

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

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MEETING HELD: The Canary Islanders Heritage Society held their July Membership Meeting at the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library on Saturday, July 16th. The guest speaker, Cassandra Fedrick, Librarian of the Genealogy Section, presented several excellent sources and procedures for developing a genealogical record.



Pictured above are, right to left: R. Layne Lindsly, society president, with Cassandra Fedrick and society member Paul “Skip” Newfield.

The society will hold its next membership meeting on Saturday, August 6, 2011 at 11 a.m. at the St. Jules Activity Center located at 7165 Highway 1, Belle Rose, LA 70341. The speaker will be Father Gerald Lefebvre.

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MICROFILM COLLECTION: A microfilm collection of Freedmen’s Bureau Records from the National Archives will soon be available at the Louisiana State Archives in Baton Rouge. This collection is entitled Records of the Field Offices for the State of Louisiana, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1863-1872. It is NARA Microfilm Publication M1905. Reginald Washington, an archivist with the National Archives in Washington, D.C., recently discussed these

records at a genealogical seminar in Baton Rouge. He showed numerous examples and explained how the records can help African American researchers with their genealogy.

On Saturday, August 6th, Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane will hold an orientation on this collection. Members will be on hand in the Research Room from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to assist patrons in using the microfilm. Researchers are encouraged to review an online [descriptive pamphlet](#) ahead of time in order to get an idea of the types of records that are found in the collection.

The 111 reels of microfilm are being donated to the State Archives by Le Comité, the genealogical support group for the Louisiana State Archives. The organization obtained them from the NARA Branch in New York City, which was giving away the film to non-profit organizations for cost of shipping. Le Comité member Delia Rotolo called this to the attention of Le Comité's Board of Directors and the organization immediately put in its application for the film. Several weeks later, Le Comité was notified that it was awarded the Freedmen's Bureau collection and two smaller collections which will also be donated to the State Archives.

For more information, visit Le Comité's website (www.lecomite.org) or contact Judy Riffel at riffelj@bellsouth.net.

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SEMINAR SCHEDULED: The Lafourche Heritage Society has scheduled its 35th Annual History and Genealogy Seminar for Saturday, August 6, 2011, at the Envie Restaurant and Banquet facility in Thibodaux. The day's activities will begin with registration and coffee at 8:30 a.m. and will close after the last speaker at 3:00 p.m. The seminar will have two morning sessions, a buffet lunch, and two afternoon sessions. There will be breaks between sessions for visits to book vendors. Speakers scheduled for this event are Dr. Christopher Cenac Sr., Neil Guilbeau, Emilie Leumas, and Jay Schexnaydre.

Christopher E. Cenac, Sr., M.D., is a native of Houma. Several years ago, Dr. Cenac began compiling years of research on the Cenac family into a book for his family. His presentation will highlight some of the documents and photographs he discovered in his research. Many of his family "treasures" are currently on exhibit at the Nicholls Archives, which everyone is encouraged to visit. His presentation is entitled "The History of the Cenac Family and the Early Oyster Industry in Terrebonne Parish."

Neil J. Guilbeau is a native of Sunset and is the Assistant Archivist at Nicholls State University. One of Neil's current projects for the Nicholls Archives is interviewing local veterans on their experiences in the armed forces. His presentation will be "U.S. Veterans of Southeast Louisiana: An Oral History," which will highlight some of the veterans interviewed thus far.

Emilie “Lee” Gagnet Leumas, PhD, is Director of Archives and Records for the Archdiocese of New Orleans and former Archivist for the Diocese of Baton Rouge. She is the current president of the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists. Lee’s presentation will be “Catholicism and French in Louisiana”

Jay M. Schexnaydre is a native of Convent. He is a genealogist and an assistant manager at Laura Plantation in Vacherie. He is currently the president of the Genealogical Research Society of New Orleans. He has compiled family trees for several of the families along the Mississippi River and has made several trips to the Family History Library for research. His topic will be “Old Creole Families of River Road.”

The seminar will be attended by book vendors offering history and genealogy selections. The Society will also have its publications available for purchase including *Lafourche Country III* which was published in 2010. Participants and members are invited to bring their family history charts.

To pre-register, please send your name and check in the amount of \$28 (each participant) to the Lafourche Heritage Society, P.O. Box 913, Thibodaux, LA 70302. Only participants who pre-register will be included in the count for a buffet lunch. Same day registration for the seminar will be accepted at the door, but will not include lunch. The deadline to pre-register is August 3, 2011. Book vendors will be welcome at no additional cost. However, these will need to pre-register and reserve a table in advance.

For further information, please contact any of the following: Clifton Theriot at 985-448-4621, clifton.theriot@nicholls.edu or Patty Whitney at 985-447-7318, pattywhitney@hotmail.com.

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KNIGHT INFO: In reading the latest issue of *Terrebonne Life Lines*, memories came back for me of the time I worked with a wonderful friend Merle Ganier of Fort Worth, Texas. In fact, I helped here design the masthead for use with the newsletter she did on the family called *Knight Letter*. We exchanged Louisiana materials over the years since both of us had family ties going back to this state. We both worked at General Dynamics at the time and were good friends up to the time of her death.

The family lines of the Knights in this latest publication caused me to read every line looking for the Ganier connection. As you probably realize, it is pronounced Gan-yay, but so many people always wanted to spell it like Gainer. She was so proud of her heritage, and upon her passing I was contacted by the family to come and claim any of her research materials, but I elected to allow it to go to the local Fort Worth library. At least I hope it ended up there.

Prior to her death, she turned the newsletter over to someone in Ohio or in that part of the country to continue with her quarterly. I have lost contact with the editor so I'm not sure if it is still published or not. Merle also published the *Dawes Newsletter*," and this one too was transferred to someone else when her health failed her.

Out of all the people I've worked with doing genealogical research, Merle Ganier remains foremost in my mind along with a wealth of research memories. She was one of the best researchers I've ever known, and I still miss her expertise when it comes to research in the Acadian section of Louisiana. She was a remarkable and honorable researcher.

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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.