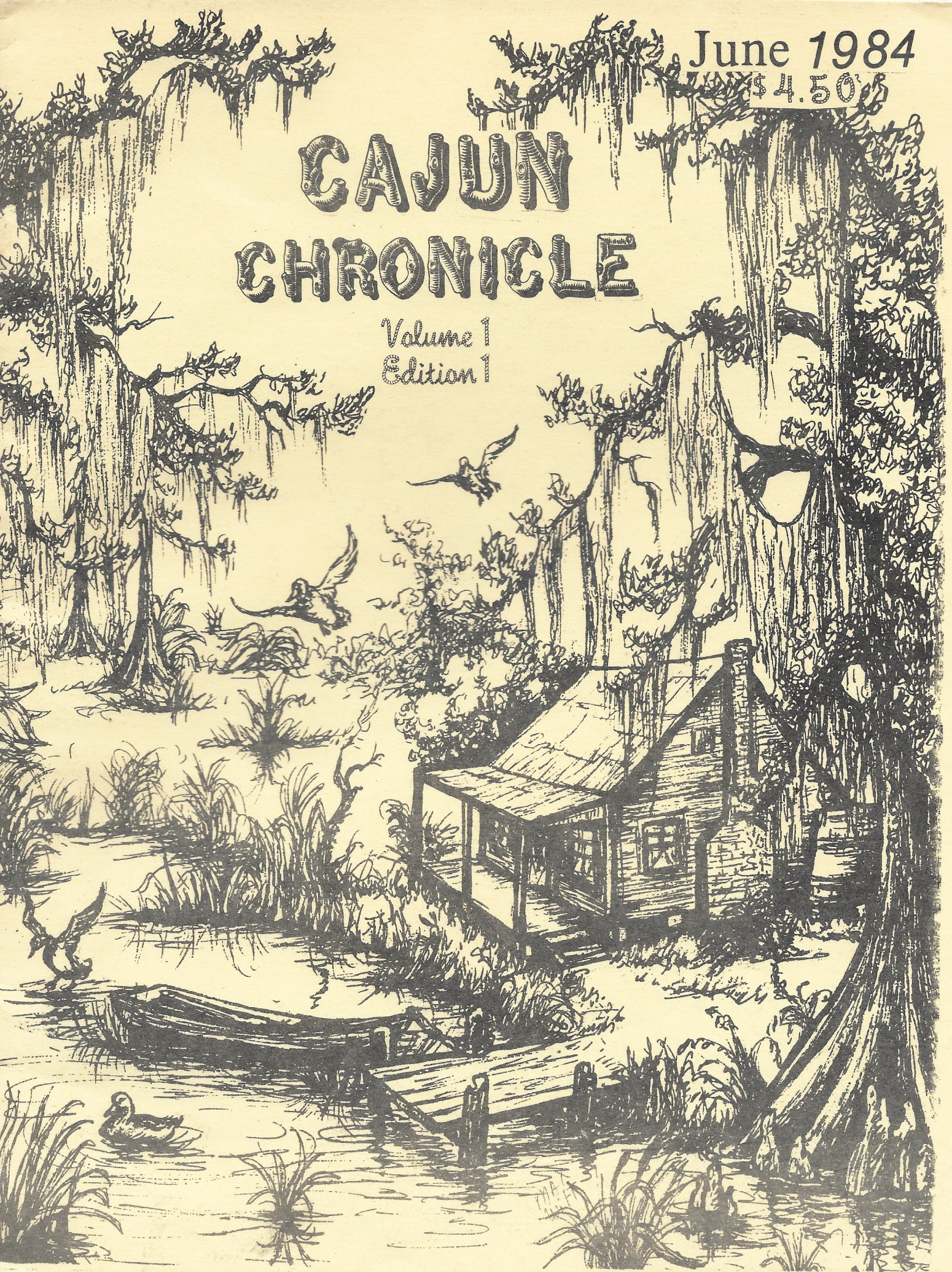


June 1984

\$4.50

CAJUN CHRONICLE

Volume 1
Edition 1



FOREWORD

At the start of my research, I was advised by others that there was very little or no known history of the Civil War in Terrebonne Parish. After months of reasearch, I found much invaluable information concerning conflicts in the area.

While there were major battles fought in the surrounding parishes of Lafourche, St. Mary and others in South Louisiana, Terrebonne was spared the effects of major battles. Yet, there were many conflicts which were devastating to the citizens of Houma and our Parish.

The complete history of the Civil War in Terrebonne parish can be found in the following publications at the Terrebonne Parish Library, *'Civil War in Louisiana'*, *'The battle in the Bayou Country'*, *'Louisiana Sugar Plantations'*, and *'The 26th Louisiana Infantry'*. The latter by Winchester Hall of this area who was a Colonel in command of the 26th Louisiana Infantry. I strongly recommend these books to anyone intrested in the history of Terrebonne or Lafourche parish during the Civil War.

Using these four books, old records from the Clerk of Courts office in Terrebonne Parish, old issues of the Houma Courier and information from Jackson Barracks Historical Records, I was able to compile much local history about the Civil War in Terrebonne Parish.

Having acquired so much war history of our area, I was tempted on several occasions to veer from the purpose of my project. Realizing my error, I returned to the project at hand and focussed on battles and veterans and the hardships of the people.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the many wonderful and valued friends and family members, who have made the publication of CAJUN CHRONICLE possible through their contributions and assistance.

My deepest and sincere thanks and gratitude to:

Col Christian (Buster) Olivier (US Army Retired) Mrs. Sterling (Edna) Belanger; S/SGT. Philton J. Hebert USMC; 1st LT. Charles Davidson, USAF; S/SGT. Ray Marcello, USAF; M/SGT Floyd Duplantis, US Army; Mrs. Pete (Georgia Savoie) Porche; Donald Boudreaux; Russ Fazzio; Una Naquin; Linda Boudreaux; Wanda Rembert; The Wayburn Hebert, Jr. Family; (Wayburn, Elenore, daughters Margie, Becky, Amy, son Daniel, son-in-law Michael and his brother Wilson. Robert (Bobby) Boudreaux, Terrebonne Parish Clerk of Courts. Even though Bobby says he's only doing his job, he and his staff gave invaluable assistance and were most helpful to Wanda, Linda and myself during the months of research of the Clerk of Court records. Last but not least by any standard the thousands of people who responded to my request for information.

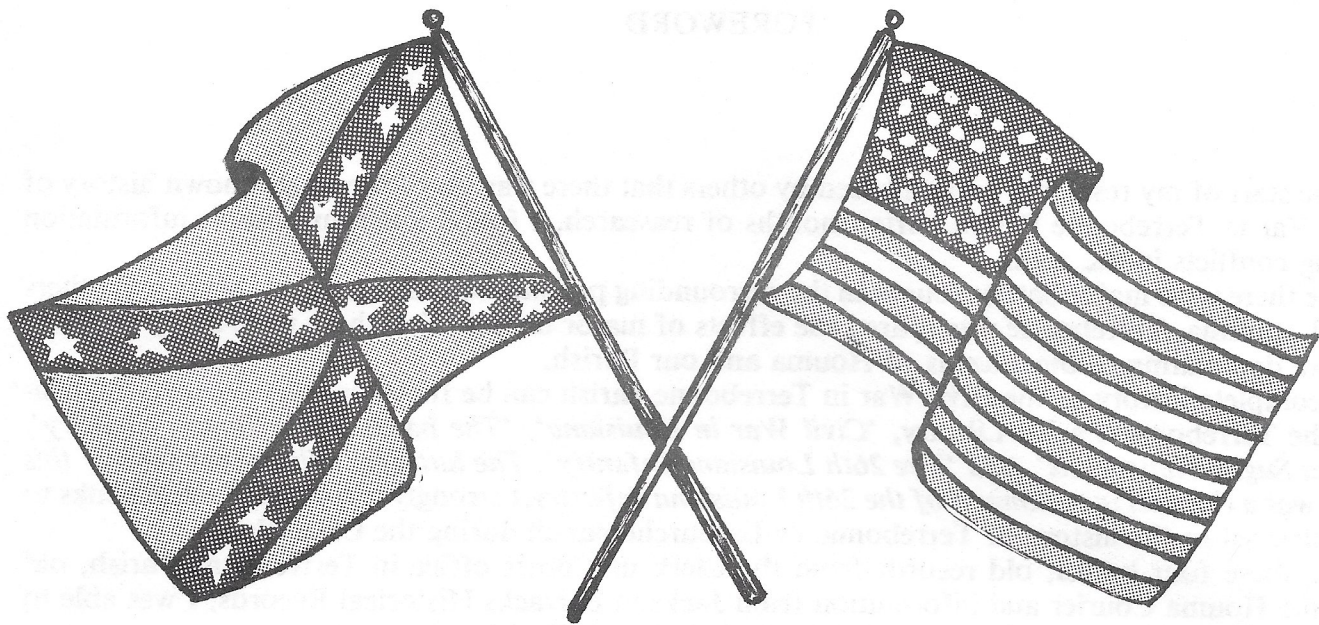


Cajun Chronicle is a quarterly publication, the contents will consist of documented information about the people of Terrebonne Parish and the area and events. There will be a continuing list of the men and women who served in the military as far back as documented proof will allow. Each issue will also contain stories, both true and fiction, about people of the bayou country and Cajun recipe's of the cuisine handed down through generations. The first issue will be devoted entirely to the Civil War Era, in the military section. Issue II through VIII will be information on all the others who served and of their families. When available, information such as rank, service branch, date of birth and death will be published. The second issue will pay tribute to those from this area who paid the ultimate price and stood the final retreat in answering the call to duty.

The Publisher feels that, if nothing else is accomplished, this series will leave a lasting history for generations to come, of the sacrifices made by their forefathers from this Cajun Land.

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THE CIVIL WAR IN TERREBONNE PARISH

THE CIVIL WAR

In the summer of 1860, the waters of Terrebonne Bayou flowed lazily through the village of Houma, Louisiana making its way toward the Gulf of Mexico. The 429 residents living there enjoyed a tranquil life in southern fashion. The plantation owners in Terrebonne's countryside, like the citizens of the small hamlet prospered with a booming economy. The American flag with 33 stars and 13 strips fluttered on the flag pole on Front street next to the wooden sidewalk by the Terrebonne courthouse. A mixture of Cajuns, Indians, Northerners, Easterners, Germans, Negros, and other nationalities made up the citizens of the parish.

Louisiana had been a State since 1812, its citizens enjoyed the protection of the United States Constitution and all the rights guaranteed by it. This was their home. They were happy and content, but dark clouds lurked on the horizon.

As the clouds of winter passed over the south, the seeds of destruction and economic devastation began to sprout. The people were about to enter an era that would leave the south in total ruin. Terrebonne would not be spared.

On November 6, 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. Immediately following his election southern states began a movement of secession. On Jan. 26, 1861 Louisiana withdrew from the federal union and joined the newly formed Confederate States of America.

As early as November 10, 1860, Minutemen companies began to organize in New Orleans and other areas of the state. In the Houma-Terrebonne area, the Terrebonne Brigade and the Terrebonne Militia were eventually organized.

In April 1861, Confederate President Jefferson Davis requested 4700 troops from Louisiana. Men from Terrebonne Parish began joining such outfits as the Louisiana Guards, Grivot Guards, the Terrebonne Regiment Militia. Many of Terrebonne's finest were later assigned to infantry outfits and fought in battles all over the country. However most were assigned to the 26th Louisiana Infantry and fought many battles in other states as well as in Louisiana.

Troops in the Louisiana Brigade, (known as the Louisiana Tigers) fought like mad men; fanatics that would have attacked Hell itself had they been ordered to do so. While these brave men fought in distant states, the news back home became worse.

On May 1st 1862, Federal troops captured New Orleans. They immediately began to expand their web in Louisiana. Thus they came to Terrebonne Parish.

It was 2 o'clock in the morning on May 9, 1862 when Union troops arrived in Houma. Union Colonel J. W. McMillan, with 65 federal troops passed through Houma en route to Grand Bayou (Grand Caillou) in an attempt to capture a Confederate gunboat. This event would set off a conflict that would result in much destruction in the town of Houma.

