

Lafayette Genealogical Society

Meeting Minutes

September 20, 2018

The monthly meeting of the Lafayette Genealogical Society was held on Thursday, September 20, 2018 in the meeting room of the South Regional Library, 1601 Johnston Street at 6:30 P.M. The meeting was called to order by President Brenda Thibodeaux. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. We then had a moment of silence to honor our ancestors and to remember our men and women serving in the armed forces. President Thibodeaux then greeted everyone and welcomed our one guest, Janice, who is researching the Credeur and Plaisance relations.

President Thibodeaux told everyone that the minutes from the August meeting are online and may be viewed at our new website. Paul Manuel motioned that we dispense with the reading of the minutes and it was seconded by Caliste Breaux. The motion passed and everyone is asked to read the minutes on line.

Warren LeBlanc was absent and we did not have a Treasurer's Report.

President Thibodeaux then informed everyone of an upcoming program sponsored by the Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Society on Celebrating the Heritage and Culture of Louisiana's Islenos. The program will be held on Saturday, October 6, 2018 from 8:45am until 4:00pm and will be held at Louisiana State Archives in Baton Rouge. The program is free and open to the public. She then reminded everyone that they should be putting together information for this year's Memoirs, our yearly publication. Please give your information to Kathy Pellerin.

President Thibodeaux reminded everyone about our annual banquet to be held on December 7 at 11 o'clock at the Petroleum Club. The cost is \$20 per person. The guest speaker will be professional genealogist, Judy Riffel. Please come early as parking is at a premium.

With there being no further business, President Thibodeaux introduced our speaker for the evening, Martha Aubert. Ms. Aubert spoke on the Orphan Train Society and the museum located in Opelousas, Louisiana. She is President of the Louisiana Orphan Train Society which is a non-profit group affiliated with the museum. This group, made up mostly of descendant of orphan train riders, meets 4 times a year and dues are \$10.00 per year. Martha was raised by her grandmother who came to Louisiana on one of these trains.



Martha Aubert, Guest Speaker

She gave us the history of the Orphan Train. It began with the Children's Aid Society founded by Charles Loring Brace in the city of New York. There were many immigrants coming to America in the mid 1800's and thousands of children found themselves alone and on the streets of that city. There were very few jobs and little housing for these people. He thought that many of these children could find homes in the rest of America. He sent some of these children west thinking they could work on farms. No known orphans from his organization were sent to Louisiana.

Sister Mary Irene Fitzgibbons had been very ill and while in this condition she had a vision of children. She promised God that, if she lived, she would devote her life to the care of children. She eventually recovered and started the New York Foundling Hospital. With the mere sum of \$5.00 she started to raise funds. Being Catholic, she started to write to bishops and priests all over the United States and

found families for the children. On her trains each child had an advocate with them and they were visited once a year by someone from the society. Foster parents were screened in New Orleans. If Sister Fitzgibbons and Mr. Brace had not started their respective organizations, the children that survived would have become indentured servants. This way they had much better prospects and many were adopted into the family. The last train ran in 1919. About 2,000 children came to Louisiana.



Martha Aubert answers question from members

She went into much more detail about the care of these children. Their story is told at the Louisiana Orphan Train Museum located at 223 S. Academy Street, Le Vieux Village in Opelousas. She handed out a brochure with all the information. She encouraged everyone to visit but to call ahead if we went as a group so that we would not overlap with another group. Brenda Thibodeaux mentioned that she had a few Catholic Acadiana magazines at the front table. This edition of the magazine had a write up about the museum and everyone was welcome to take one. Ms. Aubert graciously answered the many questions the members had.

President Thibodeaux reminded everyone that Genealogy 101 would be held on Saturday, October 6 but the location had been changed. Due to an activity at the downtown library the meeting would be at the south branch. She then adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Pellerin.
Secretary