of more than 100 people for the second batch. The second shipment should be in about May of 2003. We thank all of the people who added their names to the waiting list, thereby assuring that the re-order would be worthwhile. If you would like to order one, print out the [order form](#) and send it in. The model church is \$50.00, plus \$5.00 shipping and handling if it is to be shipped.

Measurements and photographs have been taken for our second building in the series, the historic Bank of Abbeville. We extend our thanks to the board of directors of Bank of Abbeville not only for their kind permission to make a model of their bank, but for their generous donation to pay for the prototype cast of the building. This model should be available about October of 2003.

The third building in the series will most probably be Abbeville's magnificent courthouse, designed by renowned Louisiana architect A. Hays Town.

This website was created and is maintained by [Gary E. Theall](#) on behalf of the Vermilion Historical Society.

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