Several men of the local militia took it upon themselves and attempt to stop the Union soldiers from capturing the Confederate gunboat. In the process two sick Union soldiers were wounded and two other killed.

On May 12. Union Colonel John Keith marched into Houma with 270 federal troops joining the 65 that has arrived earlier. On May 14th, the Colonel issued a proclamation, warning that not a vestige of the town of Houma shall be left to identify its former location if the citizens did not produce the assassins of the two union soldiers killed five days before.

The following excerpts from Colonel Keith's report to General Benjamin Butler dated May 22, 1862 explains in part the action taken and the devastating results.

Sir: In obedience to your order of the 11th to proceed to the town of Houma, in the parish of Terrebonne and arrest and punish certain parties charged with having fired upon 4 sick soldiers of the twenty-first Indiana Volunteers, killing two and wounding the others; to execute the guilty, their aiders and abettors, if found; to confiscate and destroy the property of all who were in any manner implicated, I left Algiers at 9 o'clock in the evening of the day of your order in a train of cars on the Opelousas Railroad.

My force consisted of four companies of infantry, comprising 240 men, under command of Captains Roy, Grimsley, Skelton and McLafflin of the twenty-first Indiana Volunteers and two pieces of artillery and 30 men of the Sixth Massachusetts Battery under the command of Lieutenant Carruth.

We reached Terrebonne Station, 55 miles from Algiers at about 2 o'clock in the morning of the 12th, where we found Captain Rose with 65 men of our Regiment, previously sent down to recapture Private Miller, one of the men fired upon and wounded, who had been made a prisoner at this point and sent 17 miles farther back into the country.

Here we also found Private Morris, another of the party who had been attacked, captured and imprisoned and subsequently released, the circumstances of which are hereinafter detailed. With the additional force of Captain Rose, leaving a guard to protect the train and having secured all necessary transportation, we took up the line of march for Houma, a distant of 13 miles, where we arrived at 10:00 A.M.

Such persons as we found traveling on the road, we arrested to prevent information being conveyed of our approach. On reaching Houma, all necessary measures to guard against escape of criminals, if there, were taken. I found the town almost deserted, at least three - fourths of the citizens having fled upon the previous day, many of them taking such effects as they could readily move, whilst others, in their haste to escape, left all their property behind and entirely unprotected.

Those remaining were indisposed to have any intercourse with me whatever, much less furnish such information as they possessed, and I required. Having secured the necessary quarters, I proceeded to investigate the circumstances relating to the murder of our men, of the disposition made of their bodies, and ascertained the following facts.

That about 2 o'clock on the morning of the 9th, Colonel J. W. McMillan of this regiment, with 65 men had passed through the town of Houma upon an expedition to capture the rebel steamer Fox, which he had been informed was then in Grand Bayou, some 30 miles beyond that place. This fact coming to the knowledge of Colonels Bisland and Robinson, (of Terrebonne Militia) they or one of them issued an order, in pursuance of which the militia of that parish assembled in Houma at an early hour of the same morning.

The object of this meeting was to devise means to prevent the capture of the above mention vessel or to recapture her should she be taken. The subject being fully canvassed and a great want to unanimity being manifest, Colonel Bisland abandoned his purpose and ajourned the meeting.

Failing to obtain satisfactory information from any of the citizens of the murderers and their whereabouts, I determined to hold them personally responsible for the outrages committed. The evidence of my intention being made apparent, I was sent for by the prisoners and informed that they had concluded to furnish all the information to discover implicated in the crime.

They gave me the following as the most prominent guilty parties; Albert Wood, lawyer and editor of the Houma, Ceres; Morelle, formerly a Lieutenant in the rebel army; E. N. Dutrail, deputy parish clerk; B. Cooper, carpenter; Edwards, overseer; Howard Bond, a druggist; W. Bond, a lad, brother of Howard, and F. Gatewood, living on a plantation 8 miles from Houma; William H. Hornsby, son of S. H. Hornsby, grocer in Houma.

Jennings, Wood, Morelle and Bond appear to have been the moving parts; Jennings was the chief of those who robbed and abused the bodies of the dead. It was he, and Howard Bond who sent 3 boys on the night of the murders 2 miles on the road from Houma to Terrebonne Station to burn a bridge over a bayou on Larette's (Lirette) plantation to delay and if possible, prevent our troops from reaching Houma. The boys sent on this errand were a brother of Howard Bond, William Hornsby and a lad whose name was not obtained. Colonel J. B. Robinson, though not engaged in the killing of our men, took an active pursuit of Colonel McMillan's force.

Having learned these facts and that the parties named had fled and some of them were still secreted in the neighborhood, detachments of men under efficient officers were sent out to scour the surrounding country in search of the fugitives. It having been ascertained that Jennings had taken refuge in the house of G. F. Connelly, that place was visited by a detachment under command of Lieutenant Carruth, whom I accompanied. Upon observing our approach, Jennings fled to an adjacent swamp, leaving his horse tied to the fence in front of the house.

The family, all of whom were present, did not deny having aided in his escape, and frankly gave me to understand that they would not reveal to us his hiding place were it known to them. It was moreover subsequently ascertained that they had purposely deceived us in regard to the time of his departure, in order to give him time to make his escape.

They furthermore declared that they were deeply interested in the rebellion; that they were anxious for the frustration of the object of Colonel McMillan's expedition; that with their consent and approbation, the men of their estate had engaged to defeat him; that with their knowledge and assistance, the men had eluded our pursuit; that they had no allegiance to the government of the United States, and neither desired or claimed its protection.

Thereupon the mules, cattle, and horses belonging to the plantation, the horse of Doctor Jennings and several wagon loads of forage were taken and conveyed to Houma. We also visited Bond's plantation, and finding that the criminals connected there with had made their escape, we seized all cattle on the premises.

Our efforts to secure the guilty parties having proved fruitless, I suppressed the proclamation referred to, concluding to bring them with me upon my return. I then determined to destroy all of the property owned by the guilty parties, who had secured their personal safety by flight. I accordingly, on the morning of May 16, issued an order and the following named property was burned or otherwise destroyed or seized upon.

Property on premises of Howard Bond burned; One dwelling house, furniture and contents; One sugar house, filled with sugar; From 50 to 100 negro houses and other out houses; one steam saw and corn mill; three stables; two corn houses, with contents; one copper shop and blacksmith shop with tools and other contents; one store house filled with molasses; two buggies and harness; stacks of hay and fodder. Taken from above premises; 35 mules; 20 sets of harness; 6 plantation wagons; 1 cart; 2 yoke of oxen and 5 loads of forage.

Property owned by Jennings burned; One dwelling house; other outhouses, barn stables and their contents, buggy and valuable library and other articles.

Property owned by E. N. Dutrail, consisting of dwelling house, stables and other outhouses, with their contents were torn down and utterly destroyed.

Property of A. Wood, consisting of the Ceres newspaper establishment was completely destroyed, the type and other materials being thrown into the bayou.

The parish jail in which Private Morris had been incarcerated, a strong brick building, by means of a battering ram was demolished.

The personal property of A. S. Hornsby, of which there was little, was either taken and used or destroyed. The other guilty parties escaped punishment as they possessed no property which could be seized or destroyed.

Before leaving Houma, I made a demand of \$200.00 upon the treasury of the parish to pay certain expenses attending the expedition, which was promptly handed over in Confederate notes and was by me paid out to the parties to whom it was due.

About noon of Saturday, the 17th, we took up our line of march from Houma to Terrebonne Station, reaching the last named place at 3 o'clock P.M. Here we found in waiting a train of cars in which we proceeded to Algiers, leaving behind Lieutenants T. D. Bryant and J. W. Connelly with a detachment of men in charge of the captured property, with orders to follow on the next train, which they did on the following day.

I brought with me as prisoners the following named residents of Houma and vicinity, all of whom were promptly handed over to the proper authorities. Lieutenant Colonel Minor, Captain Slatton, Recorder De Laporte, Sheriff Larette, Dr. Helmick, Captain Gayne, Messrs. Ernest, Guano, Larette, Wright, Delaspit, Gentre, Hornsby and one other.

John A. Keith Lt. Colonel
Twenty - First Indiana Volunteers
Commanding Detachment

Although there was much destruction by Colonel Keith's federal troops, the town escaped total ruin. Yet Terrebonne parish would experience much devastation before its citizens would again know peace.

In October 1862, Federal gunboats entered Bayou Lafourche by the way of the Mississippi River. Union troops sought out Confederate forces in the area.

General Mouton, a Louisiana commanding 1,000 rebel troops was quartered near Donaldsonville. Facing a superior Union force of 3,000 federal troops, he withdrew his forces to an advantageous terrain near Labadieville where he waited for re-enforcements.

At 9 A.M. October 26th, federal troops engaged Mouton's rebel forces. Although greatly outnumbered, the southern General was able to stop the Union advance. But the battle had taken its toll. Many Confederate soldiers were wounded, others were almost out of ammunition. Had the Union forces attacked a second time, the outcome of the battle would have been doubtful.

Mouton was compelled to retreat about a half mile to regroup his forces. On October 28th, the general received additional re-enforcements to strengthen his command. The new arrivals consisted of the Lafourche Militia Regiment and the Thirty Third Louisiana Infantry (about 800 men). Arriving the following day was the Terrebonne Regiment Militia which attacked the Union flank.

Mouton, realizing that he was greatly outnumbered, retreated toward Berwick Bay to avoid capture of his men. While withdrawing, the Confederates burned several bridges in Thibodaux and the Terrebonne Railroad Station in what is now known as Schriever, LA.

Confederate forces retreated to the safety of Brasher City (now Morgan City), then to Berwick across the river. General Mouton decided to make a stand near Franklin. Some of the fiercest battles of the Civil War would take place in South Louisiana.

The Franklin, New Iberia, Centerville area became a battle field which drew superior Union forces against the ill equipped Cajun Confederate soldiers. Yet, with sheer determination, guts and will power, the rebel forces out-fought the massive numbers of federal troops. Union commanders feared the courageous Louisiana troops. They considered the rebels to be devil-crazy because of their fierceness, rashness and dedication to the Confederate cause.

There were several skirmishes in the out-laying areas of Terrebonne Parish. Because of those rebellious conflicts, there were repercussions which brought economic decline and ruin to the area. There were massive arrests. Houses, businesses and plantations were burned or destroyed. With numerous federal troops in Houma, Grand Caillou, Terrebonne Station (Schriever), Thibodaux and Tigerville (Gibson), looting burning or confiscating property, the citizens never knew who would be arrested next, or whose property would be taken.

The confiscating of property began on November 9, 1862 when Union General Butler issued confiscatory order number 91. The order followed a report by Union General Weitzel written on November 5 in which he felt distressed because the negroes in the bayou country had become threatening and sometimes violent. The inhabitants of the Lafourche Territory (Terrebonne, Lafourche and other parishes west of the Mississippi River) were terrified. "Women, children and even men are in terror of a general uprising," he wrote.

General Weitzel informed Union General Phelps that on the plantation of Mr. W. J. Minor in Terrebonne, an outbreak had already occurred.

Federal troops were eventually sent to some plantations to restore and maintain order.

With self preservation being the first law of nature, a few plantation owners, even some with sons fighting in the Confederate Army, took General Butler's oath of allegiance in order to save their holdings. In some cases, Union soldiers were hired as overseers of plantations. Yet, other plantation owners were true blue to the Confederate cause. They watched as Union troops lay waste their land and stripped them of all goods rather than take Butler's oath.

With both Confederate and Union armies plundering the bayou country, the land and store houses soon became barren, leaving devastation and desolation to be nursed by those citizens left in their wake.

With only old men, women and children to toil in the fields and the men the fishing boats, food and clothing became the items of want. Food being the most scarce, soon reduced many women to begging and scavaging in order to feed themselves and their children. Before the war would end and a short period thereafter, women were forced from necessity, to wear clothes made from any materials available, such as curtains, drapes and cotton sacks. Their very livelihood was jeopardized.

