City Prepares For Acadian Bicentennial Fete

Area Acadian officials in the Evangeline country are polishing off last-minute plans and details for the yearlong Acadian bicentennial celebration which will open officially in Lafayette with the 23rd annual presentation of the Canadie Pageant at Blackham Coliseum, 8 p.m., Jan. 14.

Dr. Thomas J. Aronson, president of the Acadian Bicentennial Celebration Association and dean of the College of Agriculture at Southwestern Louisiana Institute, today confirmed that a delegation of 150 Canadians will arrive in Lafayette for the bicentennial opening.

In the meanwhile area towns of Acadian provenance such as New Iberia, Youngsville, Abbeville and St. Martinville are racking out details for special receptions to receive the Canadien delegation.

In Abbeville, a meeting will be held tomorrow at 7:30 p.m., in the Abbeville Elementary School gymnasium to complete plans for Vermilion parish's participation in the commemorative events.

In Lafayette, students and faculty are going through last-minute rehearsals for the Canadie Pageant which will have a previous performance for the area's children the day before the official bicentennial opening.

Les Vingt-Quatre of Lafayette under the presidency of Mrs. C. E. Zernett are making arrangements for the annual Acadian Bicentennial Celebration banquet to be held at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 13, at Iberiabank Hall.

Deadlines for making reservations for the banquet is Jan. 10. Reservations can be made at the Lafayette Police and Fire Schools, 1000 E. Main St., Lafayette.

In St. Martinville, a reception luncheon is also being planned for the Canadian delegation. The reception from Canada is expected to tour other Acadian towns and be held at a luncheon in St. Martinville, the heart of the Acadian country.

Area people are invited to both the Lafayette banquet and the St. Martinville luncheon. Reservations for the St. Martinville luncheon can be made through the secretary of the St. Martinville Bicentennial Celebration at the school board office in St. Martinville.

The official bicentennial banquet in Lafayette will be bilingual. Both French and English addresses will be delivered, and entertainment will also be offered.

Official guests at the banquet will be the Canadian delegation, high church and state officials from Canada, France and Louisiana. With the Canadian delegation will be a number of Acadians from the New England states.

The majority of the Acadians from Canada will come from Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia (Acadia) and Ontario.

The Acadians from Canada have already inaugurated their bicentennial year. It opened last Aug. 14 with religious ceremonies throughout historic Acadian centers in Canada. The greater part of the secular events in Canada will be staged in late summer this year.

At the meeting in Abbeville tomorrow Miss Louise Oliver of the Louisiana State University extension department will preside.

All sessions involved in French are invited to attend.

"If any person is able to contribute talent such as old-fashioned dances, the polka, minuets, the waltz and lancers, French songs, cancan dances, mazurka, folk dancing and etc., he is urged to attend," Miss Oliver added.

Plans for the Abbeville area for observing the bicentennial include entertainments from areas where Acadians and their descendants live and the staging of an elaborate pageant with the Acadian theme in connection with the annual Lafayette Dixie Festival and Fair.

Helping to promote interest in the bicentennial are members of La Cercle Acadian-Francais, an organization in Abbeville dedicated to keeping alive French culture and customs,customs, music and hospital by which the Acadians are famous.