

## **HISTORY OF THE JOHN R. DUPRE', SR. MUNICIPAL LIBRARY**

The property for the library was originally owned by John Clay Dunbar back in the mid 1920's. His son, Johnny Dunbar, Sr., inherited the property and built the present structure in 1982. It was the family home of Dorothy and Johnny Dunbar, Sr. until their deaths. The house and property were purchased by the Town of Port Barre on June 14, 2011. The Town's intent upon purchase was to convert the home into a library and/or multi-purpose facility to be used by its citizens.

The building remained unused until early May, 2012. At that time a Library Committee was formed and the following appointments were made: Ken Marks – Chairman; Todd Abshire - Vice Chairman; and Lisa Abshire - Secretary/Treasurer. The Committee consisted of the following: Ex-officio's - Mayor Gil Savoy, Alderwoman Paula Sharkey, M.D. and Joe Fred Godchaux. The additional committee members included Donnie Perron, Brenda Rodgers, Raymond Hargroder, Sr., Barbara Robertson, Gayle White and Louis McClemore.

Not long after the forming of the Library Committee, the leg work began. The word needed to get out of the Town's intentions for this building, and the need for funding such an endeavor. Committee members formed lists of contacts. From these lists, letters were mailed to local businesses and entrepreneurs.

The Town of Port Barre hired the architectural firm of D'Avy & Associates for plans, specs, regulations and cost estimates for the renovation. Drawings, plans and cost estimates were given to the committee members, and presented to the Mayor and Council for the project. Needless to say, the Town did not have enough money to start the project. Grant procurement was attempted, but not successful.

Shortly after the death of Mr. John R. Dupre' Sr., Library Committee Chairman, Ken Marks, was contacted regarding interest from the Dupre' family to help fund the Town's Library Project. Because of the gracious financial support of Cornelius Dupre, the Library Committee recommended and obtained approval at a meeting on November 1, 2012 from the Port Barre Town Council to officially name the building as the: ***John R. Dupre' Sr. Municipal Library*** .

In addition to Cornelius Dupre's generous contribution, Mr. Bobby Dupre, Mr. John's brother, along with other family members and numerous citizens and businesses made generous contributions to this worthwhile project as well.

Bids were sent out to general contractors in our area for the renovation of the building. Lenard Bertrand General Contractors submitted the lowest bid and was selected to do the work. The renovations began in May, 2013 and were completed in September, 2013.

Upon completion of the renovations, the Library Committee then researched all necessary equipment and supplies needed for the operation of a library. After weeks of compiling information, visiting other libraries in the area, a general list was compiled with cost estimates. The estimates were somewhat astronomical and the town was once again at an impasse as to how to fund the equipment purchases in order to open the doors to the library.

The Town completed its 2013 annual audit for the fiscal year ending in October, 2013. The Town of Port Barre was very blessed to close the 2013 fiscal year with a surplus of funds. In addition to receiving additional donations, the Town of Port Barre was now in a position to fund the remainder of the project.

We are all here today to officially open the doors and dedicate this beautiful library in the memory of Mr. John R. Dupre' Sr. The Town of Port Barre is very proud and excited to provide this much needed facility for all of its citizens, both young and old, to benefit from and enjoy for many years to come.

In conclusion, without the generous financial support of Cornelius Dupre, this project would not have become a reality in a short period of time. Also, we would like to commend the Library Committee, our Utility and Street Department personnel, the administrative personnel and the Port Barre Police Department's work crew for working diligently on getting things done. A huge THANK YOU to all of the above and volunteers who gave of their time to bring us where we are today.