In 1864, Union troops in overwhelming numbers with superior weapons, forced the Confederate rebels to either surrender or retreat to remote areas.

In November of 1864, in reports written by federal officers General Robert A. Cameron, Major Jessie S. Miller, Lieutenants Eugene S. Thrall and Sergeant Simms, they mention other incidents occurring in Terrebonne Parish.

While one of the following conflicts occurred outside of Terrebonne, it is closely related to one that took place on Grand Caillou near Bayou Salle.

On the night of November 17, 1864, Major Miller of the federal army left Brasher City (Morgan City) with a force of 200 Union troops on the gunship Nijanza accompanied by the transport steamer Cornie. Their destination was Lake Fausse Pointe and Bayou Portage near Loreauville, Louisiana. Arriving at the mouth of the bayou, he proceeded upstream. At 6:00 A.M. on the 18th the Cornie, leading the way, was fired upon from ambush by about sixty Confederate soldiers. The Major immediately set his troops ashore and gave chase. After four hours of skirmishes, the Confederate troops took to smaller boats and escaped in the maze of bayous and swamps. Major Miller estimated the rebel force to be about 200 to 250 strong.

Before leaving the area, Miller captured one of the rebel soldiers. Obtaining information concerning the area, the Major succeeded in destroying a barracks capable of quartering about three hundred soldiers. He also received information that a Confederate Lieutenant Shaffer with several boats was on a raiding expedition and that Houma was the supposed destination. A company of federal troops was immediately dispatched to Houma in an attempt to capture Lieutenant Shaffer.

Union forces had previously uncovered a vast smuggling operation on Grand Caillou Bayou. Union Captain Moore suspected a Mr. Raymond Luke as being the ringleader of the smugglers supplying goods to the rebel forces in and around Franklin, Louisiana where fierce fighting was taking place. Several attempts had been made to entrap Mr. Luke and his followers.

In a report dated November 30, 1864, Major Miller states that on November 23rd, a Lieutenant Shaffer (must be Thomas or William) had left the smugglers camp on Grand Caillou via Bayou Salle.

Captain Moore took a company of federal troops to the location where they captured one of Luke's smuggling vessels loaded with rum and other goods. Moore, taking all the officers, a sergeant and six other troopers with him, left the company without leadership. While the officers were away, the Union soldiers went on a drinking spree. One of the drunken soldiers attempted to rape a 12 or 13 year old mulatto girl. When she resisted, he shot at a negro male, missing his target, he shot the girl in the head. The ball entered on one side and exit on the other side of her head, killing her instantly. A Private Hilton was later arrested and tried for her murder.

Mr. Raymond Luke it seems, led all of the Union officers of the expedition into a trap where they were captured by Confederate troops led by a rebel Captain Jefferson. Jefferson was operating in the Grand Caillou, Bayou Salle area recruiting and obtaining goods for the Confederate forces.

For Lieutenant Shaffer to have been at the two before mentioned places within a few days time, he must have known the waters and the area quite well. This Shaffer, whether it be Thomas or William, is the last local soldier mentioned in my research as still fighting in Terrebonne Parish. There may have been others, but I found no mention of them.

Gradually, the war moved westward, away from Terrebonne Parish. The citizens began to find direction in a new way of life. Terrebonnians, transplants and native cajuns began to straggle into the area. Many were wounded, sick and uncaring. Others were in federal prison camps in northern states. Still, there were others that would not return, they had been killed in foreign lands, other states where their remains would rest forever.

Those who returned, came back to a devastated land. A country side unlike the one they had abandoned years before in the defense of a cause. These hardy men had known the loneliness, the horrors, hunger and the brutalities of war. They had given their best to a cause which was lost. Now they would settle on the bayous, in villages and communities from which they had come. They went about their affairs in their own quiet way, trying to rebuild their lives and raise their families.

Although these hardy fighting men lost the war, they remain heroes of the past. While we may or may not agree with the righteousness of their cause, the fact remains, that the men from Terrebonne Parish answered the call to duty for a cause in which they believed in. They fought until there was no hope of winning. Their names should be enshrined with the best of America's heroes.

COMPANY F 26th LOUISIANA
CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA
MUSTER ROLL
OCTOBER 31, 1862

[illegible]

SHAFFER John J.
 LEONARD J. A.
 SHAFFER Thomas L.
 AYCOCK E.L.
 LEBLANC P.P.
 LEONARD Evariste Wounded 6/25/1863
 DUGAS Lovincy
 GIROIR X.
 BOUDERAUX N.
 CANCIENNE Adrien
 BODOIN Octave
 LABIT Henry
 DUPLANTIS Gervais
 ANCOIN Adrien
 BERGERON Germain Wounded 6/12/1863
 BERGERON Trasimon
 BERGERON Erninvill
 BOURGEOIS Florence Wounded 5/21/1863
 BOURGEOIS Joseph
 BOURG Aulime KIA 6/12/1863
 BOUDREAUX Adrien
 BOUDREAUX Victor Wounded 5/29/1863
 BOUDREAUX Clovis
 BOUDREAUX Emile
 BESSE C. A.
 CHIASSON Schuyler Wounded 5/19/1863
 COLONATE Joseph
 CANTEY John D.
 DELATTE F.
 DAVIS Joe
 DARCEY John
 DUBOIS J. B.
 GROS Gerazime
 GIROIR Theles

[illegible]

GIROIR J.B.
 GAUTREAU Edward
 HEBERT Theles Died 3/18/1862
 HEBERT Lusignan
 HEBERT Evariste
 HEBERT Oville
 HEBERT Theodule
 JENKINS Edward
 JUNOT Aristide
 KELLER Gustave
 KALLAHAN (Callahan) Ben
 KALLAHAN (Callahan) C. Mortally wounded 6/19/1863
 LEBLANC Prosper F. Died in service
 LEBLANC Oleus
 LABIT Joseph
 LASSAIGNE Abel
 LASSAIGNE John Died 11/13/1862
 MUNSON T. B.
 NAQUIN Joseph
 OZELET Jules KIA 5/24/1863
 PERILLOUX Joseph
 PITRE Faustin
 PITRE J. B.
 PARR Clodomire Mortally wounded 6/29/1863
 PORTIER Victorin
 POLIT Felix Died 9/27/1862
 ROGER Alex
 RICHARD Louis
 THIBODAUX Oville
 THIBODAUX Evariste
 THIBODAUX Hilaire
 USE Joseph B.
 WHITNEY George Wounded 6/7/1863

Lieutenant
Private
Private
Private
Private

ADDED TO THE COMPANY ROLL AT A LATER DATE

LEBLANC P. P.	Died
BROOKS T. F.	
MOLAISON Adrien	6/3/1862
PONTIFF Dorneville	6/12/1862
LEBLANC Ernest	6/15/1862

COMPANY H. 26th LOUISIANA
CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA
MUSTER ROLL

Captain	CAGE Duncan S.	Later promoted to Colonel
Lieutenant	BISLAND William A.	Promoted to Captain
Lieutenant	AYCOCK Joseph	
Lieutenant	LIRETTE Homer	
Sergeant	DASPIT Claiborne H.	
Sergeant	BABIN Telesphor	
Sergeant	PORCHE Schuyler J.	
Sergeant	KNIGHT John M.	
Sergeant	TRAHAN Serville M.	
Corporal	HAINES Elias	
Corporal	PORCHE Thibodaux A.	
Corporal	BOUDREAUX Leopold	
Corporal	LOTTINGER Frederic	Wounded 5/19/1863
Private	ARCENEUX Wilfred	
Private	ARCENEUX Sosthene	
Private	ANTIL Albert	Died 10/8/1862
Private	AYO G. O.	
Private	BOUDREAUX Jules	
Private	BERGERON Octave	
Private	BERGERON Washington	Wounded 5/29/1863
Private	BERGERON Charles	Mortally wounded 6/5/1863
Private	BERGERON Schuyler	
Private	BRUNET Faustin	
Private	BABIN Theodule	KIA 6/12/1863
Private	BABIN Joseph	Wounded 5/29/1863
Private	BOURG Edouard	
Private	BOURG Faustin	
Private	BERNARD Lewis A.	
Private	BUFORD William	
Private	BOARD J. W.	
Private	BROUSSARD AUGUSTIN	Died 6/26/1862
Private	BELANGER Henri	
Private	BLANCHARD J. B.	
Private	BLANCHARD Theodule	
Private	BLANCHARD Edouard	Died 6/15/1862
Private	BURNS John	Died 6/7/1862
Private	BOUDREAUX Numa	
Private	BOURGEOIS Adam	Wounded 6/10/1863
Private	CROCHET Edouard	
Private	CREPPLE Severin	Wounded 6/25/1863
Private	COOPER Ezra	Wounded 6/9/1863
Private	CLARK Thomas	Died 8/2/1862
Private	CHAISSON Bernard	
Private	CHAUVIN Leufroy	
Private	CHAUVIN Felix	
Private	CLEMENT Joseph	
Private	DAVIS M. P.	
Private	DUPRE J. B.	Died 7/26/1862
Private	DUPRE Ludger	
Private	DUGAS J. N.	
Private	DOMINGUE Antoine	Died 7/19/1862
Private	DOMINGUE J. B.	
Private	DAIGNON Euzelien	
Private	DUPRE Simeon	
Private	DUPLANTIS Eusebe	
Private	ELLENDER Henty	Died 7/15/1862
Private	ETHERIDGE William C.	
Private	FORD Robert B.	
Private	FREMIN Aurelien	
Private	FLIPPIN James D.	Died 6/23/1862
Private	FORESTIER Caesar	Died 6/26/1862
Private	GUIDRY Ludger	
Private	GUIDRY Onezime	
Private	GUIDRY Hubert	
Private	GUIDRY Ernest	
Private	HATCH Alphonse	
Private	HEBERT Louis	Died 7/4/1863
Private	HUTCHINSON Adolphe	Died 6/26/1862
Private	HOTARD Joseph	Died 6/22/1862
Private	KIGER Henry C.	Wounded 5/26/1863
Private	KING Thomas	Wounded 5/29/1863
Private	KING George	KIA 5/29/1863

Private	KNIGHT W. O.	
Private	KNIGHT Joshua B.	
Private	LIRETTE Belloni	
Private	LYONS L. C. P.	Wounded 5/26/1863
Private	LECOMPTE Justin	
Private	LEBLANC Henri	
Private	LANCON Fortune	
Private	LANDRY Sosthene	
Private	LENAIN J. B.	
Private	LORIO Donatien	Died 6/17/1862
Private	MUNSON Frank	
Private	MUNSON Sylvanus	
Private	MILLER Christopher C.	Died 9/27/1862
Private	MILLER Elias	
Private	MARCEL Sed A.	
Private	MICHEL Prosper	
Private	MARLBOROUGH Joseph	
Private	MUNSON Asa	
Private	OLIVE Joseph	
Private	ORDENAU John	Died 2/25/1863
Private	POINCOT Etienne	
Private	PICHOFF Augustin	
Private	PORCHE H. C.	
Private	ROUNDTREE Thomas	
Private	ROUGELET Alfred	
Private	SAVOIE Marcellin	
Private	SAVOIE William	Died 6/22/1862
Private	SPARKS J. N.	
Private	SKINNER Samuel	
Private	THIBODAU Augustin	
Private	THIBODAU Aubain P.	
Private	THIBODAU Emile	
Private	THIBODAU Adam	
Private	TRAHAN Onesiphore	
Private	TRAHAN Ozeme	
Private	THERIOT Aurelie	
Private	THERIOT Oliva	
Private	TOUPS George	
Private	VOISIN Leonard	
Private	VICS (VICE) Emile	
Private	VALLETTE A.	
Private	WYMAN Charles	

ADDED TO COMPANY ROLLS AT A LATER DATE.

