



Genealogy News

Southwest Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Library

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Coming Events

The Carnegie Memorial Library Building will be tentatively closed from August 17 - September 8 for installation of new carpet.. All programs during that time period will be cancelled.

The following programs will be held in the Carnegie Memorial Library Building meeting room. Tidbits of History programs are held from 10:00 - 11 am on the first Tuesday of each month.

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Tidbits of History
History of PPG and Lockport Area
Speaker: Joe Anderson

Friday, October 16, 2009

Branching Out in Genealogy
After Hours Reception and Research
411 Pujco Street
5:30 - 8:00 pm

Saturday, October 17, 2009

Branching Out in Genealogy Seminar
Lake Charles Civic Center
Contraband Room
8:30 am - 4:00 pm
Speaker: Carolyn Billingsley, PhD

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Tidbits of History
History of the DeQuincy Area
Speaker: Hershel Frazier

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Tidbits of History
Early Church Histories
Speaker: Armajeane Declouet

Lebanese-Syrian Heritage Day

On Saturday, May 9, 2009 the Southwest Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Library hosted the Lebanese-Syrian Heritage Day program. The room, filled with about seventy people, was brightly decorated with posters, maps, family photographs and artifacts. The tables held delicious Lebanese-Syrian dishes prepared by several local families.

The speaker was Raff Ellis, author of the acclaimed book *Kisses from a Distance*, the history of his Lebanese ancestry. Much of the information within the book was discovered in letters to his mother from relatives in Lebanon who wrote from her marriage until her death.

Mr. Ellis gave an engaging and informative talk which was accompanied by a colorful slide presentation. He explained how his genealogical journey began and culminated in the publishing of his book by Cune Press. The presentation highlighted for genealogists and those interested in compiling family histories how difficult it is to separate fact from fiction when researching the past. Mr. Ellis also listed the various research documents and archives that he visited in his quest.

The inspiration to have a Lebanese-Syrian Heritage program began when Dr. Michael DeBakey passed away in July 2008. Dr. DeBakey, born of Lebanese parents in Lake Charles in 1908, was possibly the city's most famous resident. Wheels were set in motion for the heritage day when in July 2008 a call was received from Jim Yaman who lives in upstate New York. He is the son of Lebanese immigrants and a great admirer of Dr. DeBakey. He called to request information about Dr. DeBakey's early years in Lake Charles. He was gathering information with the hope it would create a basis for a biography about Dr. DeBakey. Shirley Burwell, the branch manager, felt this research would provide a base for a Heritage Day program that would honor Dr. DeBakey as well as all of the descendants of Lebanese-Syrian immigrants to Southwest Louisiana. As plans and research progressed, more notable names of this ancestry were added to the "Who's Who" list. Census and naturalization records, city directories, newspaper articles and ads, McNeese University Archives and contacts with local families helped reconstruct the rich history of middle-eastern immigration to southwest Louisiana. An important part of the archival material used was in the Mediterranean Oral History Project in the McNeese University Archives.

Members of the Stoma, Abraham, and Khoury families were contacted and all responded with enthusiasm. With their assistance word spread and soon others volunteered to make the day a success. Many brought ethnic food, artifacts and stories to share. Heartfelt thanks go to Mr. and Mrs. Joe Stoma, Gus Abraham, Rose Khoury Parham, Sylvia Abraham Seals, Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Abrusley, Samia Abrusley, Melinda Antoon Cormier and Mr. Barkate for bringing personal artifacts and providing food for our program. Everyone enjoyed the baked kibbie, hummus, baba-ganoush, olives, zaatar spread, tabouleh, cheese, lentils and rice, stuffed grape leaves, qirshalli (cookies), and homemade bread. Beautiful artifacts such as

a 100-year old nargilé (a tobacco water pipe also called a hookah or hubbly-bubbly), a traditional outfit for men complete with headgear, a cookie press, a beautiful embroidery in Arabic, citizenship applications, a hand-written poem and an old prayer written in Arabic, and many personal photographs.

Mr. Ellis brought a map of Lebanon on which the villages of origin of some local families were marked, and attendees were invited to point out the village from which their ancestors came. The map was of great interest to the attendees.

The contributions of the Lebanese-Syrian families and their descendants are innumerable. Everyone is aware of Dr. Michael DeBakey's many accomplishments. Before completing medical school he invented a pump that was crucial to the development of the iron lung and later to the development of the heart pump. He was also instrumental in creating the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (M.A.S.H.) and the Veteran's Administration Medical Center System and Research program.

Some of the surnames of Lebanese-Syrian pioneers who settled in southwest Louisiana include:

Abdallah	Boustany	Isaac	Mahfouz
Abraham	DeBakey	Jacobs	Misse
Abrusley	Farris	John	Monsour
Antoon	Gani	Joseph	Mowad
Ashy	George	Karam	Nagem
Barkate	Ieyoub	Khoury	Rahbany

Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research

Armajeau DeClouet and Linda Gill attended the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research from June 14 through June 19 at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. The Institute is academically and professionally oriented with exceptional teachers. Ten courses are offered and class sizes are limited.

The classes are much like university classes without the necessity of taking exams! All of the lecturers are professional genealogists with expertise in delivering interesting and informative talks about their fields of knowledge. The lecturers are (or were) educators, librarians, an archivist, a private investigator, a banker, and a former military officer. Some are professional genealogists on a full-time basis while for others it is a sideline.

Armajeau and Linda attended the course *Research in the South, Part 2*, which is designed for intermediate to advanced researchers who already understand how to use various original and general secondary records. Fields of study included migration, settlement patterns, religion, land, geography, politics and economics, kinship groups, and Native Americans.

