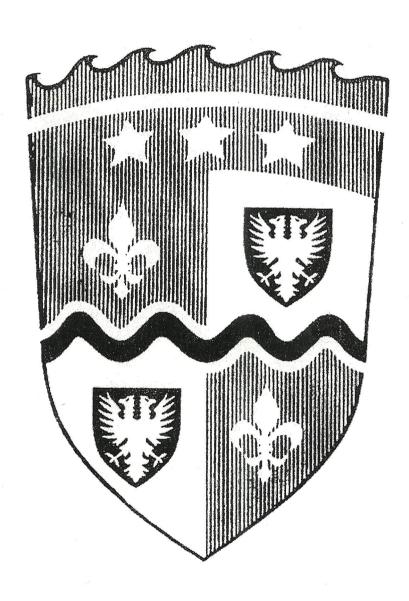
LES VOYAGEURS

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LES VOYAGEURS

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GERMAN-ACADIAN COAST HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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One of the main goals of the Society is to preserve, compile, and publish records of genealogical or historical nature, with emphasis given to the records of St. James, St Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes.

Applications for membership should be addressed to The Membership Committee, German-Acadian Coast Historical & Genealogical Society, P. O. Box 3086, LaPlace, Louisiana 70069. The membership year begins in January and extends through December. Annual dues, including a subscription to Les Voyageurs, are payable as of January 1st of the new membership year. An individual membership is \$20.00. Family memberships are \$25.00 and library and historical society rates are \$15.00 per year.

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Members as well as non-members of the Society are invited to submit articles for inclusion in Les Voyageurs. Preference is given to original material pertaining to the history and families of St. Charles, St. James and St. John the Baptist Parishes. Sources of information used in articles should be listed, and any copyrighted material must be accompanied by written permission to use the information. Articles are subject to editing as necessary. Neither the Editor nor the Society assumes responsibility for the content, originality, or accuracy of material submitted.

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BOURBON'S LAST STAND

By Marguerite T. Dow McEnerny, d/o Emilie Teissier Dow Submitted by Karen M. McEnerny kmeinzen@aol.com

Editor's Note: This article was written by Marguerite Teissier Dow McEnerny based on the remembrances of her mother, Emilie Teissier Dow, whose father and mother owned Bourbon Plantation from 1890 until their deaths. See the article, "Bourbon Plantation's Owners," for more information about Bourbon Plantation and its history.

A Louisiana Sugar house has been added to "Americana." The old mill from Bourbon Plantation has been purchased by Henry Ford who, recognizing it as one of the finest of its type, has considered it worthy of preserving along with other relics in the museum at Dearborn, Michigan.

Bourbon Plantation is on the Mississippi River in St. James Parish, fifty-five miles north of New Orleans. The machinery in question was installed during the regime of Jean Teissier, whose family was the longest in possession, according to parish archives, from Alexis Ferry, son-in-law of the famous sugar pioneer, Valcour Aime, to the Colonial Sugar Company who bought it from the Teissier family in 1910.



Emilie Teissier Dow cf. Karen M. McEnerny

A daughter, Emilie, remembers it as it was in the late seventies, when she was a child of four. The plantation house was set way back in a forest of pecan trees. A small "parterre" or inner garden, enclosed by a circular fence, abounded in camellia bushes, sweet olives, lilies and violet beds. The house itself was not one of the mansion types, like Belle Grove or Burnside, merely a comfortable country house on a foundation of tall pillars. There was a gallery running all around the house, allowing a shifting shade as the sun moved around during the day.

Down the road apiece was the plantation "store," the mainstay of the whole plantation in the occasional lean years.

Far back, across the newly constructed railroad track, was the sugar house, always gleaming with fresh white paint, its great brick chimney pouring forth clouds of smoke, accompanied by lesser clouds from the auxiliary smoke stacks. The steam whistle on its roof had a peculiar character of its own. It had nothing in common with the shrill imperative factory blast. A three toned chime affair, it sent out its summons in grace and harmony.