Private	BABIN V.	Wounded 6/25/1863
Lieutenant	DASPIT Charles M.	Wounded 5/20/1863

CONFEDERATE VETERANS AND / OR THEIR DEPENDANTS THAT RECIEVED BENEFITS

Achee T. P.	Darden W. R.
Arceneaux Sostherne	Daspit C.M.
Aucion Gideon	Daunis Mason
Aycock E. L.	Domangue Sostherne
Ayo J. O.	Dufly Nicholas
Babin Joseph	Dugas Octave
Babin Theophile	Dupre Simeon
Belanger Frank H.	Duplantis Eusebe
Belanger Henri	Duval C. A.
Bambum Valentine	Easton T. S.
Bergeron Harris	Eschete Cadet
Bergeron Schyler	Foolkes E. J.
Bergeron	Gaultier Lafayette
Bergeron Washington	Gagneau Emile
Blanchard Theodule	Gautreaux Nenville
Bond Howard J.	Giroir J. D.
Bonvillan Bamon	Guidry Ernest
Bonvillan Ernest	Hamagaiffe John
Bonvillan Washington	Hellier Henry J.
Boudreaux Leopold	Hock Theo
Boudreaux Narcisse	King Thomas
Boudreaux Numa	Kyle V. H.
Bourg, Taustin	LeBlanc Francois
Brooks I. J.	LeBlanc P.
Buford Joseph	LeCompte Justin
Campbell Jasper G.	Ledet Adam
Chassion Bernard	Lirette Ernest
Chauvin Alfred	Lirette Homer
Chauvin Lenfroy	Lirette Ozeme
Clement Edward	Louviere Henri D.
Clement Joseph	Malbrough James
Coloitre George	Marcel Emile
Connely A. W.	McCollan Edmond
Creppelle Serverin	McCollan John

McManus P. H.	Roger Francois
Molaire Octave	Roundtree Thomas
Montegut Gabriel	Savoie Marcellin
Munson Asa	Seon Oneziphe J.
Naquin Hypholite	Shaffer J. J. Captain
Picou Evans	Theriot Areelie
Pitre Alfred	Thibodaux Armand
Pitre Joseph	Tucker J. P.
Porche A. J.	Tucker W. P.
Porche H. C.	Use Leo
Porche J. S.	Viala Theo
Prevost Joseph	Vice Emile
Roddy Taylor	Voisin Leonard
Roger Alex	Smith E. A.

NOTEABLE INFORMATION

While researching the Civil War histoy of Terrebonne Parish, I came upon many names which were related to this parish. Those brave soldiers and others unlisted, their names forgotten or lost in the pages of history, were the heroes of a by-gone era. Their contributions none the less, were the sufferings of the atrocities of war.

At the begining of the Civil War, the State of Louisiana began to muster the Militia and Guard Units from all of the parishes, Terrebonne included. Many of the parishe's prominent citizens would rise in rank during the next few years. Others would not return, their bodies wasting away in distant lands.

Among the militia called to duty were the Terrebonne Regiment and the Houma Rifles.

The Terrebonne Regiment was under the command of Colonel Albert G. Cage; Lieutenant Colonel F. S. Goode; Major James Daspit.

The Houma Rifles were commanded by Captin Joseph Aycock; First Lieutenant V. A. Rightor; and Second Lieutenant Sulakoski.

On August 14, 1861 Randell L. Gibson was elected Colonel of the 13th Regiment Louisiana Volunteers. (Later promoted to General)

Reassigned to a Special Battalian in the Grivot Guards, First Lieutenant F. S. Goode; Second Lieutenant D. B. Dunn and Second Lieutenant Joseph A. Gagne.

General Quitman, owner of property on Grand Caillou Bayou was called to duty and served in the Confederate Army.

In April of 1861, the Secretary of War called for troops. In less than five days more than five thousand armed Louisianans responded and offered their services.

On December 1st 1862, the Secretary of War again called for troops from all the Louisiana parishes. Terrebonne responded and furnished another 501.

During the early stages of the war, the Twenty-Six Regiment Louisiana Volunteers consisted of Guard Units from several Parishes. These fell under the command of Colonel Alexander DeClouet; Lieutenant Colonel D. S. Cage and Major Winchester Hall.

Companies B and C also remained under the command of local officers.

Co. B of the Grivot Guards was commanded by Captain W. A. Bisland; First Lieutenant Joseph Aycock; and Second Lieutenant Homer Lirette.

Co. C also of the Givot Guards was led by Captin J. J. Shaffer; First Lieutenant J. A. Leonard; Second Lieutenant Thomas J. Shaffer and Second Lieutenant E. L. Aycock.

The 4th Louisiana Cavalty under the command of Colonel Louis Bush fought several battles around Mansfield and Pleasant Hill.

Listed below are the other names of Confederate soldiers whose names I found in records and books, but with no information given.

Two brothers, Louis and Joseph Champagne

Henry Minor

William Shaffer II

PRELUDE

LEGENDS OF THE BAYOUS

Along the banks of South Louisiana, stand great oaks of magnificent size. Their finger like branches reaching out toward the distant, like gaint hands seeking to engulf their surroundings. The centuries old oaks have stood as sentries watching the ever changing times.

The silver grey moss hanging from the their branches gives one the impression of ageless structures that have withstood the ravishes of time.

Their seed, the acorns, have been spread across the land by flood waters, birds and other wildlife to give roots, then struggle upward, seeking the sun in the shadow of it's parent. Thus new life was given to the forest to enhance it's beauty.

At the gateway of Acadiana, there is yet another gigantic ancient oak which stands alone, guarding the entrance to this mysterious land. It's huge branches spreading outward, twisting and curving in every direction.

It also, has for centuries stood vigilant like the sentry, observing history in the making. It has witnessed the hordes of Acadians as they invaded it's surroundings, as they fell the smaller trees to clear land for cultivation. It felt it's trunk vibrate when the ropes of justice were slung across it's branches. It's ears were deaf to the sweet sounds of lovers courting in it's shadow in the glowing moonlight. It stood silent as proud men snuffed out each other lives in duels over foolish pride. It stood strong as the raging flood waters rose and crept into it's branches, destroying everything in it's path. Through it's strength, the mighty oak has survived. Yet, it still stands.

Like the great oaks, the Cajuns also have a unique history of hardiness. Theirs is a proud and colorful heritage of unswerving strength that has been preserved through their seed. It has been instilled into one generation after another.

The history of the Cajuns had it's real beginning in Acadia when their ancestors suffered the atrocities of murder and the separation of their families in the massive deportation from Nova Scotia in 1755. Then the hardships of survival in the swampland delta we know as Acadiana.

Like the mighty oaks, the Cajuns have also planted their seed throughout the land, migrating from one area to another, seeking better lands and a better way of life.

Also like the mute oaks, the Cajuns have retained in silence the memory of the agony and hardships they had endured. Just as they have for centuries silently guarded the mysterious secrets of the strange phenomenal happenings in the swamplands of South Louisiana.

It is alleged that some inhabitants have in years past, seen the legendary spirits of the pirates who had plied their trade along the coastal waters, bays and bayous of the area. Even in our advanced age, some know of and fear the powers of voodoo withcraft. Most have heard the legends concerning the frightful occurrences that take place in the foggy, eerie atmosphere of those southern swamps.

Numerous Cajuns have heard the tales of the strange ball of fire that has followed certain Cajuns whenever they walked through the woods on dark, moonless nights, always remaining the same distant behind them.

Most Cajuns have heard the tales about the strange, mysterious disappearances of strangers who had ventured into the forbidden lands. Of the unknown happenings, so terrifying, that on one occasion it is legended, it caused a young man's hair to turn to snow white overnight. So afraid was he, that he never uttered another word in his life time, nor did he ever venture outside his house, remaining a prisoner of fear until death.

Unlike the oaks, the Cajuns have a remembrance of these tales and others. Through the course of history, they have been recounted to their Cajun offspring. Perhaps, not always with the same meaning, or in the same manner. Sometimes a change of area, or a change of language causes drastic changes in the stories. So it has been with our Cajun folklore.

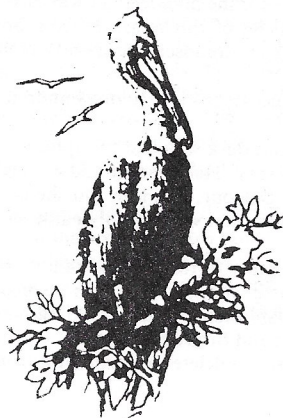
Even through the frightening, alterations of life under several regimes, the Cajuns like the solid oaks, remains. Their experiences have on many occasions been subjects of humor. They have learned to laugh at their own mistakes and misfortunes. Thus, they have survived the uncertainties of life.

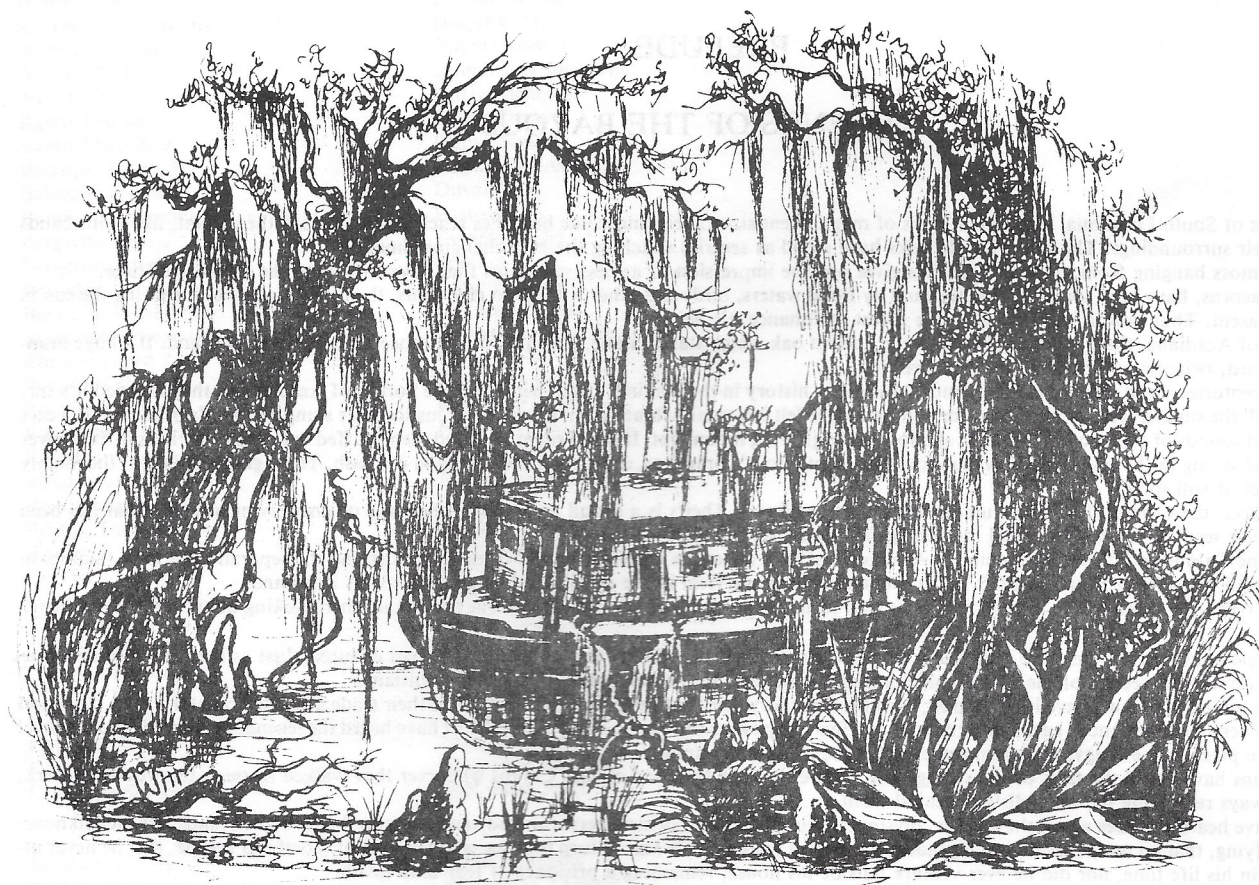
For centuries, the mythological tales have been a source of suspensive entertainment for the young which created excitement, anxiety and fear.

As the elderly grow older, their memories of the fables and tales of their ancestors begin to fade. But, the legendary stories live on in the hearts and lives of their offspring. Thus, they were assured that Cajun folklore would be remembered and cherished forever.

