

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

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By Damon Veach

My Memories of Cheniere au Tigre



Zoe Sagrera Lynch

CHENIERE AU TIGRE: I can understand how one can love an island, and Cheniere au Tigre is a small piece of paradise. It is located in Vermilion Parish and is only about five miles long and very narrow. It is isolated from the rest of the world by treacherous marshes filled with vicious alligators and mosquitoes. Tiger Island is a sandy ridge of land surrounded by marsh along the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, there are three ridges resembling long fingers.

The front ridge is on the Gulf Coast shore, and the Coast Guard Tower was located on this ridge. The second ridge had five cottages and a dance hall for guests. The third ridge was occupied by the Sagrera Home, Hotel and Health Resort, family homes of the islanders, a school, church, and the Sagrera Cemetery.

Zoe Sagrera Lynch has captured the past beautifully in these published pages. Her father was Raphael Semmes Sagrera, known as Semmes, and named in honor of his father Dr. Raphael Sagrera and the prominent Confederate Naval Admiral Raphael Semmes. He attended school in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, at St. Stanislaus College. When his father passed away, he quit school and returned to the island to help his mother care for his brothers and sisters. Semmes was married to Mary Zoe Cessac at Campbell's Ferry, Louisiana in August of 1912. She grew up in a family of seventeen at Belle Isle.

What is especially nice about this book is the number of pictures used to illustrate life on the island. I don't ever recall such a massive number of pictures used to tell a historical account, but they are used extensively to show all phases of life even to the animals, buildings, and scenery. Some of the more interesting chapters detailed the foods used by residents, fishing, hunting, trapping, and medical needs. The accounts of the healing waters of the Gulf is an amazing look at how the residents and visitors used the sand and salt water for body rejuvenation.

Most of the homes on the island were badly damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Audrey in 1957, but the memories of life on the island lives on. The comforting breezes of the Gulf still blow across the island, and the stories to be told keep the island alive. With the stories of other days, other times, they now become a part of the continuing history of a unique place in Louisiana.

This beautiful book will be available in mid July from Claitor's Publishing and is just one of the most pleasant ones I've read in quite some time. The pictures are amazing. The memories recalled here are so very nice. The book is priced at \$40.00.

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CROOM BOOK: A book by Emily Croom has just been released, and it provides all the tools researchers need to begin family history research. From step-by-step discussion of the records used in genealogical studies to the investigation of family legends, *Unpuzzling Your Past* shines a light on all facets of family history research.

Throughout the book you will find the following:

- Strategies for success
- Tips for getting the most from names, dates, and family traditions
- Suggestions for using vital records of births, marriages, and deaths
- Keys to census records, and all state and federal records
- Tools for using county courthouse records, including wills, deeds, and court records
- Discussions of church, cemetery, and newspaper sources
- Illustrations, charts, sidebars, and study lists for further reference

- Blank forms, including a five-generation chart, family group sheets, and census forms covering the years 1790 to 1930

Besides gathering names and dates, family history researchers want to learn how their ancestors lived and how they fit into the world around them. Therefore, focusing on the family as a primary source of information, the book provides suggestions for interviewing relatives and explains how to interpret and understand oral records, keepsakes, and family papers. It also introduces you to research methods and to the entire mass of public records used in identifying your ancestors.

Unpuzzling Your Past is great for both individual and classroom use. It is intended for beginning genealogists with little or no prior research or family history experience and thus addresses the needs and potential questions of those beginners. For this updated and revised 4th edition, Croom has expanded the information on public records, added useful Internet addresses, and included a chapter-length case study of a search to identify female ancestors.

This one can be ordered from the Clearfield Company, 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260, Baltimore, MD 21211-1953. The price is \$40.45, postpaid.

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FAMILY NEWSLETTER: The Morgan-Chapman Family Newsletter is filled with pictures and memorials to deceased family members. There are also a number of individual pictures and letters from descendants along with a prized family recipe. Their latest reunion took place June 26, 2010 at BREC Park on Jefferson Highway in Baton Rouge. The reunion was dedicated to those family members who passed away since the previous reunion.

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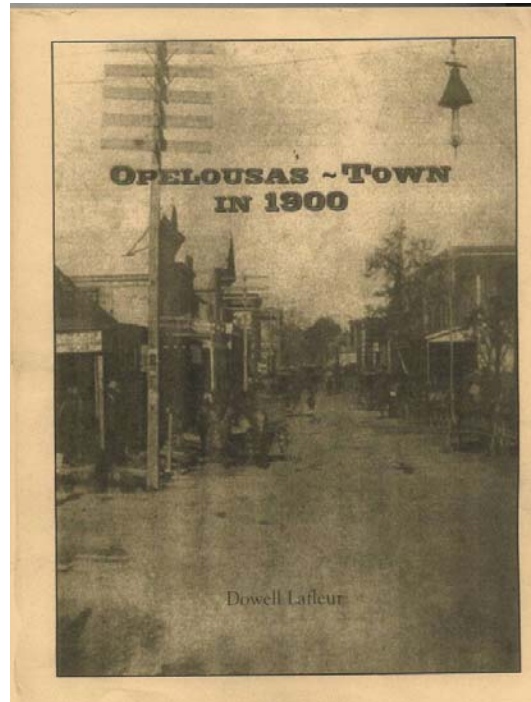
ANOTHER REUNION: On September 18, 2010, the Stevens-Calmes Family Reunion will take place at the Hillsdale Corkern Community Center in Hilldale. This is located in St. Helena Parish, north of Montpelier at the corner of Highway 43 and Highway 1045. More information will be given in a later column format.

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NEW BOOK: *Opelousas - Town in 1900* is a nice book compiled by Dowell Lafleur. It is actually the 1900 census listing with the added index and section on meanings of abbreviations. If you need a quick look at those people living during this time in Opelousas, then this is the book for you.

The St. Landry Parish town of Opelousas had long since ceased to be an outpost, and after a two-century recorded history, it continued to be the major crossroads of all southwest Louisiana. This volume reveals ethnic groups from practically all

European nations, as well as all states east of the Mississippi River. Details are vital for genealogical research, and this listing details names and relationships of household members, race, gender, birth month and year, number of years married, birthplaces of subjects and their parents, occupations, and much more. Because of space limitations, all data in the original enumeration are not included, but all genealogically valuable information is provided.



This price of this publication just released by Claitor's Publishers is \$33.50. It would be great to see more census records published in this way.

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FREE SERVICE: Correspondence to this column should be directed to Damon Veach, Cajuns, Creoles, Pirates and Planters, 709 Bungalow Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5337. The e-mail address is ancestorslaveach@cox.net. Queries and book reviews are printed as space permits, and you are encouraged to take advantage of this free service. Claitor's Publishing can serve as a distributor for self-published genealogy titles. Go to their homepage for details on how you can obtain this excellent service.