On certain precious occasions, Jean Teissier would take his children through fields of cane, where field hands would momentarily rest their great cane knives, and shout a happy greeting to the master's children.

The little girl would gaze spell-bound at the "grinder," that huge mouth of a machine, which bit with greedy iron teeth into a perpetual meal of cane stalks, seeming to be ever bubbling in huge open kettles. Over each kettle stood a massive Negro, stripped to the waist. In his hand he held a long wooden paddle with which he whisked away the scum that came to the surface at intervals. Emilie was undismayed when the scummy mess landed at the tips of her kid boots. It was all part of the adventure.

Presently, she would produce some shelled nuts from a paper bag and hurl them into the building syrup. The attendant Negro would fish them out cooked and coated for her eager consumption. This was tolerated more than encouraged by a father who was reading scientific journals and already had plans for more sanitary manufacture.

During the eighties, Emilie overheard many a masculine discussion, fraught with cryptic phrases, "protective tariff," "Cuban competition," and "free sugar." She saw southern planters become desperate and vote the Republican ticket. Then came the McKinley Act of 1890, allowing a "bounty" of two cents a pound on American sugar provided it "polarized properly."

The Bourbon sugar house was rebuilt and equipped with new modern machinery. The syrup now boiled in hermetically sealed boilers, upright cylinders of steel with thermometers and glass peep-holes. The old open kettles were placed as rain-catchers in the fields to furnish drinking water for mules. There were stronger presses and filters. Centrifugals of tremendous power sent the granular crystals flying to the edges. There was a bleaching room and the finished product poured into the barrels of Jean Teissier with the immaculate whiteness of his native Alpine snows.

Then came the revocation of the "sugar bounty." Then the crevasses of 1891 and 1892 which, while not destroying actual property, meant the ruination of two entire crops. Emilie was 17 when there came a frantic day. The levee swarmed with Negroes carrying sandbags to an ever widening break. Neighboring planters, demonstrating a practical friendship brought their laborers and even gave a hand themselves. She remembers the heavy tread of her father as he came through the avenue of pecan trees to the group of wide-eyed children huddling on the gallery.

"Emilie, come with me," he said. She followed him to his office where he opened his big black safe and handed her several formidable envelopes. "I am sending you children to New Orleans by the next train. It may be the last for many months. Keep these papers on your person, my dear. It is everything we have in the world."

The next time Emilie saw Bourbon house, it had been moved back for a new levee. The forest of pecan trees, the exquisite parterre, had vanished into the Mississippi. It sat squat and pillar less, close by its ancient ally, the plantation "store."

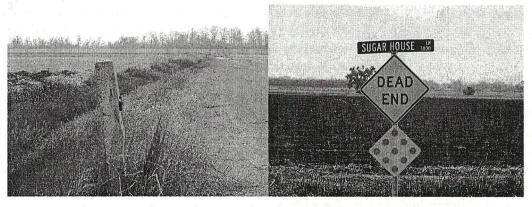
After the death of the parents, the children moved to the city. The plantation continued under the same ownership, but hired "managers," whose interest centered in the fields and sugar house, had no sentiment for the old home, no feeling for the life of beauty and serenity that had once been Bourbon's.

In 1906, Noemie, the youngest daughter married a young civil engineer, and moved back to Bourbon. She set about immediately to restore the old homelike atmosphere. Violets and lilies grew again in a new parterre. The trees could not be replaced, but she planted an avenue of ninety rose bushes down to the road gate.

It was Bourbon's last stand. It was thus that the daughter of Emilie knew it, living in imagination the childhood her mother had known. She loved to watch the distant sugar house, gleaming bravely in the sunlight, smoking, steaming, its three-toned whistle crying its last earnest plea: "I am working hard for you. Let me live! Let me live!"

But the days of sugar prosperity were over. The store became once more the mainstay, but the stock was now prosaic and utilitarian. There were no sugar planters now who could buy expensive silks and laces. The last daughter of Bourbon and her young husband strove valiantly to tide over a series of lean years. But in 1910, the hard facts were faced squarely and the plantation sold to an impersonal corporation. Like the royal family from which it had taken its name, the spirit of Bourbon was now forever dead.