We bring our reader the fascinating history and heritage of our Cajun folklore in CAJUN CHRONICLE.

SLEEP WELL.





THE STRANGE STORY OF MADAM DELCOUR

At sometime or another during our life time, we all experience some mysterious occurrence. Usually they are easily explained, or soon forgotten. Yet, others remain implanted in our minds, suspenseful, and unexplainable. The very thought of the latter, sometimes bring cold chills and goose bumps. The story of Madam Delcour and the experiences of Phillip Devereaux, remains a mystery yet to be solved. The chilling aspects of the tale leaves one with the feeling of sadness, happenings and fearful apprehension.

On June 11th 1925, Phillip Devereaux was born on Delcour plantation. Thus, his story begins.

The plantation is situated on a high ridge surrounded by floating marshes, cypress swamps and fronted by Bayou Teche, a small stream whose water rolls lazily toward the Gulf of Mexico. This was the setting that surrounded Phillip as he entered the Cajun world of South Louisiana.

At his birth Phillip was delivered by an old mid-wife known only as Madam Delcour. There were many mysteries concerning the old lady. Some referred to her as being a mid-wife, because she had delivered most of the citizens in the area. Even the older inhabitants between 60 and 80 years of age had been told by their parents that the old lady had been the one who had assisted at their births.

Then, there were others who called her an old witch, because she practiced a form of witchcraft. She would conjure hexes and spells when paid to do so. She also sold herbs for medicines, love potions and other articles of witchcraft. Dried rabbits blood was a popular ingredient as it was supposed to make the slow mover faster; dried wildcat ears ground into a powder which supposedly made weak men strong and courageous. These were only a few of the many items sold by her.

Some speculated at the old woman's age. Some thought her to be close to one hundred and fifty years old, while others figured her to be a little less. But no one knew with certainty.

Madam Delcour was tall and slender, her wrinkled leathery, dark skin had the appearance of alligator hide. Her thinning snow white hair hung loose and straight over her stooped shoulders. But, she was active and spry. Her hearing and eye sight were in excellent form. In general she was in good health.

One of the un-explainable mysteries concerning Madam Delcour, was how did she come to bear the name of the plantation? As far back in history as anyone could remember or from information passed on to them, that was the only name she had ever had. No one knew if she had a first name, or if she had any living relatives.

Another mystery about her, was the fact that the last member of the Delcour family to own the plantation, "Madam Falcon Delcour", had made such generous provisions for the old lady in her last will and testament, stating, "The negro woman, known as Madam Delcour, free woman of color, shall be provided food and shelter on the property known as Delcour plantation by all succeeding heirs / or owners until she goes to her final resting place. She is to be treated with kindness, courtesy, love and respect by all present and future heirs/and or owners until such time as she expires. This provision can not be deleted from any future sale or transfer of said property. Any attempt to delete this provision from future transfers of said property will in fact cause such sale or transfer to become null and void."

Signed by Madam Falcon Delcour

Heir and owner of Delcour Plantation

Dated August 19, 1908

Although everyone speculated none were able to extract those secrets from the old woman.

Madam Delcour lived in an old dilapidated house-boat that had been drawn ashore many years before. It was partially hidden from view by large oaks and cypress trees which surrounded it. She didn't seem to mind her life style. Mostly, the people of the area left her alone, unless they needed her skills of mid - wifery, or that of witchcraft. She in turn, did not bother anyone. She would often visit their gardens and select vegetables for her table. But, no one could object to her doing so. After all, it was a provision in their property deeds.

As Phillip grew older, Madam Delcour seem to take a special interest in him. Even though he had been forbidden to go near her houseboat, Phillip would slip away to visit with her. Even as a very young lad, he would make small repairs on the weather beaten structure which she called her home. Then, at times he would bring her rabbits and other wildlife he would shoot while hunting, or he would give her fish, whenever he caught any.

Phillip was fifteen years old when he began asking the old woman questions. But, just as she had done with everyone else, she would change the subject. Some-how, Phillip knew that one day the old lady would reveal her secrets to him. This he had no doubt about. But, he was impatient, so he continuously asked questions.

Then World War II broke out. Phillip enlisted in the United States Army. When he came home on furlough just before Christmas of 1943, he knew that he would be going overseas when he rejoined his unit. He would have to leave his home on the morning of December 26.

Time flew by then Christmas day arrived. It would be a long time before he would see his family or the old woman again. As he walked toward the old woman's house-boat on Christmas day to bid her farewell, Phillip stopped in his mother's rose garden. He selected a dozen beautiful red roses which he brought to her. Upon receiving the flowers, Madam Delcour began to cry. This surprised, and touched Phillip.

"Why are you crying? He asked.

"You remind me so much of Monsieur Delcour with those roses," she replied, then continued. "I was only fifteen years old then. It was Christmas morning and it was also my birthday. Those were the first of many flowers I received from him. I was a slave girl then, owned by his father. Slave girls didn't normally receive flowers from white gentlemen. It was a birthday and Christmas present from him. He also gave me a beautiful red dress to go with the red roses. That was One hundred and four years ago today. I was born on Christmas day of 1839. Lord child, that's a long time ago."

"Who was Monsieur Delcour?" Phillip asked. "What did he mean to you?"

"He was my lover. He was a white man with blond hair, and we were very much in love."

"Did you marry him?"

"Oh, Lord no child, there was no way we could get married. White gentlemen didn't marry black slave girls. We would have been stoned to death if we would have tried to marry. From the moment he gave me those flowers, I fell in love with him. Then I got so excited, I momentarily forgot that I was a slave girl. I threw my arms around him and I kissed him. He in turn, embraced me and returned my kiss. From that moment on I was his woman."

"What happened after that?" Phillip asked with anticipation.

"Before I answer that, I have to go back a spell and tell you about the elder Madam Delcour. I was her house maid from the time I was ten years old. She taught me to read and write and to study the Bible. She always saw to it that I was well fed and properly dressed. The madam was always telling me how pretty I was. As you can see, my skin is not black like most negroes. When I was young, it was the color of tanned leather. My hair was long and wavy, not white like it is now. Lord child, that was a long time ago."

"Madam Delcour, I'll be going off to the war. I may never return. I could get killed over there. Then on the other hand, you might die before I return. I do wish you'd tell me everything there is to know about you and Monsieur Delcour. How did you acquire the name of Madam Delcour? What happened to him? Why didn't you go up North and get married? Why didn't you ever marry? How did you become involved in witchcraft? These are only a few of the many questions I'd like for you to answer for me."

"No child, I won't answer your questions until you come back from the war. As for you getting killed, if you do as I say, you'll go through the war unscratched, even though death will strike others all around you."

"What is it that you would have me do?" he asked.

Before answering him, she rose from her rocking chair and walked over to a shelf. She remove a small envelope from it and gave it to Phillip, then she gave him instructions.

"First, I want you to take this powder which is made with dried alligator hide, eat it with your supper tonight." Then she reached under her bed and retrieved three bars of foul smelling soap and hand them to Phillip. "Then you must bathe with this soap at least once a month. It is made with the fat from an alligator. No bullet or sword will ever draw blood from your body as long as you follow my instructions. Your body will have the toughness of the alligator. As for my dying before you return, have no fear. I've been through many wars in my hundred some odd years, I'll be here waiting for you to come back." She informed him as she rose from the rocking chair, and went to the window where she lit a long white candle.

"I will keep this candle burning while you're away. As long as it burns, you will be safe. It will still be burning when you return."

"Upon your return, I will tell you the story you seek, but only if you promise never to reveal my secrets. Then I shall die and go to meet the Lord."

Phillip gathered the ingredients, he kissed the old woman farewell, then walked away toward his destiny.

As he left the houseboat, Phillip wondered. Did this stuff really work? Not that he believed in the old woman's powers, it was just that he didn't believe in taking any chances.

At supper time, Phillip mixed the alligator powder with the shrimp okra gumbo his mother had prepared. He ate all of it.

Phillip left the next morning before daylight. The last thing he saw which became implanted in his mind, was the light of the candle glowing in the window of Madam Delcour's houseboat. He was on his way to fight the war in Germany.

Every few weeks, Phillip would bathe with the foul smelling soap. The other soldiers told him, that they would rather he remained dirty and smelly, rather than for him to bathe with that soap. Still he followed the old woman's instructions over their objections.

Then one day in 1944, his company became engaged in a terrible battle with the Germans. The enemy was well fortified. When his company attacked, soldiers fell all around him. Machine gun bullets struck the stock of his M-1 rifle in three places, forcing the bullets to ricochet away from him. Other bullets tore holes in his shirt and pants without touching him. Then, enemies bullet found its mark, striking him in the chest. The impact sent him reeling backways, knocking him to the ground unconscious. When he regained conscious there was a German soldier standing over him with bayonet raised. The blade plunged downward toward his stomach. Phillip could not move. He felt the impact of the bayonet striking his middle, then he again returned to unconsciousness.

When he returned to the world of the living, he found that he was not wounded. The bullet that had struck his chest had been deflected by the cigarette case in his pocket. Then he noticed that his cartridge belt had also deflected the bayonet that had been meant for his stomach. As he glanced around him, he noticed that his entire company of two hundred men were all dead. He was the only survivor. Madam Delcour's predication came to his mind and he remembered the candle in her window.

After crawling away to safety, he later joined another combat unit. He continued to fight the Germans.

Five months later while patrolling with eight other soldiers, one of them stepped on a mine. By some miracle, all the others were killed, but Phillip did not suffer any wounds. He stood there for a moment unable to believe that he was still alive. Again he thought of Madam Delcour's predication.

Several times in the following year, he narrowly escaped death, while others around him were wounded or killed. But, he remained unharmed.

He continued to bathe with the foul smelling soap. He was not going to take any chances even though he still had serious doubts about the old woman's powers.

Then finally in 1945 the war came to an end. Phillip returned to his South Louisiana homeland. He arrived at his parents home at 2:30 in the morning on December 21, 1945. As the taxi pulled into the driveway, he glanced toward Madam Delcour's houseboat. He noticed the glow of the candle light in the window. He knew that the old lady was still alive.

The next day after visiting with his folks, he walked toward the bayou side. He stopped and gathered a bouquet of roses for Madam Delcour. As he reached the houseboat, he saw her sitting in her old rocking chair, just as he had seen her so many times before. He gave her the flowers as he bent down to kiss her. She cried when he gave her the roses, just as he knew she would. After greeting him and welcoming him home, she asked.

"Are you ready to begin taking notes of my life's history. I don't have too many days left. So let's get busy."

"You're not going to die now that I'm home. We have too much to do. I have to tell you all about the things that happened to me since I last saw you," Phillip said.

"You mean, like all those bullets that passed through your clothes. About the one that struck your cigarette case and the bayonet that glanced off your cartridge belt. Then about the three bullets that struck your rifle and about the mine that exploded and killed all the other soldiers."

Phillip's mouth dropped open, he was speechless. How had she known these things? He had not told anyone about them. Was she really a witch?

Finally, after minutes had passed, he asked, "How could you possibly know this?"

"I watched over you. I saw them happen at the very moment they occurred. I saw them in the flame of the candle. Now child, enough of this idle chatter. I promised to tell you my life's history. When we are through I will give you two of the greatest gifts that you could ever receive besides the gift of love and life. Those two you already have. After I finish telling you everything about myself, then you will know why I am leaving them to you, rather than to those you will know about. Get paper and pencil and we will begin. There is no time to waste. My time here is very limited."

Phillip fetched a pencil and lots of paper. Then for the next few days, Madam Delcour told her story which would answer almost all of his questions.

"I may be repeating some of the things that I have already told you, but I will start at the beginning and tell everything."

"I was born on Christmas day in 1839 on Delcour Plantation, to slaves Martha and Samuel. They named me Lisa. These were the only names we ever had. The plantation owner was Monsieur Falcon Delcour. I remember him as being a very kind, elderly gentleman. As I grew up, I became Madam Delcour's favorite housekeeper. Working in the mansion, I ate, dressed and lived better than other slaves. Madam Delcour taught me how to read and write. She had planned to send me to school up North so I could become a teacher. Then I would be able to teach other slaves to read the Bible. She was a Christian woman. She felt that everyone should be able to read the Bible. The Madam was always telling me how pretty I was. Most everyone said that I must have had a trace of white blood in me because I wasn't as dark as other negroes."

