

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Post Marche Pouvoir Meeting - 5 August, 2001 - Champaign, IL.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EIGHT AND FORTY

Composed, compiled and presented by MAY MALONE,
La Secretaire-Caissiere Nationale Passe (FL.)

A two part story - - -

In researching some of the old files of the first days of Eight and Forty, we found the formation of the Eight and Forty very interesting and believe that the information would be helpful in understanding the purposes of our organization and why we function as we do.

At a National Executive Board meeting of the American Legion Auxiliary held in Indianapolis, Indiana, in June, 1922, one of the leading Auxiliary members first suggested the idea of a playground society for Auxiliary members and women members of The Legion. This was to be a sister organization to the 40/8, which was the fun organization of The Legion. At the New Orleans Legion Convention in 1922, the new group was recognized by the 40/8 as a sister organization.

A committee for La Societe 40/8 met with a committee of the Ladies Auxiliary and the Legion women to form an association in connection with the Ladies Auxiliary and the Legion. A committee for the 40/8 was appointed to formulate plans and draw up a Constitution and resolution to be submitted to the Promenade National and the same was approved by the National officers and National Cheminot of the 40/8.

In the first Bylaws the purpose of the organization read as follows: "For God and Country and to defend and uphold the Constitution of the United States of America, and to all times help preserve The American Legion platform, and to preserve the dignity and prestige of the women of The American Legion and the Ladies Auxiliary; to collect and compile into records the songs and traditions, with stories of our men and women in the service of our great United States of America; to observe Memorial Day and Decoration Day and days set apart by The American Legion as days to be observed; and to cooperate with the La Societe Nationale 40/8 to establish an orphans fund; and further assist to Americanize our country one hundred percent; and last, to hold dear to our hearts the memories of those who served, and a sacred memory for those who paid the supreme sacrifice."

The next change in the Constitution and Bylaws with regard to the purpose of the organization read as follows: La Societe des 8 Chapeau et 40 Femmes shall be an organization composed exclusively of women of the American Legion Auxiliary in good standing; to provide a playground for female membership of The American Legion and the Auxiliary;

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EIGHT AND FORTY

Continued - Page 2

for wholesome relaxation of mind and spirit. All Partners of La Boutique shall be known as Chapeau Americains, and all eligible non-Partners shall be known as Chapeau Brittasques (later changed to Etrangers.)"

The 40/8 titles of officers, etc., were derived from the French railway system and we all know the story of the 40 men and 8 horses in one box car. Therefore, the Eight and Forty also used French titles. Since we were in no way connected with the railway, it was decided to use titles relating to hats - dear to a woman's heart - at least in those days - and the first National Chapeau was known as Le Grand Chapeau - "the big hat."

The first Annual Marche Nationale was held in New Orleans in October, 1922, with a membership of 56 representing 33 Auxiliary Departments. Mrs. Ada Sangster of Michigan was the first National Chapeau.

The second Annual Marche was held in San Francisco in October, 1923, with a membership of 200 representing 38 Departments.

At this Marche, a Child Welfare program was adopted and during the administration of this year, May Day and the collection of funds associated with it for child welfare work was instigated.

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THAT IS ALL - - - for Part One!

Are you interested in hearing and reading "the rest of the story?"

Virginia Kates
Chairman
Advisory Committee
2001-2002

Committee Members
Betty Lou Thompson
Mary Silver

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