Emilie's daughter shed tears of joy when she learned that an appreciative capitalist had saved for posterity, the fine old sugar house that had cried so eagerly to live. It will live in the Ford Museum at Dearborn, but the three-toned whistle may not grace its roof. The last daughter of Bourbon was loath to let it blow for strange ears, and it was one of the treasures that she salvaged in Bourbon's last stand.



Editor's note: These two photos showing the area where Bourbon Plantation once stood are a fitting conclusion to this article. They were taken by Karen Meinzen McEnerny, widow of Harry McEnerny, III, on 14 January 2010 on a trip to the site. Harry McEnerny, III was the great grandson of Augustine Gebelin Teissier through his matrilineal line, through his grandmother, Emilie Teissier Dow.

BOURBON PLANTATION OWNERS

in St. James Parish, Louisiana

Submitted by Emory C. Webre

Some of the information for this article was supplied by Mrs. Karen Meinzen McEnerny who submitted the article, "Bourbon's Last Stand," in this issue of *Les Voyageurs*. Other sources that have been used are in the bibliography. Some of the information in this article is from written notes of deceased persons and has not been documented. There may be contradictions in names, dates, and places.

The story of Bourbon Plantation might begin with Alexis Ferry, a former surgeon in the French army who came to Louisiana before 1814. In the St. Martin Parish Court House records, there is the marriage contract of Alexis Ferry, "docteur en medecin," a native of Maran, Department of Charente-Inférieure, and Marguerite Francoise Uranie Fuselier on 12 April 1814. Their son, Alexis Ferry, was born 23 May 1815 and baptized in St. Martin of Tours Church, St. Martinville, Louisiana. (Southwest Louisiana Records, Vol. 2A (1811-1818)

The younger Alexis Ferry made a number of land purchases for what would become Bourbon Plantation on the east bank of the Mississippi River in St. James Parish about 56 miles above New Orleans. In 1844 he acquired one arpent from Sylvestre Bourgeois and another from the widow of Isaac LeBlanc. An 1844 *Statement of Sugar* listed A. Ferry and Co. as having produced 327 hogsheads of sugar. A hogshead was about 1,100 pounds. In 1845 an arpent was purchased from Antoine Clervaux. Ferry bought all of the double concession in the rear from the widow of Zenon Trudeau in 1850. Finally, in 1852 he bought about 13 arpents from William Priestly. An arpent is a French land measure of about 192 feet or about 0.84 acres.

Not a large plantation, it was about 200 acres, measuring 16 arpents on the river and 65 arpents deep. The cane season of 1853 - 1854 may have been one of its best, as Pierre A. Champomier records that it produced 514 hogsheads of sugar. Later, after the Mississippi River had eroded the levee through the years, it was less than the original 200 acres.

Alexis Ferry married Josephine Aime, the daughter of Valcour Aime. "Valcour Aime – St James Sugar Refinery" was listed in the 1881 publication, *Landings on all the Western and Southern Rivers and Bayous*, as being "opposite Bourbon Place." There are varying accounts as to how Alexis and Josephine obtained St. Joseph Plantation. One account said that it was a gift from her father. (Toledano, p. 219) Another source notes that "Prior to 1820 Dr. Cazimir Bernard Mericq came to France from Louisiana and settled on a narrow strip of land, now part of that plantation. ... The good doctor died in 1857 and the plantation was sold to Alexis Ferry (Bourgeois, p. 37) Another account said that they bought the house in 1847 and that they remodeled it in 1858. (Sexton, p. 72)

The 1860 United States Federal Census for Louisiana listed Alexis Ferry as being at two locations in St. James Parish. In the 2nd District on the Left Bank, at Family and Dwelling Numbers 105, Ferry's age was not listed, nor any information about a family, only his occupation as a farmer and his property values. The Real Property was valued at \$39,000 and Personal property valued at \$60,840. This was Bourbon Plantation.

