

## History of Catahoula School

The Catahoula Lake School opened at its present site on September 19, 1936. Hugh Daspit, as principal, along with five other teachers taught grades one through seven. The six room structure was of cement blocks but without modern conveniences.

In 1940 the wooden gym of the St. Martinville High School was moved to Catahoula. The building was converted into a gym-auditorium with two classrooms to the rear. The same year a butane gas system was obtained to replace the kerosene fuel. Drinking fountains were also installed but this caused a water shortage. The School Board installed a deep water well system to solve this problem.

In 1944 Catahoula Cove School grades 1, 2, and 3 were transferred to Catahoula Lake. This increased the enrollment considerably.

In 1946 two classrooms and indoor restrooms were added to the sides of the six room cement block building.

In 1939 surplus commodities were furnished by the Federal and State Government. This was the beginning of a "lunch room" at school. Prior to this, children brought their lunch or went home to eat.

In 1942 Mr. Hugh Daspit was called to the Armed Services. Mrs. Lloyd Boulet replaced him as principal during the war years.

In 1947 the old cafeteria with all modern conveniences was constructed. The student enrollment at the beginning of World War II (1942) was about 160 pupils. This increased to about 260 after the war and in 1947 an 8<sup>th</sup> grade section was added to the school. In 1965 the library building which housed the library, speech therapy room and teachers' lounge was completed and the services of a part-time librarian were obtained. In 1969 the school obtained a full time librarian.

Mr. Daspit retired in 1966 with 45 years of service to public education and as principal of Catahoula School. He was replaced by Clifford Durand, Jr.

In 1967 the Benoit School cafeteria (Little Red School House) was moved to Catahoula to be used as a book and storage room. In 1968 the parish started its kindergarten program and this building was remodeled for the kindergarten class. The enrollment then jumped to about 316.

A metal building was also constructed near the kindergarten building to provide for classroom space for the schools increasing enrollment. In 1968 a full time secretary was obtained for the school.

The educational standards rose gradually with the times. When the school began 95 percent of the children spoke only French. The school steadily grew over the years and had an enrollment of about 330 students in the early 1980s.

Mr. Durand retired in 1983 and was replaced by Ms. Glenda McGee. Ms. McGee was principal from 1983-1986, followed by Mrs. Georgie Blanchard from 1986-1992 and Mr. Russel Foti from 1992-2004. Ms. Annette D. Baudoin, daughter of Mr. Clifford Durand, Jr. is the current principal of Catahoula Elementary School.

The school presently has an enrollment of about 237 students served by 14 full time teachers and 16 other employees.