"The Delcours had a son who was only two years older than myself. Even though I was a slave, we were very good friends. We grew up playing in the yard, studying books together. That changed on that Christmas morning when he brought me a bouquet of roses and that pretty red dress. That was the day that I reached out and kissed him. When he responded to my kiss by embracing me, I was the happiest slave girl in the world. I fell in love with him right then and there. That was on Christmas day of 1854. That night when he invited me to his room, I didn't hesitate for one second, even though I knew that we would make love together. I loved him very much and I knew that he loved me. Nothing else mattered."

"When the kitchen slaves began making noise in the morning, I knew that I had to sneak out of his room, but he wouldn't let me leave, Lord child, I was scared to death."

"Then when he was late going downstairs, his father came upstairs looking for him. He opened the bedroom door without knocking and he caught us in the bed naked as the day we were born. Lord child, I was so scared that I thought I was going to die. His father changed several shades of red before he spoke. Then he said in a very calm voice, "Boy, put your clothes on and let's go to work. We're late already. Lisa, I'll talk to you later," then he closed the door behind him, then went downstairs."

"Lord child, I just knew that I was going to get it bad or that he would sell me to some mean owner. I didn't hear from them all day long. I was afraid for them to come back. I just did my work as best as I could. I was too scared to wonder if I was doing it right. Then late that night, young Monsieur Delcour and his father returned to the house. I hurried to hide in my room. Then my lover came and found me and took me for a walk in the woods nearby."

"Father is very angry with me for what I've done to you," he said. "He reminded me of how mother felt about you and that she planned to send you to school up North. She doesn't know about us yet, but I know that father will tell her tonight. We both know that you and I can never get married. The other whites would never stand for it. But, I do love you with all my heart. I told this to my father. He understands, yet he is powerless to do anything in this matter. He also said that we are never to make love again in the house. That we are to wait and see if you are pregnant. Then if you are, you are to move into the little house next to the woods. He also said that if you are in a family way, that he will give you and the unborn child your freedoms. That he doesn't want any of his offspring to be born slaves."

"Lord child, as you would know, I became pregnant. I continued to work in the big house, but I had my very own house to go to at night. Madam Delcour fussed over me like I was her daughter - in-law, even though she never mentioned the fact that she knew the child was her grandchild. She took care of me during my morning sickness. She didn't allow me to do too much around the house."

"Just before the baby was due, Monsieur Delcour sent my mama to live with me so that she could take care of me and help deliver the baby."

"Lord child, that baby girl was the most beautiful baby I ever did see. It had straight blonde hair just like her daddy. Her eyes were blue just like his. That baby has a skin as white as milk. You just couldn't tell that that girl had any negro blood in her. Once Monsieur Delcour saw that baby, he took to staying nights at the little house."

"Before too long, I was in a family way again. Lord child, did I have a hard time with that second one, It also, looked just like her daddy and her sister."

"Then the older Monsieur Delcour began putting pressure on my lover for him to marry a certain white girl that they had chosen for his wife. Even though he didn't want to, his father left him no choice in the matter. It was either marry the white girl, or his father would disown him."

"Well, he married her. She was a very beautiful lady, with blue eyes, long blond hair. She was tall and slender. At first Monsieur Delcour stayed away for a few days at a time. Then he took to visiting me again almost every day."

"Before too long, his wife also took to visiting me and the children every day. Lord child, she fell in love with them two children. She treated them just like they was her own. She would spend the whole afternoon at my house, just playing with those children. Sometimes she would take them riding with her in her carriage."

"Then one day when my eldest was two years old, I came down with the killing fever. Madam Delcour, my lovers wife, took the children to live in the big house with her. She was afraid that the children would come down with the sickness if they stayed with me. For several weeks, no one knew if I would live or die. It was during that time that I found out that Madam Delcour couldn't have any children. Thinking that I was going to die, she asked me to let her adopt the girls and raise them as her very own. She said that she would get some forged papers showing that they were her own. Knowing that she would take very good care of them and that she would shower them with all her love, I agreed."



"I recovered, but the deed was done. My oldest, Martha, whom I had named after my own mama, soon forgot all about me. Lisa, the youngest, whom I named after myself, was too young to remember me. As the years passed, I watched my two little girls grow up to be beautiful white ladies. When they married white gentlemen, they had the most beautiful weddings. I saw my grandchildren, great grandchildren and my great, great grandchildren marry into other white families. The negro blood strain in their veins has dimished and no longer remain.

"None of them have ever known that I am their great grandmother, or that they have a living grandmother. But, I love everyone of them. Lord child, it's been hard seeing those children growing up and always having to keep my mouth shut. Not being able to tell them that I'm their grandmother. This has been one of my greatest secrets.

"But, my happiest times were those that I spent with Monsieur Delcour. We continued to love one another until the day he died at the age of 62.

"His wife is the one who gave me the title of Madam Delcour. She said that I deserved it more than anyone else, because I borned his children. We would have had more, but for some reason, after I had Lisa, I couldn't have anymore. Lord child, it wasn't that we didn't try.

Phillip interrupted.

"How did you become involved with mid-wifery and the business of witchcraft? he asked.

"after my children were adopted by their father and his wife, I had to have something to do. I began going with my mama and helped her deliver babies. From her I learned all of the secrets of mid-wifery and that of withcraft. Then through out the years, I added some things of my own. I also picked up bits of witchcraft from some of the older blacks."

"How does the hexes and spells work?" Phillip asked. "I know that it does work, because I'm the living proof of it."

"They work only if the believers want them to work. If they really believe that it will work, then most of the hexes, spells will be effective. It gives them the self confident to do the things that they don't have the courage to do without them."

"I didn't believe in these things. I thought that it was a lot of nonsense, yet it certainly worked wonders for me. Can you explain it?" Phillip asked.

"Yes, I can explain it. You see, you are something very special to me. I had ways of helping you through the war and to keep you safe. I called upon the most powerful force ever known to man," she replied.

"What is that power you speak of?"

"I called upon the powers of the Lord himself. I burned a candle and prayed to him the entire time you were away. It was his power not mine that saw you safely through the war. I have no power except those that he gives me. It is only through him that I can do anything."

"I don't quite understand all this, but I'll accept whatever you say. You also told me that you would give me two great treasures, what are they?" Phillip asked.

"Throughout your life, you have given me love from your heart, asking nothing in return. I want you to promise me that you will never reveal the secrets that I will entrust to you. Do you promise?" she asked.

"Yes, I promise that whatever you reveal to me, will remain a secret forever." Phillip pledged.

"First, go over to that cabinet and open the door on the bottom, right under the dish pan. Then remove the articles that are on top of that five gallon can."

Phillip did as he had been instructed. When he removed the articles, he whistled and looked down in disbelief.

"Where in the world did you get all this money? he asked as he gazed at the gold and silver coins which filled the metal can to the very top.

Madam Delcour did not answer. Instead, she instructed him.

"Now reach into the far right hand corner. There is a large wooden box. Pull it out and bring it here."

Phillip fumbled around until he removed the box from it's hiding place. He then placed it on the table in front of the old lady.

She removed the cover revealing old documents, yellowing with age. Upon removing the ancient looking papers, she uncovered neatly stacked bundles of treasury bills of all sizes. The box contained another fortune.

"Now," she said. "To answer your most important question. This is money I have accumulated throughout the years. There must be about one hundred thousand dollars in gold and silver coins in the metal can. There is another one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in bills in the box. When you leave here today, you must take this money with you. It rightfully belongs to you. I will never need any of it."

"Why do you say that? Why does it right fully belong to me? Why do you say you'll never need any of it?" Phillip asked.

"Tomorrow I will be one hundred and six years old. Don't forget that it will be Christmas day. That is the day I will leave this world and go to another one. So you must remove the money today. Don't argue. Just do as I say," she ordered.

"Is this one of the treasures you spoke of? If so, what is the other? Why do you give them to me?" he asked.

"Actually, I will give you two more treasures. But, only one of them will useful to you. The other will be a mystery. You will try to solve it, but never will. These documents contain the other treasure. It is the treasure of knowledge. A knowledge that only you will ever have. Remember, you have given me your word never to reveal these secrets."

"What kind of knowledge is it?" Phillip asked with a puzzled look on his face.

"These documents contain the history of your family. A line that none of your relatives are aware of. It is the history of your relatives from darkest Africa. You see, my child, you are my great, great, grandson. Your great, great, grandfather was the young Monsieur Delcour I spoke of. You look exactly like him. Like him, you too, bought me beautiful roses. Because of the love you've given me and also because you are the only one of my blood that I have known and loved as I do, I give you all of my treasures. These you must take away before my spirit return to my home in Heaven.

Phillip just sat there graping for words, unable to speak. After several moments had passed, he said.

"Great grandmother, somehow I've always known this. I have always felt that you were or had been part of my life. I know now, why I have this strong love for you. There was no other explanation."

"Now, grandmother, what is this nonsense about your spirit going to meet the Lord? You're not going to die just yet, Then only your spirit will go to Heaven."

"No my child. When I die tomorrow, my body and my spirit will leave this earth and go to Heaven. You shall see. Now, take this money away from here. Do whatever you want with it. It is yours. Tomorrow will be Christmas day. It will also be my birthday. Surely it will be a wonderful day for me. Now my child, kiss me good - by before you go."

With tears in his eyes, Phillip kissed his great, great grandmother good - by. Then he struggled to remove from the houseboat the treasres he had inherited.

Very early the next morning, Phillip left his house and went directly to the houseboat. After knocking on the door and receiving no response, he entered the houseboat. He found his great grandmother in her bed. She appeared to be asleep, but he knew she was dead.

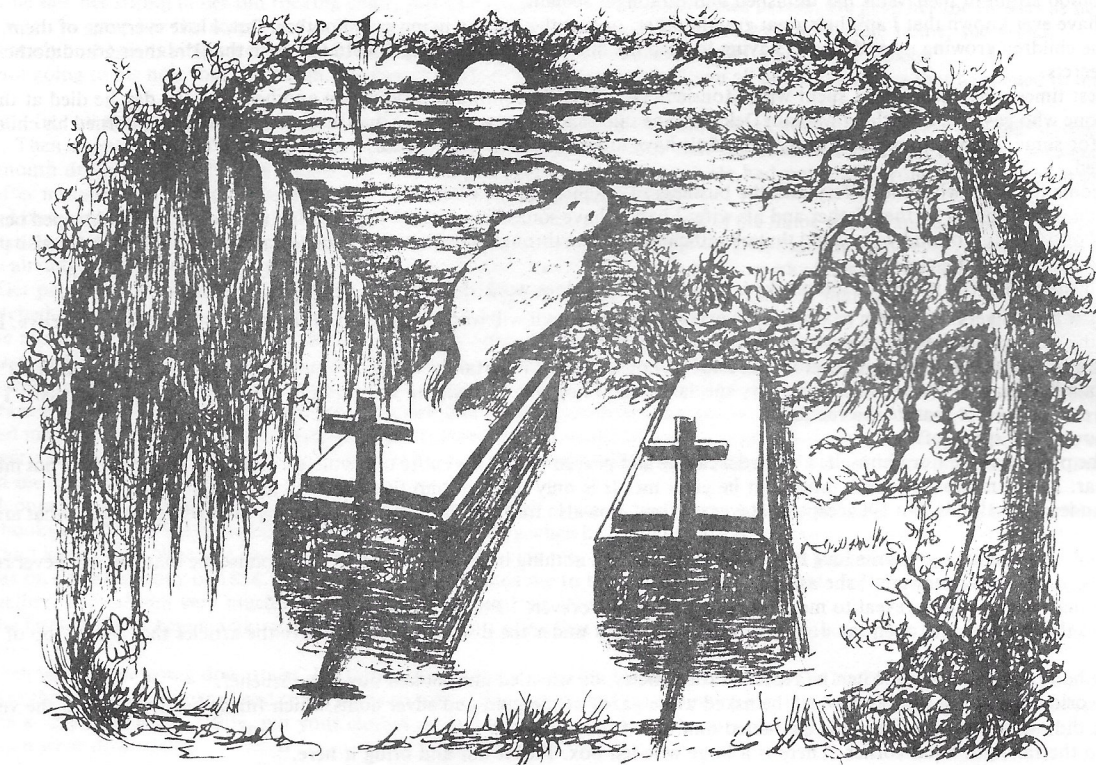
Phillip then returned to his house and informed his family that the old woman was dead. Then he went to town and made arrangements for her funeral. That night, Phillip and others sat up waking his great grandmother. As was the custom of those days he closed the casket at midnight.