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1860 U.S. Census Louisiana, St. James, Grand Point P.O. Series: M653 Roll: 423 Page: 541

In that same census, in the 7th District on the Right Bank, Vacherie Road P.O., at Family Number 489, Dwelling 474, Ferry was listed as aged 45, a farmer, with 8 children, and his household included a school teacher, gardener, and house keeper. His Real Property was valued at \$65,000 and Personal Property valued at \$86,400. This was St. Joseph Plantation.

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1860 U.S. Census Louisiana, St. James, Vacherie Road P. O. Series: M653 Roll: 423 Page: 602 - 603

According to Joseph Menn, *The Louisiana Slave Schedule of 1860* listed Alexis Ferry's slaves at the two locations in St. James Parish, but he may have reversed this information from the 1860 Census. At Dwelling Number 105, Ferry was listed as aged 41, a farmer, with 8 children, 12 members of his household, 53 slaves and 26 slave dwellings. The Real Property was valued at \$39,000 and Personal Property valued at \$60,840. There were a total of 765 acres of land. (Menn, p. 353)

At Family Number 474 of the *Slave Schedule*, there was no information for his age, occupation, children or number in his household. There were 93 slaves and 26 slave dwellings. This Real Property was valued at \$65,000 and Personal Property valued at \$86,400 for a total of 800 acres of land. (Menn, p. 353)

Alexis Ferry's United States Direct Tax for 1865 was \$122.40. His 1866 tax assessment was for 2 carriages, a watch and a piano. (U. S. Tax Assessment List, 1866)

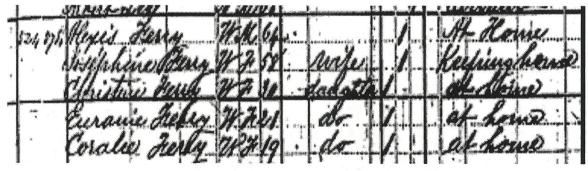
A French journal of J. A. Ricaud, who traveled in Louisiana in 1869, described the generosity of Valcour Aime to his daughters and a conversation with the elder Alexis Ferry. My English translation follows.

The old Valcour had three daughters who married rich Louisiana planters from the area, and each year, on the first day of the year he gave them a New Year's gift of a check for 100,000 francs. These happy young men were ..., Alexis Ferry who had two large plantations facing each other: one on the right side and the other on the left side of the Mississippi, in this beautiful St. James Parish, where I spent many happy years.

M. Ferry, who was born in France, told me one day, 'Before the war, I had hoped to retire in France with a million and a half. I wish to sell my two plantations. With my wife and my father-in-law, I am stuck here and I am now in the most profound misery.' Mrs. Ferry had in prosperous times, as has been said before, 22 colored servants (Ricaud, p. 127)

In 1861, Valcour Aime had given the responsibility for the management of Jefferson College on the East Bank of St. James Parish to Alexis Ferry and his other sons-in-laws who formed a corporation. In 1864, they transferred ownership of it to the Marist Order of Priests. (Fay, pp. 141-142)

Josephine Aime Ferry sold Bourbon to C. C. Millaudon and H. C. Millaudon. The 1880 Census shows Alexis and Josephine living in St. Mary Parish.



1880 U.S. Census Louisiana, St. Mary, Series T9 Roll: 471 Page: 167

Alexis Ferry died 20 June 1884, aged 69. In 1891, the widow Josephine was living at 333½ in New Orleans. She died 26 December 1894, aged 74.

The following chart from Louis Bouchereau, shows C. C. Millaudon & Co. as the owner of Bourbon Plantation and Alexis Ferry as the former owner. It was 54 miles from New Orleans, using "Steam, Kettles, Open Pan" to process its cane, and that the sugar house was constructed of brick with a shingle roof.

PARISH OF ST. JAMES, East Bank-Continued.

