

By Angie Mayes

Since La Vergne's name is relative to one of 12 cities of the same name in France, it is inevitable that at some time the two cities would twin. The La Vergne France that Tennessee residents visit is the one from the province of Auvergne, closest to the birthplace of Francois Roulhac.

Viscount Oliver de bony de lavergne of Brussels Belgium was traveling the United States when he noticed the Tennessee town on the map. Curious, he contacted relative Louis de lavergne of New Orleans, La.

In the mid 70's, Louis de la vergne visited the town named after his ancestors. In 1979, Andre Calary from La Vergne France came to La Vergne as a representative of France.

By 1891, talks between the two cities had gone so well that the first official visit of one country to the next was planned. A group of Tennessee residents left for France in June, 1981, excited about meeting their European counterparts. The next year the trip was returned, but this time 40 French came to America.

The trips were again repeated in 1991 and 1992 and a trip to France is planned for this summer. Travelers will leave in June and stay in the homes of La Vergne France residents.

"You will receive 'real southern hospitality' and you can't imagine the fascinating things they have planned for us," said trip coordinator A.C. Puckett.

The group will also visit Rome, Florence and Venice in Italy and Geneva and Interlaken in Switzerland, in addition to the trip to La Vergne. Paris is also a destination planned for the trip.

The trip is a project for the city of La Vergne and the La Vergne Rotary Club. For additional information, call Puckett at 793-6589 or Carrie Smith with the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce at 793-6295.