Info available on Orphan Train Riders

Descendants of more than 150,000 homeless children placed from New York and Boston between the years of 1854 and 1929 now count into the millions.

These homeless children were members of the groups making up the Orphan Trains. Many requests come through this column for information on these orphans. Here is an update on the organization that can provide the most accurate information on the subject.

The Orphan Train Heritage Society of America Inc., 4912 Trout Farm Road, Springdale, AR 72764, has announced a series of reunions, meetings and gatherings of Orphan Train Riders, families, friends and interested individuals and researchers.

The meeting for Louisiana will take place in Opelousas on Saturday, July 13. Registration fee is $25. Topics to be covered are: the history of the Orphan Trains, what OTHSA can do for you, where information can be found on the orphans, how to compile a family history and related topics of interest.

By 1910, Texas had taken 1,527 children from the Children's Aid Society of New York City, while Illinois had taken 9,172 during the same length of time. For this reason, most of the meetings for OTHSA take place in these two states.

Louisiana became home to several thousand babies from the New York Foundling Hospital's so-called “baby trains.” The July meeting will be the second for this state.

Documentation on more than 2,000 of the “placed-out” children has now been gathered by OTHSA members, and a quarterly newsletter called Crossroads is published. This newsletter is full of these stories and contains useful information about family histories. It is an invaluable aid for researchers, and it offers a complete index as well as offerings of other publications and a video of interest. The publication is very good and should be in all major genealogical library collections.

In case the Louisiana meeting is impossible to make, there will be an August meeting in Greenville, Texas, and in October, the group will meet in Fayetteville, Ark.

For complete information on membership, contact OTHSA at the Arizona address above. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the response.