



Caddo Parish, La.

Caddo Parish officially adopted this seal in 2001, replacing the traditional round governmental seal which had been used for years.

On the seal are 11 stars - representing 11 townships in Caddo Parish; an oil derrick - representing the historical significance of oil in the parish; an arrowhead - representing the Caddo Indians, the original inhabitants and namesake of the parish; and the Red River - the lifeblood of Caddo Parish, and an important part of the economy today.

Townships

The townships in Caddo Parish are Belcher, Blanchard, Gilliam, Greenwood, Hosston, Ida, Mooringsport, Oil City, Rodessa, Shreveport and Vivian.

The oil derrick

Natural gas was discovered in Shreveport in 1870 while drilling for water for the Shreveport Ice Factory. A night watchman struck a match to see if the wind he heard blowing from the site would blow it out, but it ignited. The gas was used to light the ice factory and is the state's first documented use of natural gas.

In 1902, Ellison M. Adger drilled a water well along Cottonwood Bayou for his livestock, but at 400 ft. he found soured water. After sending soil samples to the U.S. Geological Survey, Adger learned that if he drilled deeper, to 1,000 ft., he might hit oil or gas. However, Adger was not interested but in 1907, a group of planters in the Belcher area organized the Dixie Oil, Gas and Pipeline Co., and their first well was near where Adger had drilled.

The next well in the company ran wild, but supplied gas for Dixie and Blanchard after it was capped. The first natural gas compressor in the world was located at Rodessa. By 1910, the Caddo Parish oil fields produced 75 percent of Louisiana's oil, and by 1911 derricks were everywhere.

The arrowhead

In 1835 the Caddo Indians ceded their land to the U.S., and the area was opened up for settlement. Within three years, the area had enough people to create another parish. Thus, Caddo Parish was created on Jan. 18, 1838. The name, suggested by legislature member W. H. Sparke, refers to the Caddo Indians. The boundaries of the new parish were not set until 1841.

The river

The Red River is still a vital part of Caddo Parish's economy. It provides a home to five riverboat casinos in Caddo Parish and neighboring Bossier Parish. In addition, the Red River allows industrial access to the Caddo-Bossier Port, and is a favored waterway for fishing and boating activities.

The Red River begins in eastern New Mexico, traveling east along the southern parts of Oklahoma and the northern areas of Texas before it heads southwest through Arkansas.

From Arkansas, the river turns south and runs between Shreveport and Bossier City, La. From there, the river serves as a border for Red River, Winn, Natchitoches, Grant, Rapides Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia and Pointe Coupee parishes before it links up with the Old River and finally flows into the Mississippi River itself.

As the river worms its way through the land, it picks up alluvial soil, which contains iron oxide, the material responsible for the reddish color of the water as well as its name.

The river was heavily trafficked during the steamboat days of the early and mid-1800s. Men established their businesses on the banks of the river, which served as a port and was essential for importing and exporting goods.

By 1881, 20 steamers ran between Shreveport and New Orleans with cargoes of beeswax, wool, grain, cottonseed oil, tallow, hay, cotton, livestock and hides.

Caddo Parish is a largely populated parish, ranking fourth in the state of Louisiana with 252,161 residents. The parish encompasses 889 square miles, covering 568,960 acres of land.