



The Story of The City of Eunice, La.

"It All Started With An Auction"

The City of Eunice (which was named after the wife of C.C. Duson, Eunice Pharr Duson) resulted from one man's dream, and had its beginnings only about 100 years ago. On September 12th, 1894 C.C. Duson he drove a stake and said, "On this spot I will build a town and name it for my wife, Eunice."

The story of Eunice starts with an auction. People had been gathering since daybreak in the prairie village, which boasted one or two stores, and a half-dozen houses.

C. C. Duson, sheriff of St. Landry Parish, had bought 160 acres of ground around the railroad station that had resulted from his efforts to establish this new community. He had divided the land into lots, ran a boulevard through its center, laid out wide (70-foot) streets due east and west, and north and south.

Eunice was chartered as a village on September 12, 1894, and incorporated as a Town on June 4, 1895. The noisy hubbub of the crowd subsided to a hushed whisper as the speaker mounted the wooden rostrum.

"Friends," his voice rose above the crowd, "you're here today to have a good time and to buy land for new homes and new businesses--"

Off under the shade of a tree, a horse swatted flies with a bushy tail; a hungry child sniffed the aroma of meat, roasting in an open pit which was to provide a banquet-like feast for the hundreds of visitors standing on the rails of the Southern Pacific Railroad, (which were not yet worn smooth from the friction of locomotive wheels), stood a modern, monstrous, "iron horse," main attraction of the day to many of the country folks who had never before viewed such a monstrosity.

Over the speaker's rostrum, the tall, dark-haired man who barely spoke French was giving way to an auctioneer, whose pounding gavel soon was pronouncing finality of each transaction that was concluded.

People milled about Gus Fusilier's store, wandered around the small park and stared at the wheezing locomotive. The ladies in their long skirts, the men in their Sunday best. It was a gala occasion. There was plenty to eat, speeches by public officials and even state government big-wigs. There was a free train ride for the ladies, and a big fais-do-do in the dance hall on the top floor of the two-story wooden structure which housed Fusilier's store.

How the fiddlers played and how the revelers whirled to the giddy music of the square dance, the waltz, and an occasional polka.