Baby Train's Arrival Was Festive
And Exciting Moment in Area History

By Alton E. Broussard

It was a highly festive and exciting occasion in the history of Lafayette.

Hundreds of men, women, children, several scrawny dogs and a flock of squawking white leghorn chickens almost drowned out the music of the 26-piece Lafayette Concert Band directed by Felix Girard. On this particular day, the entire band was present, and the children were eagerly awaiting in the Younghurst train depot.

Two young boys were doing a brisk business in the sales of selected candies and snakes, all cut from the now-defunct candy store in the yard. A number of the children, including several nurses and doctors, were stuck in Irish potatoes to preserve their freshness.

"Baby Train" Arrives

The excitement of the children on this hot, humid day in 1907 was almost uncontrollable when the "Baby Train" pulled into the Lafayette railroad yards. If the children had not been well guarded, they would have just run directly onto the tracks without being asked to do so.

Marie Louise Judice was a ten-year-old girl. She was very excited about the possibilities of the "Baby Train" that month.

When engineer Dick Tanner applied his brake valve to bring Train No. 9 to a dead stop, the children rushed forward. All the children were waiting eagerly at the depot reception.

"Baby Trains" orphan trains were a system where orphaned children were transported to a new home. In this case, the children were from New York, and they were eagerly waiting for the train to arrive.

Mrs. J.C. "Cass" Chargois, the former Ella Orthman, and the former Robert B.o.o. Chopin, two of the "Baby Train" orphans, were eagerly awaiting in the depot reception.

Although the emotional task of delivering the orphans to their foster parents proceeded in the relative privacy of Brown News, at least a few youngsters and parents had already seen another side to the situation. The children were being loved and fostered.

This heart-tugging scene was one of many repeated at depots in Catholic south Louisiana between 1907 and 1910. The arrival of the "Baby Trains" was one of the greatest exoduses of children since the Children's Home.

The Louisiana Foundling Hospital had been established in Lafayette, and within the Greater Lafayette area, it would become a shelter for unattached children.

A ten-year-old girl, now Mrs. J.C. "Cass" Chargois, strained on tip-toes to watch the "Baby Train" arrive. Once inside, the two sisters proceeded in their respective roles in the orphanage.

The children, among them many orphans, were eagerly awaiting in the depot reception.

IN SUNDAY BEST - One of the "Baby Train" orphans Mrs. Placeide Cornier, Lafayette.

One love-starved little girl, Ella Orthman, now Mrs. Chester Hebert, 907 Myrtle Place, Lafayette, spotted her mother, Mrs. J.C. "Cass" Chargois, as she threw her arms around her neck and gleeefully yelled "Mother!"

"Red Tape Is Cut"

Mr. and Mrs. Mouton, both of whom are now dead, couldn't dispute such persuasive evidence. The Sisters somehow arranged to assign Ella to the Moutons.

Cruise

The beginning of this amazing story goes back to 1907 when two nuns of the Sisters of Charity founded their orphanage in the city. They were not only non-profitable but also had to deal with the legalities of the adoption process.

The children were eager to be adopted by the Sisters, who had already been working with the children for two years. They had already been teaching the children how to read and write, and they were eager to learn more.

The children were eagerly waiting in the depot reception, eager to meet their new families. The Sisters had carefully selected and matched the children with the right families.

The Southern Pacific Railroad, represented by District Engineer, ordered all possible equipment muffled and quieted when the baby was delivered to the front depot reception.

Even by today's standards the placement program was thoughtfully planned. An agent was employed to arrange for the placement of the children and the foster parents.

Doctors John Tolson and J.R. Trahan took time out from their busy schedule to examine the orphans before they became the responsibility of their foster parents.

All in all, it was a day for Lafayette. Some 140 children were rollercoasted by the easterners, and they were eagerly waiting at the depot reception.

Today they occupy stations not so different from that of their natural mothers.

The very warm and human story of the orphans who had been sent duplicate identification. Although the emotional bond of the children and their foster parents was unbreakable, it was thought that this would be the best course of action.

Baby Trains were a means to transport orphans to new homes. The children were eagerly waiting in the depot reception, eager to meet their new families.

The very warm and human story of the orphans who had been sent duplicate identification. Although the emotional bond of the children and their foster parents was unbreakable, it was thought that this would be the best course of action.

The New York Foundling Hospital

OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY,
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,
TO

Adam & Elida Roman

Broussard

Louisiana

INDENTURE

(FEMALE CHILD)

Mary Vanna

INDENTURE - Adoption papers were not given in usual procedures. The Sisters of Charity provided an indenture which required that the foster child receive the same rights as a natural child.

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Aillett, widely known football coach and athletic director at Louisiana Tech, Hudson, who was reared in Youngsville: Ernest LeDoux of Eunice, Miss Mayme Milsted, Eunice. Mrs. Agnes Duplex Viguirie, de

ceased. Youngsville: Mrs. Katie Klein, Eunice. Mrs. Anne Giraud Melancon, formerly of Broussard and later of Breaux Bridge; and Jimmy Maynard, deceased, Lafayette area, New Orleans.


James Kelly, Marksville; Dennis Couvillion, Marseilles; Eltern, Elise Mayeaux, Mandeville, Herbert Campbell, Marksville; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Newberg, Marksville. Mr. Newberg was reared in Banks and Mrs. Newberg was reared in Marksville; Sam Grunke, Marksville; John Gremillion, Alexandria.

James Bulen, New Orleans; James Bulen, Lake Charles; Joseph Maranto, Steworthy, Martin Roy, deceased; Opelousas; Frank Delorenza, Lafayette.

The community, except for a few "old timers," has largely forgotten about the Baby Trains. The young easterners are now in their sixties and except for a few you may mostly have forgotten that they go about their lives with no special distinction except of their own making.

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