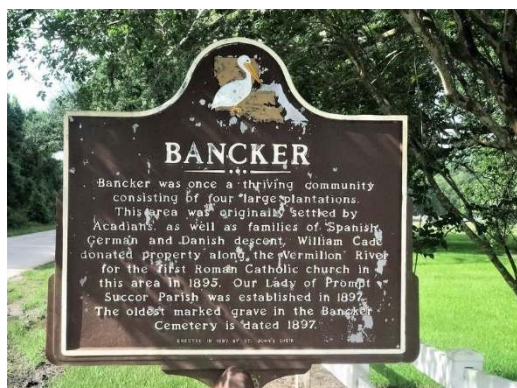


Rabideaux Sausage Kitchen

Bancker Grotto Memorial Park

*Bancker Grotto / Rabideaux's Run*

# Bancker



Bancker was once a thriving community consisting of four large plantations. This area was originally settled by Acadians, as well as families of Spanish, German and Danish descent. William Cade donated property along the Vermillion River for the first Roman Catholic church in this area in 1895. Our Lady of Prompt Succor was established in 1897. The oldest marked grave in the Bancker Cemetery is dated 1897.

Other nearby markers. At least 8 other markers are within 7 miles of this marker, measured as the crow flies. Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church (a few steps from this marker); Bancker Ferry (about 400 feet away, measured in a direct line); Bancker Plantations Paid Advertisement

The Bancker site has a Catholic Grotto, a nature walk, cemetery. Also a "you are here" map and a small self walking tour. Free open all year long.



## Bancker:

Bancker, located almost due south of Abbeville, where Hwy. 690 crosses the Vermillion River, was for many years a thriving community built around several large plantations.

On the east side of the river were Live Oak Plantation, owned by Adrien Nunez, and Cade Plantation, the property of William Cade, who established the first post office at the place (in 1896) and named it for his son, Bancker. Hope Mill Plantation was on the west side of the river. It was owned by Solomon Wise and Henry Bartels.

Hope Mill was a large plantation and had an open-kettle syrup mill, a sugar mill, a cotton gin, a saw mill, a grist mill, a moss gin, a cooper shop to build barrels and hogsheads for molasses and syrup, a blacksmith shop, a general store, and a private school. Until about 1900, workers on the plantation would grind the cane, boil it into a syrup and pump it into a tank barge that would be pushed by steamboat to Rose Hill Plantation, where it was converted to sugar.

The first school at Bancker was a private school on Hope Mill Plantation, where Alice Bartels, daughter of Henry Bartels, taught the children, some of whom came from the other side of the Vermillion River by pirogue or skiff. About 1890, Diedrich Ramke donated an acre of land for a public school to be built at

Bancker. It lasted for about 20 years, then was moved to William Cade's property, across from the present Bancker Cemetery. This school remained in operation until 1920, when it was consolidated with the Henry School. The Bancker students then had to ride to Henry in a mule-drawn vehicle called a "transfer."

In the beginning, water was the chief means of transportation in Bancker and most of the houses there faced the river. There was no public road in the immediate vicinity. A few steamboats plied the Vermilion and small sail boats went up and down the river regularly. They were poled or towed by a skiff when there was no wind.

The first church at Bancker was started on Hope Mill Plantation when Sunday School classes were held in Bancker's first school. About 1873, a Methodist Church was built nearby.

The first Catholic Church in Bancker, Our Lady of Lourdes, was built in 1895, and was served by priests from Abbeville until May 1897, when it was established as a parish and Father F. C. Blast was named its pastor. This church was on land donated by William Cade bordering the Vermilion River. It was moved to Henry in 1939, and was renamed the St. John Church.

All that remains in Bancker to show that the church was once there are two large gate posts marking the entrance to the church yard, a cemetery, and a grotto. The grotto was originally built of concrete made to resemble natural stone and has recently been refurbished. It is a replica of the original grotto at Lourdes, France.