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L. Bouchereau: Statement of the Sugar and Rice Crops made in Louisiana 1873-74

In Landings on all the Western and Southern Rivers and Bayous showing Location, Post-Offices, Distances, &c., there is also a listing for "Bourbon - C. Milladon (sic) & Co. ½ mile above the head of Grand View, e.g. 56 miles" and "Bourbon Place, – Ferry, A. point at head Grand View, e.g., 56 miles." (Cayton, p. 19)

The following information is from notes of an unpublished letter of L. S. Bourgeois of St. James Parish to Dr. M. Mallowitz of New Orleans in June 1931. In 1879 the Millaudons sold (half of) the plantation to Adolph Tambourg. He then sold that half to Elphage Poche, listed in the 1880 U.S. Census as a retired planter, aged 52. Louis Remy bought the half of the plantation owned by Millaudon and the half owned by Poche. At one time, there was a post office station named for Louis Pierre Remy.

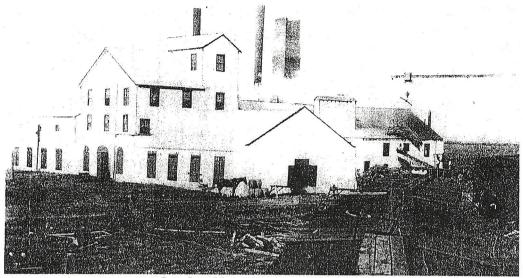
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1880 U.S. Federal Census Louisiana, St. James Parish Series: T9 Roll: 468 Page: 511

Now I come to the family who is the subject of the previous article, that of Jean Baptiste Teissier who was born in Nice, Provence-Alps, Cote de Azur, France, about 1834. After coming to Louisiana, Teissier married Augustine Gebelin, a daughter of Jean Baptiste Gebelin and Margaritte Morel about 1870. Gebelin and his family had arrived in New Orleans 22 January 1849 from France. According to the IRS Tax Assessment Lists, for the tax year 1865 he was listed as a "retail dealer". And by 1870 his employment in the U. S. census was listed as "Grocery & Cooperage."

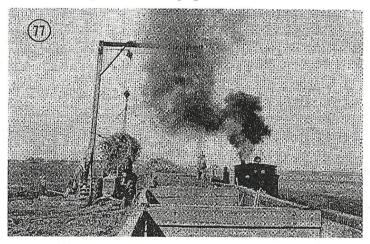
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1870 U.S. Federal Census Louisiana, St. James Parish Series: M593 Roll: 529 Page: 306



Bourbon Plantation Sugar Mill, 1908 c.f. Karen M. McEnerny

On many large plantations, narrow gauge railroads were used to transport cane from the fields to the mills. If a plantation had a railroad, the cane "was seldom hauled by mules for greater distances than half a mile." (Maier, p. 48) These were discontinued in later years because of the increased costs of equipment and maintenance and the taxes on what was considered rolling stock and equipment.



Loading narrow gauge railroad cars c.f. The Story of Sugar Cane Machinery

In 1908, Frey had purchased sugar cane loading equipment consisting of a derrick and chain slings from American Hoist and Derrick which filed suit for non-payment. The suit states that chain slings Frey bought were used "to load and ship the sugar cane crop on Bourbon Plantation in the fall and winter of 1908" and that the claim for collection was in the hands of an attorney in June 1909.

The suit is interesting in that it shows how Noemie Teissier Frey held the ownership of Bourbon Plantation as separate property from her husband and that they had never established any community property. The suit states that the

derrick was delivered to the Bourbon Plantation where it was erected to enable Mrs. Frey, wife of the defendant, to load and ship on railroad cars her crop of sugar cane, grown and gathered on said plantation, which is her separate property. There is no community between defendant and his wife, and they were separate in property previous to the purchase by Mr. Frey of the derrick and attachments presently the subject of this suit. (Southern Reporter, p. 487)

The suit also gives us information about the property of Charles Frey. The American Hoist and Derrick Company learned that the plantation was the separate property of Mrs. Frey and that Charles Frey owned only a small tract of land with a mortgage of \$1,200, and was fearful that it would be the subject of a lien for the wages of the sugar cane laborers. He also owned "a store and a barroom worth \$4,500."