At 7:00 o'clock the next morning as he again opened the casket for the final viewing, he was presented with the mystery the old woman had spoke about. As he raised the lid, a white mist rose from the casket and disappeared into thin air. The casket was empty. Although frighten he hurriedly closed the casket and would not allow anyone to open it again.

How had she done it? Where was her body? How had she taken her body to Heaven with her spirit? How had she known exactly when she was going to die? Was she a witch, or was she an Angel?

Her life had been a mystery Madam Delcour remained more of a mystery in deathone never to be solved.





UNCLE JACQUE RETURNS FROM THE GRAVE

Paul DeBlanc was a very handsome young fellow of eighteen years. He stood six feet, two inches tall. Hard farm work had made him strong as an ox. His body flexed with rippling muscles. He was reared on a plantation with other French speaking families. Although he had no formal education and spoke only the French language, he was wise in the ways of life. He was a quiet, peaceful, bashful youth who was loved by almost everyone.

Every Saturday afternoon, it was Paul's habit to travel to Naquin's dance hall on Point-Au-Chenes. There, he would court the beautiful Marie LeBouef, with whom he had fallen madly in love. Late in the afternoon, he would dress in his fine, freshly ironed, white cotton suit and walk the several miles from Arragon plantation to the dance hall. It was there that he would meet Marie and her mother who always chaperoned her.

This Saturday was no different from any others. Paul left his house just before dusk. As he walked along the dusty road, he thought about his beautiful Marie, anticipating holding her warm, soft body in his arms as they waltzed across the dance floor. He visualized her dark brown hair, her small nose, her hazel eyes and the sweet fragrance of honeysuckle that always hung in the air about her. He looked forward to the moments when they would sly away together, when he might steal a kiss, or hold her hand under the watchful eyes of her mother. He remembered the time he had stolen a kiss when Mrs. LeBouef had gone to attend to Marie's younger sister. He had only to think of that occurrence and his lips would burn like fire. His body would vibrate with excitement.

But, Paul had some problems. As we mentioned before, he was very shy. Another being a poor plantation farm hand. Then, he didn't feel that he was good enough for Marie. There was also the fact that she could read and write and she could speak a little English, while he couldn't even sign his own name. He had decided that he would never ask her to marry him unless he was able to give her the finer things of life. What could he offer her besides his love? Yet he could not bring himself to stop meeting her. Maybe things would get better, then he would ask for her hand in marriage.

Then, there was John Levron who was the same age as Paul. But, unlike Paul, John was rich by the standards of the times. His father owned the only grocery store in the area, and had a thriving business. John could read, write and speak the English language very well. While John's father was highly respected and well loved by everyone in the community, John didn't have any friends. The people despised his selfish, arrogant manners.

Like Paul, John also had a certain beautiful young lady who lived on Point-Au-Chenes that he was madly in love with. Elaine Hotard had the kind of personality that drew men to her wherever she was. But, she avoided John and wouldn't even speak to him, because of his ill-mannered ways. Even though she found John attractive in some ways, she refused to associate with him. Yet, John continued to have hopes of one day marrying her.

For almost a year, both young men, separately, traveled the same road, going the same direction at about the same time. Paul would leave Arragon plantation at dusk and begin walking the lonely dusty road, being careful not to dirty his clean white cotton suit.

John would leave Montegut after dark and ride in his fancy horse drawn buggy. He would pass by Paul, never offer him a ride nor bid him the time of the day. He figured that his status in the community was too high to allow himself to lower his standards thus.

As John rode along hearing only the clatter of the horses hoofs on the dry dirt, his thoughts turned to the girl he loved. He had done almost everything he could think of to get her attention. Still, she ignored him completely. But he wondered!!! Why did she always look in his direction whenever she flirted with the other fellows? Was she deliberately taunting him? Why? He was at his ropes end. If she didn't pay notice to him tonight, then he would simply give up and not return to Point - Au - Chenes. The pain was too great for him, to endure. He could see no reason to continue going to meet someone who just didn't care for him.

Total darkness had settled around Paul as he walked along the narrow dusty road. It was so dark under the moonless, cloudy sky that he could barely see the road. When he reached the graveyard which he had to pass by, he stopped to rest. Spreading his handkerchief on a fallen cypress tree, he sat with his back to the tombs. As he rested, he heard the clatter of horses hoofs approaching from a distant. Suddenly, as the horse drawn buggy came upon him, there appeared a soft wierd light from behing him. As Paul turned to face the tombs, he noticed a misty, ghostly figure forming over a concrete structure. At that very moment, the horse and buggy passed by.

The driver of the horse drawn rig saw the ghost raising from the tomb. He whipped the horse to make it go faster, leaving in a cloud of dust.

Paul jumped to his feet and rushed after the buggy. He ran with his right arm stretched out in an attempt to grab the rear of the buggy. He managed to catch the back of the vehicle and ran with all his might to keep up with it.

The driver, thinking that the white figure behind the buggy was the ghost trying to reach out to grab him, whipped the horse even more in an attempt to leave the ghostly figure behind.

Paul was running out of breath. He was having a hard time keeping up with the run-a-way horse and buggy. Suddenly in desperation, he called out in a whispering voice, "John, stop." But, John, beat on his horses back trying with all his might to make it run faster.

Paul's heart was pounding so fast, that he thought it would burst on him. He began to tire, but he refused to let go of the buggy. Then in the distant he noticed the kerosene lantern which was always hung on a pole in front of the dance hall. He released the buggy and stopped to rest. He continued on his way after he had rested and regained his composure.

John was scared out of his wits. When he saw the ghost come from the grave, he paniced. Then when he heard Paul calling, "John, stop." He thought that the ghost was commanding him to halt. Traveling at great speed until he reached the dance hall, he suddenly pulled on the riens and brought the rig to a halt. Frightened as he was, he jumped from the buggy and ran into the hall, leaving the horse unattended.

John hurried to the bar where he ordered one brandy after another, downing them in one glump. So shaken was he, that he refused to speak to anyone for fear that his voice would betray him.

Most everyone noticed the terrified look on John's face as he entered the dance hall. They could tell that there was something wrong. Yet they left him alone to suffer the chilling consequences of his alarming experiences. Usually he would enter the hall being loud and boist, but tonight he remained quiet.

Paul entered the hall a short time later. He was his usual self, friendly, pleasant and humble. Although he had been quite shaken by th ghostly experience, he had regained his composure and self confident. Upon spotting Marie and her mother sitting on the benches along the rear wall, Paul ventured over and took his usual seat next to Marie. He didn't seem affected by the incident.

John, on the other hand, continued to down one brandy after another. He remained sullen and to himself. Not once did he attempt to dance with Elaine. Nor did he notice that she was concerned about his condition.

Then about an hour later, Elaine approached John and asked. "John, what's wrong with you tonight? What happened?"

Elaine's sudden concern and friendliness took John by complete surprise. He was momentarily at a loss for words.

"No, oh no, there's nothing wrong," he answered with a quivering, still shaken voice.

"You look like you've seen a ghost," she said with concern in her voice. "Come on, let's dance. Maybe that will cheer you up," she said as she took his hand and led him to the dance floor.

They danced without speaking. John was in deep thought. He wondered if he should tell her about the ghostly experience? Would she believe him? He had to tell someone, because it was driving him crazy.

When the music stopped, John and Elaine walked off the dance floor holding hands. Once they were seated, she asked again. "John, what in the world is wrong with you tonight?"

"Elaine, tonight I had the most terrifying experience. You wouldn't believe me if I told you about it. It seems so unreal. These things just don't happen. Yet, I know what happened out there on my way over here." He replied.

"It really must have been something terrible to have frightened you so much. Do you want to tell me about it," she asked.

"As you know, I have to pass by the graveyard to get here. As I was riding along in total darkness in front of the graveyard, a soft light suddenly appeared covering the whole area over the tombs. A ghostly, misty figure formed over one of the tombs. It's finger like hands reached out in my direction, rising high above the tomb. As it approached my rig, I whipped my horse to get away from the area. I was so frighten, that I screamed. I almost jumped from the buggy to out run the horse. Then, the ghost caught up with my rig. It raised it's arms out toward me and called my name. It cried out in a weak, soft, rattling voice "John , stop". The faster I drove my horse, the faster the ghost went. All the time it had it's arm stretched out trying to grab me. I could feel it's cold, rasping breath on the back of my neck. Then it finally disappeared about a quarter of a mile from here. Now I wonder if that thing will be waiting for me when I pass there to go home tonight. Will it chase me again? I couldn't take that again.

"You poor dear thing. No wonder you're so shaken up. Maybe you can get someone to ride with you. That way you'll feel more secure. Why don't you ask Paul to ride with you? You know he's walks back and forth every Saturday night to court Marie. I'm sure he'll be glad to ride with you."

"I've been so rotten to him, I don't think he'd want to be in the same buggy with me or have anything to do with me," he replied.

"You could always apologize to him for whatever wrong you've done him in the past. That would be a good start, wouldn't it? Would it hurt you to say that you're sorry? Are you too proud? she asked, then went on to express her fellings toward him. "Do you know why I've never allowed myself to get attracted to you. First, you always seem to give the impression that you think you're better than everyone else. Second, you always brag on yourself. Third, you be little those less fortunate than yourself. Fourth, you only make friends with people you can use, then when you're through with them, you cast them aside. I think that it's high time you take a real close look at yourself. I like you very much, and maybe I could learn to like you a lot more if you'd change some of your bad habits. I know you love me and want to court me, but you'll have to show me a drastic change in your attitude before that comes about."

"I know that I've been wrong. But, I'll do anything to get you to go steady with me. You have no idea how much I've suffered, wanting to be close to you and hold you in my arms. I've done everything I could to get you to notice me, but I can see now that I went about it in the wrong way. Tonight I've been so happy here with you. If, you'll give me a chance, I'll change, I promise. I had made up my mind, that you didn't talk to me tonight, that I wouldn't be back to bother you, but now nothing can keep me away from you, not even that ghost I saw."

While John and Elaine were dancing, John stopped Paul and Marie in the center of the hall and spoke with them, inviting them to their table. The two couples found themselves chatting, dancing and enjoying themselves for the rest of the evening.



When the band quit playing and the dance was over for the night, they gathered together outside to bid their farewells. John asked Paul, "Why don't you ride with me?"

Paul readily accepted and climbed into the buggy and they rode away together.

When they approached the graveyard, John pulled back on the reins and brought the buggy to a halt.

"Paul," John said, "I can't go on without telling you what happened tonight. I can't let you take the risk of riding with me and maybe your getting hurt because of me. I know I've been selfish and stupid in the past and I want you to know that I am really sorry about the way I've treated you. If you want to walk home alone after I tell you this story, I won't blame you in the least."

Paul listened to John's story about the ghostly experience without interrupting. Nor did he dare tell John that he had also seen the apparition. Nor would he ever tell him what he had taken for a ghost chasing him behind the buggy was none other than himself. This would remain his secret. He saw no reason to tell him these things. If this would cause John to change for the better, then so be it.

When John finished relating the story, he asked Paul for forgiveness.

"John, I understand these things, and I do forgive you. You know there have been many ghostly sightings in the past. I do believe that you saw a ghost tonight. As far as holding anything against you, I don't. As a matter of fact, I'd like to be your friend if you'll let me."

