1834 - 1934

A CENTURY OF ENDEAVOR AND ACHIEVEMENT BY THE WOMEN OF HOUMA AND TERREBONNE

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With no source of material at hand it is difficult to deal with a subject in which are involved many processes by which the modern City of Houma was evolved from South Louisiana marshes.

Woman's part in this evolution is even more subtle and elusive. The eyes of Time, through the glass of social science, must have observed slow minute and particular changes as well as vast growths by leaps and bounds, with each new growth dependent upon the old.

in town and country, that for charm has never been equalled. The chateau, one of the mansion became the "grande dame" of society of which Louisiana is very proud. One has but to look at the women of the present generation to know that there were many lovely women in the generations gone, living in Houma and Terrebonne. But this life of charm, though not of idleness was not to last.

The Trumpet of War sounded and to the music of fife and drum the men marched off to serve the Confederacy.
1900 or 1901—in the home of Mrs. Julia Gresham Lashbrooke (now owned by Mrs. Lucy Humphries)—"purely for the pleasure of its members." Mrs. Charles Magnin (Sue Bush) Mrs. Reuben Bush and Mrs. A. W. Connely were, I believe, its guiding lights. It lasted a number of years and always had a waiting list, its membership was limited because the parlors could not seat too many.

A very excellent Shakespeare Club flowered here for a while, fostered by Miss Eloise Weathers, a woman of rare culture and large experience.

The air in the second ten years of this century, began to be filled with the Club Spirit. A group of kindred spirits met quietly in the interest of Woman's Suffrage, then a question of locally almost in whispers, and used their influence and men's votes to carry several elections in which the status of women was involved.

Later Miss Jean Gordon organized that group into a Suffrage Club, with Mrs. R. euben Chauvin as president. Miss Gordon's snapping black eyes and charming personality won the lasting friends to the cause that had she remained in the parish longer we may have witnessed a Woman's Suffrage Club among the men.

Strange to say after organization of its women, Terrebonne failed to support the sufrage cause. But the Federal Amendment was adopted by the required support of States and the local Suffrage Club became the Citizen's Club.

I am writing from memory—a poor thing at that—but the faces of many women come to me now as members of that Club. Mrs. W. Wright, Mrs. Arthur Dauplitz, Mrs. C. P. Smith, Mrs. A. Bisland, Mrs. Robert Calvert, Mrs. allen Ellender, Mrs. Reuben Chauvin, Mrs. Oscar Briedenbach, and some 20 others. Mrs. Allen Ellender being the last president. This Club did some outstandingly fine work.

Miss Cornelia (C) Wright (Mrs. T. Baker Smith) made a splendid effort for a community house and has since used the money collected (what was left of it after the Bank failure) as a beautiful memorial to the soldiers of the World War in gifts of books to the Library.

World War work was organized; Anti-tuberculosis, Red Cross, Auxiliary to the American Legion, parent teachers and of course all church organizations expressed its own interest in organization.

Finally a Woman's Bureau of the Association of Commerce came into being with splendid acclaim, on April 23, 1922 and absorbed all the strictly women's organizations and interests.

It functioned for a while, and carried on its committees the names of practically all the women in the parish. Its outstanding work was the Editing and Publication of a Woman's Edition of the Houma Courier with the purpose stated—"to raise funds for a City and Parish Beautiful."

Of all the departments of the Bureau, I believe the Terrebonne Literary Club is the only group remaining. Under the guidance of Mrs. J. H. Thatcher, a group was gathered that gave to Houma for several years, a delightful annual "Community Chorus" giving great pleasure to the music lovers of the city, besides being of fine cultural value.

The garden club has caught the idea of the City Beautiful and is putting it into actuality. This club has done very fine work under the successive presidency of Mrs. Allen Ellender, Mrs. Joe Richard and Mrs. Randolph Bazet, and is now under the guidance of Mrs. Claude Ellender carrying on excellently.

To a small group of young women Houma is now and will always be indebted for the organization of a Library Club and the gathering and fostering of a permanent library. Miss Helen Smith was the original inspirer of this most valuable movement and as time passes the work of this group will become more and more important. Miss Effie Breaux is now the Presi-