Among the topics they heard were *The Formation of Kinship Groups; The Reality of Researching Your Indian Ancestry; Using Topo and Other Maps; War of 1812; Tax Records; Florida; The Territorial South; Coastal Georgia, Ports and Georgia Waterways; The Five Civilized Tribes; America and Caribbean Connections; French and Spanish Land Claims in Federal Records; Alabama; Coastal Alabama, Ports and Alabama Waterways; Climbing Your Female Side of the Tree; Masons and Fraternal Organizations; Lineage Organizations for Southerners; and 19th Century Secular and Religious Newspapers.*

Their attendance at this institute enhanced their knowledge in areas to which they may not have had easy access. The knowledge gained from the lecturers about resources, historical information and methodology will be beneficial in assisting patrons with their research.

The coordinator of this course, Carolyn Billingsley, PhD, will be the featured speaker at our seminar in October. We are looking forward to hearing her speak on four different topics.

Genealogical Gleanings from "The Pelican State" Column of The Lake Charles Daily American

January 21, 1899, Page 2, Reel 5

- David Crippen, watchman at the Eagle rice mill at Crowley, fell off some freight cars a week ago, receiving internal injuries which resulted in his death Thursday.
- Frank M. Welsh has obtained an injunction in Rapides District Court restraining the Secretary of State from commissioning H. S. Gessens as mayor of Alexandria.
- The Louisiana delegation are hopeful that President McKinley will accept the invitation extended him to visit New Orleans May 8.
- Dr. J. W. Carter of Amite City is on trial on a charge of arson.

January 23, 1899, Page 2, Reel 5

- J. R. Hann, of Winn Parish, was run over and killed by a loaded wagon Thursday, while driving home from Pineville.
- Arsennis Spell is under arrest at Lafayette, charged with shooting John Laughlin during a drunken quarrel. Laughlin is fatally hurt.
- Holly Karnett and Peter Plant are under arrest, charged with robbing the Crowley post office.
- Dr. Weden Smith, proprietor of a Leesville drug store has been arrested charged with selling liquor without a license.
- Mother Digby, Superior General of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, is visiting the convent at Sunset. The parent house is in Paris, and this is the first visit to this country of the head of the order.

January 24, 1899, Page 2, Reel 5

- J. A. Brooks is under arrest at Donaldsonville charged with obtaining money under false pretenses. He represented himself to be an agent of Munsey's Magazine.
- Joseph Buckley, a private in the Second Louisiana Regiment now at Havana has been found guilty of murdering Private Hughes of his company and sentenced to be shot.
- In the case of Dr. J. W. Carter charged with arson at Amite City the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

New Books on Our Shelves

Family Books

Ingalls Family

Louisiana

Southwest Louisiana Records, Volume 42 (1910)

Southwest Louisiana Records, Volume 43 (1911)

Southwest Louisiana Records, Volume 44 (1912)

The Day Freedom Died - Colfax Massacre

Down Among the Sugar Cane

A History of Notre Dame de La Paix - Vacherie, LA

Dark and Bloody Ground - The Battle of Mansfield

Louisiana's Old State Capitol

Twenty-seventh LA Volunteer Infantry

Virginia

Index to Virginia Estates 1800 - 1865

Other

Guide to Finding Your Ellis Island Ancestors

Reference Encyclopedia of the American Indians

African - American Ancestors

Dictionary of American Family Names (3 volumes)

Forensic Genealogy

Encyclopedia of Surnames

Call for Yearbooks

Yearbooks from the local schools are a wonderful source for researchers. Our collection continues to grow through donations.

Please check with us before throwing your old yearbooks away.

Our collection of area high school yearbooks currently includes:

Resume (LaGrange High School):

1947 - 48; 1950; 1952 - 54; 1957; 1959; 1962 - 64; 1970; 1972 - 74; 1978; 1984

Tornado (Sulphur High School):

1948 - 1971; 1982 - 1983

Catalog (Lake Charles High):

1947; 1950; 1953; 1956; 1958; 1960; 1962 - 68; 1975; 1983

Les Memoires (A. M. Barbe):

Stampede (Sam Houston High):

1983; 1987 - 1992; 1994 - 1996

Souvenir (Vinton High):

1979

Rice Shock (Jennings High):

1923

Le Petite Ours (Bell City):

1987

Hornet (Grand Lake):

1974; 1975

Ram-ler (Westlake):

1956; 1962



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Library**

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**Email:
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**Visit our webpage:
www.calcasieu.lib.la.us**



The registration fee is \$25 and includes *After Hours Reception and Research* on Friday evening from 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm at the genealogy library; seminar talks and access to vendor displays, and coffee, light refreshments and a box lunch on Saturday in the Civic Center Contraband Room. Brochures are available on the library webpage, in the library branches, or they may be requested by email or telephone.

Interested vendors, genealogical and historical societies should contact the library for complete details about selling your genealogical and/or historical books and/or genealogical supplies. Phone 337-721-7110 or email gen@calcasieu.lib.la.us for guidelines and pricing.

Branching Out in Genealogy Seminar

Speaker: Carolyn Earle Billingsley, PhD

Topics:

**Communities of Kinship: A New Theory for Genealogy
The Reality of Researching Your Indian Ancestors
Melungeons and Other Mixed Race Groups
History Lost - History Found**

Master of Ceremonies: John A. Sellers

Saturday, October 17, 2009

Lake Charles Civic Center

Contraband Room

Time: 8:30am—4:00pm

Sponsored by:

**Calcasieu Parish Public Library
Libraries Southwest**

**Friends of the Library, Lake Charles Chapter
Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society, Inc**