As a response to the suit, Frey was claiming damage of \$1,000 for being branded as dishonest by plaintiffs, which caused, according to his allegations, his employés (sic) to worry about being paid their wages, and that the defendant's neighbors knew of said charge The only evidence of harm to his reputation, outside of the defendant's own statement that he was damaged, is that a neighbor, Mr. Brignac, hesitated to cash a check for him. (Southern Reporter, p. 489)

The suit was settled in February 1910 with both parties having to pay certain amounts and the interest due to those amounts. In 1923 Noemie Frey sold Bourbon Plantation to Colonial Sugars which was owned by the Cuban American Company.



"Daughters of Bourbon in early Ford 1910" c.f. Karen M. McEnerny

The reference to a "Louisiana Sugar house added to 'Americana'" in the article, "Bourbon's Last Stand," was to the 1927 purchase by Henry Ford of the machinery from Bourbon Plantation that was exhibited from 1949 to 1989 in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. It has since been put into storage according to a 2009 letter of Karen M. McEnerny.

My thanks to Karen M. McEnerny for her assistance with information in this article relating to the Teissier family. Submit questions and comments to Emory Webre, 6542 Winnebago St., St. Louis, Missouri, 63109-1243. emsweb1@mindspring.com.

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QUERIES

Genealogical Queries will be accepted free (two per year) from members and non-members. All queries should be typewritten or printed, and limited to fifty (50) words or less. The society would like to publish answers received on queries, so please relay information received to Rose Marie Perilloux, 103 Farm Road, LaPlace, LA 70068 or e-mail to: editor@gachgs.com

GEBELIN - MOREL - TEISSIER

Karen M. McEnerny, kmeinzen@aol.com, needs information on Jean Baptiste Gebelin and his brother, Joseph Gebelin. Both were born about 1819 in France. According to immigration records, Joseph Gebelin, Jean Baptiste Gebelin and wife, Margaritte Morel Gebelin with daughter, Josephine (age 1) arrived in New Orleans in 1849 from France. She also is searching for the place of burial of this family and also the burial place of Jean Baptiste Teissier, b. about 1834 in France, died 1908, probably in St. James Parish or St. John the Baptist Parish, LA.

ELFER - DESNOYER

Brenda Olavarrieta, 2033 Belmont Place, Metairie, LA 70001, <u>Brendao@bellsouth.net</u>, needs the death date and cause of death of **Evariste Elfer**, b. April 26, 1845; married **Marie Desnoyer**, Jan. 24, 1877. Evariste is buried in St. Peter Catholic Cemetery, Reserve, LA. Any information would be appreciated.

BARRE - ROUSSEL

Mark A. Brandenburg, MD, P. O. Box 33092, Tulsa, OK 74153, is interested in information on the life of his great great grandfather, Achille Barre, s/o Zephirin Barre & Eulalie Roussel.

IN MEMORIAM

The German Acadian Coast Historical & Genealogical Society extends condolences:

To the friends and family of former member and avid genealogical researcher ,Jacques Lynwood ("Lyn") Vicknair, who died June 15, 2010. Services were private.

NEW ADDRESS FOR GACHGS

The German Acadian Coast Historical & Genealogical Society has a new mailing address. All correspondence by members should be mailed to GACHGS, P. O. Box 3086, LaPlace, LA 70069-3086

NEWS OF INTEREST TO GENEALOGICAL RESEARCHERS:

The St. John the Baptist Parish Library, 2920 Hwy. 51, LaPlace, Louisiana, is now open from 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm on Sundays.

SALE - LES VOYAGEURS-SALE

All remaining back issues of Les Voyageurs starting from 1985 through 2008 are on sale for \$1.00/issue, plus postage of \$2.00 for the first issue and \$.50 per additional issues. Order from Carolyn Laurent, Circulation Chairman, 22157 Fen St., Ponchatoula, LA 70454; checks should be made out to GACHGS