

# Chapter 2

## HISTORY AND TOURISM

### History

In 1771, Firmin Breaux purchased land from a New Orleans merchant that eventually became what is now Breaux Bridge. In 1799, Breaux constructed a suspension footbridge tethered to large oaks on respective sides of the Bayou Teche. Breaux Bridge's namesake was derived from travel instructions to cross the Bayou Teche, one should "take Breaux's bridge." Some 18 years later, Firmin's son, Agricole constructed a large bridge capable of carrying vehicular traffic and thereby connecting both sides of the bayou for commerce and residential development. Agricole's widow, Scholastique Picou Breaux, drafted a city charter, and the city was founded in 1829. The next 100 years would bring civil war, two world wars, the Great Depression, the Great Flood of 1927, numerous economic hardships, and numerous hurricanes for which south Louisiana is known. In contrast, despite the hardships and economic downturns, Breaux Bridge continued to grow, and in 1959 it was incorporated. In the year of its centennial, 1959, the Louisiana legislature officially designated Breaux Bridge as "*la capitale Mondiale de l'ecrevisse*" or "the crawfish capital of the world". This title has gained notoriety and routinely attracts visitors from all over the nation and the world.



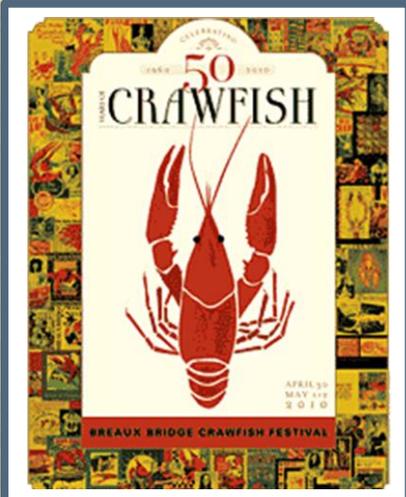
Statue of Scholastique Breaux-Located in Breaux Bridge.

Source: T. Baker Smith. LLC.

### Festivals and Tourism

The *Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival*, which started in 1960, is an annual festival that attracts thousands of visitors to the city. The festival is a long-standing tradition for many, and in 2010, Breaux Bridge celebrated the 50th year of the event. Held in May, the three day festival consists of amusement rides, live Cajun and Zydeco music, arts and crafts, and an assortment of Cajun foods. Also, the festival offers lessons in traditional Zydeco dancing and Bourée, a card game often enjoyed by Cajuns. The festival is accompanied by a parade, adult pageantry in which a Crawfish King and Queen are named, and junior pageantry in which children receive the same accolades.

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*Blooming on the Bayou*, held annually in April, occurs at Parc des Pont Breaux. The event offers an arts and crafts show, art walk, cook off, and antique car show. Proceeds from the event are dedicated to city beautification efforts. The city also boasts a one-day city-wide garage sale held annually in October in which residents coordinate and map garage sales throughout the city. This event typically draws vendors from throughout the region as well as out of state. This relatively new event is gaining in size and popularity. In 2011, an additional day will be dedicated for the event.

Breaux Bridge recently gained notoriety among eco-tourists through the *Tour de Teche*. The event is a 133 mile, three-stage canoe and kayak race from Port Barre to Berwick. Held annually in October, the event was designed to promote the preservation of Bayou Teche for recreation.

During the event, participants are encouraged to visit educational kiosks along the bayou that provide educational opportunities focused on the environment. The event programming also coordinates with the National Park Service to identify public access points in need of improvement. This event continues to evolve and adds new activities each year.

The festive atmosphere of the community is not limited to grand scale events. Outside of the planned festivals, Breaux Bridge is home to many smaller events held at local venues. Live bands and Cajun cuisine can always be enjoyed at local restaurants and cafes.

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