Now that all the wrongs of the past had been aired out and forgiven, John wondered. Did he dare pass in front of that graveyard again? What if the ghost came after him again?

Although fearful, John raised the reins and brought them down on the horse's back. The buggy began moving forward. John strained his eyes in an attempt to see beyond the horse's head. Very nervously, he whipped the horse, giving it a free rein to find its way in the pitch black night.

Paul on the other hand, was also very much frightened. Although he was not afraid of man or beast, ghost were something else. But, why should he be afraid? His father had always told him, that he should only fear living things like evil men and dangerous animals. Still he said nothing to John concerning his knowledge of the ghost, or his fear of it.

They passed the graveyard without incident. Much to their relief, no ghosts appeared as they continued on their way home.

Thus, this was the beginning of a close, lasting friendship that was to change the lives of four people, Paul, John, Marie and Elaine.

John got into the habit of picking up Paul every Saturday night and they would ride to the dance together. Then they began going to Point - Au - Chenes on Sundays, where they would spend the day with their girl friends. Soon, they began to speak of marriage.

While John was financially well off, Paul remained a poor plantation hand. Then one day John brought up a business proposal. He needed a partner in a business venture that he had in mind. But, he needed someone that was well liked in the community and one who could speak their language. A man that was trusted by everyone. Paul met all the requirements for the position. Would he take the job with a full partnership? After discussing the idea of going into the dry moss business, Paul accepted. John would furnish the money to go into the business and Paul would manage the work crews and that end of the enterprise.

Months went by and the two partners prospered. Soon Paul had more money than he ever dreamed of having in his lifetime. He and Marie married and settled down in their own little dream house on the bayou side.

John and Elaine also married. They built a huge house on the high side of the bayou where they lived happily. John changed his ways and lost all his bad habits. People learned to like and trust him. He was more cheerful and happy.

Then one day, several year later, Paul and Marie were riding along Point-Au-Chenes, they came upon the old burial grounds. Paul decided to break the silence and reveal to Marie secret he had held for so long. He stopped the rig in front of the graveyard and proceeded to tell Marie about the ghostly figure he had seen that night so long ago. He also told her that he was the person that John had taken for the ghost that had followed his horse and buggy.

Paul stepped down from the carriage, he assisted Marie to the ground.

"For years I've wanted to stop here and see who is buried in that tomb where the ghost appeared. I mean to find out why that spirit chose that night to appear."

They ventured to the tomb and read the inscription on the tombstone. It read.

"Jacque DeBlanc - Born 1769 - Died 1861." He died without knowing the fulfilment of love."

Then Paul noticed an identical tomb next to Jacque DeBlanc's. The inscription read.

"Melena Brunet - Born 1769 - Died 1862. "She waited - She died."

Paul wondered what it all meant. Who were these people? What did the inscriptions mean? Was Jacque DeBlanc one of his ancestors? Why was Melena buried next to Jacque?

Upon returning to his mother's house, he told her about the ghostly appearance. He asked her if she knew who was Jacque DeBlanc and the story behind the inscriptions.

"I hardly knew Jacque DeBlanc. He was a very old man when I married your father. Jacque was your great, great uncle. There is a very interesting story about him and Melena.

"Your uncle Jacque loved Melena very much. He kept putting off getting married because he felt that he couldn't give her the things she deserved. He was very poor. He didn't want to marry her until he could give her all the comforts he thought she deserved. She kept waiting for him to ask her to become his wife. They saw each other every Saturday night for seventy years. Then on a cold December morning, they found Jacque dead. Melena died one month later in January. She went to join her lover as life for her had ended when he died. Your grandfather and Melena's family had the inscription carved on the headstones as a reminder to others not to waste their love and their lives waiting for something that may never come. But to build better lives together.

"You need not be afraid of Jacque's ghost. I'm sure that he made his appearance to you and John because somehow, he knew it would change both of your lives. Through his spirit, he prevented you from making the same mistake he had made. It seems like uncle Jacque's ghost returned to help all of you. It has certainly changed your lives for the better. At least he accomplished something, even if it was after he died."

Thus it was that Uncle Jacque DeBlanc returned from the grave to help his nephew.





THE LIGHT IN THE SWAMP

Raymond Savoie was twenty years old. His brother Alfred was three years younger. They were full blooded Cajuns who like their ancestors before them, derived a living hunting and fishing the abundance of wildlife and seafood in the area. Also like their ancestors who had come from Nova Scotia, it was their love for the wilderness that had kept them there.

They partially loved to hunt frogs at night in the huge cypress swamp. The peacefulness of this yet untamed area was occasionally broken by the sounds of the wild creatures who inhabited it. The big bull frog that would call out with a loud bull horn sound echoed through the swamp, gave them direction in the darkness. There was the mating calls of the alligators that could be heard for miles away. There was also the old wildcat who lived in one of the ancient oak trees, who would sound his resentment of their intrusion into his domain. Raymond and Alfred knew all of these animals by the sounds they made. They knew every family of raccoons, the minks, alligators, frogs and every other inhabitant of this vast playground which they called their home.

The frogs they would catch, they would sell to the restaurants in town. They would shoot alligators for the hides which they would salt down and keep for the buyer who passed by every month. Although the brothers never had much money, they did live comfortably.

As they paddled their pirogue through the darkness, they were not afraid. Quite the contrary, they felt safer in the swamp than in any other place they could think of. Yet, there was one unexplainable occurrence that took place on certain nights which gave them cause to wonder.

They were not afraid of the strange phenomenal light that would appear, then follow them through the swamp. It was legended that the light had also followed their ancestors in years past. They like their ancestors, had grown accustomed to it.

No one had ever been able to give an explanation as to where the light had come from, or for how many centuries it had been in the area. It was about the size and color of an orange. It did not shine, or give off reflections, nor did it luminate the area around it. It would only appear behind people and follow them through the woods and swamp. It would never appear or remain in front of them. When sighted, if the person turned and attempted to approach it, the light would disappear, then re - appear behind them.

On several occasions, Raymond and Alfred had tried without success, to find out more about the strange light. The only thing they found out with certainty, was that the light had never harmed anyone, nor did it ever give indications of being dangerous.

Then one dark, moonless, cloud covered night, as they were hunting for frogs, Raymond spotted the light behind them. At the same time, he spotted a large frog between them and the orange light. He turned the pirogue around and headed toward the frog. Then he noticed that the light remained in front of them. It began to slowly move away from them. Raymond began paddling toward it as it moved away. Suddenly, the light stopped as though waiting for them. Raymond continued to paddle in its' direction. Each time the light had put a certain amount of distance between them, it would stop and wait. It appeared that it was trying to lead them to a specific area. When it reached a small island in the swamp, it disappeared from sight.

Raymond and Alfred were confused. Why did the light change its' habit? Why did it lead them here? What did it want? Was it trying to tell them something? At a loss for and explanation, they hurried out of the swamp to tell their aging father of the occurrence.

The following night, the Cajun brothers again went into the great cypress swamp. Even though they became engrossed with hunting frogs, they continuously looked toward the rear, anticipating the appearance of the light.

Then suddenly, when they were about two hundred yards from the island, the light again appeared in front of them. It moved slowly toward the island as though waiting for them to follow it. Upon reaching the island, the light attached itself to a large cypress tree which was situated in the middle of the island. Then it slowly began to disappear, hesitating as though marking the spot. It seem to be trying to convey a message of some kind. The brothers not understanding its meaning, once the light had completely disappeared, went home.

The following night, they again set out into the swamp. Only this time they would be seeking the light in an attempt to solve its mysteries. They headed directly toward the tall cypress tree on the island.

As they approached the area, the light suddenly appeared before them. It attached itself to the tall tree, then began to fade away as it had done the night before. But wait!!! Something else was happening. The cypress tree began to glow with a faint bluish light. Soon, the trunk, branches and the leaves were aglow in the wierd, ghostly light. This lasted for about thirty seconds, then the bluish light began to fade away. As the blue light dimished, the ball of orange light began to re - appear on the trunk of the tall tree. After it had completely materialized, it left the tree and headed away in a horizontal direction. About five feet from the trunk of the tree, it stopped. Suddenly, it plunged toward the ground and disappeared into the earth. It reappeared on the trunk of the tree and repeated the same maneuver several times, always entering the ground at the same spot.

Raymond and Alfred waited as though hypnotized, unable to understand what was taking place before their very eyes. Then, the ball of light did not appear anymore. What was it trying to tell them? Baffled, they returned to their house more puzzled than they had been before. They decided that they would return the next morning and investigate the area.

At the break of dawn, the two Cajuns entered the fog draped swamp. They headed directly toward the island with the large cypress. The swamp held a ghostly appearance about it. Raymond and Alfred both had the feeling that they were encountering some ghostly affair, but they were determined to see this thing through.

Upon reaching the island, they walked around the cypress tree. They did not notice anything unusual. Raymond walked to the area where the light had gone into the ground. He very carefully examined it. He noticed that there was an area about four feet long and three feet wide that appeared to be about five inches lower than the rest of the surface.

"Alfred, come here. I think I've found something," he said. "There must be something buried here. This is the exact spot where the light disappeared into the earth. I wonder what's down there?" he asked.

"Let's go get some shovels and find out if there is something buried there."

Making a quick trip to their house, they returned and began digging.

Upon digging about two feet, they uncovered the skeleton remains of a spanish soldier encased in complete armor. These they laid above ground. Then Alfred's shovel struck something solid. After probing around the item, he estimated that it was about 18" X 24" in size. Digging faster and deeper, they unearthed a spanish treasure chest still in excellent condition. The leather straps around it had rotten and fallen apart. But, the oak chest with the brass handles, hinges and fasteners which bind it together were well preserved. It took both their combined strength to raise the chest above the ground.

With anticipation, they hurried to open the chest. As they lifted the lid from the chest, the rays of the sun seeped through the trees and filtered through the fog. The contents of the chest sparkled in the sunlight.

There were articles of pure gold, plus gold and silver coins of spanish design.

The item which drew their attention the most, was a solid gold crown laced with precious stones. The treasure chest contained a vast fortune.

The contents were too heavy to carry in one pirogue. So the two Cajuns loaded half of the treasure in their pirogue and left the remaining valuables until they could come back for it later in the day.

It took them about an hour and a half to make the round trip. When they returned, they found the treasure still in the same place. But, something very strange had happened in their absence. The human bones and the spanish armor had disappeared. The pit which they had dug had been refilled. With the exception of the treasure chest which had not been touched, everything appeared as it had before they had begun digging. Even the grass over the site appeared untouched.

This baffled the brothers. Who could have done this? What supernatural power had been here? What was it that had led them to the treasure? Was it the spirit of the dead spanish soldier? How had the treasure gotten there? Would they ever know?

Somewhat shakened, they hurriedly loaded the remaining treasure in their pirogue and paddled away from the mysterious area and returned to their home.

Arriving at their house, Alfred asked his aging father. "I wonder how that treasure got there? There are no lakes or bayous near it, yet there is a fortune on the table. Whose crown might that be? Who killed the spanish soldier?"

The old man replied, "Your grandfather once told me a story. Until now, I never gave it much thought, because at the time, it seemed too far - fetched to be real.

"It seems that the story had been passed on to him by his father. The best I can remember it goes like this.

"It is legended that during the 16th century, that a spanish nobleman had gone to Mexico in search of gold and silver and other valuables. Upon finding vast treasures, he had a beautiful gold crown made for the queen of Spain. While returning to Spain, their ship encountered a dangerous storm and was washed ashore somewhere on the Louisiana coast. The nobleman and a few soldiers survived the shipwreck and made it inland with the treasure. It is legended that it was somewhere in this area that they decided to abandon the treasure chest, because it was too heavy to carry it any further. It is said that one of the spanish soldiers refused to leave the treasure chest behind. He revolted and laid claim to it for himself. The nobleman killed the soldier and buried him with the gold chest. Then it is said that the nobleman and the rest of the soldiers were later killed by unfriendly indians. The exact location of the buried treasure died with them. It is legended that many have tried in vain to find it, but no one knew exactly where to look.

"The ball of light that has wandered through the woods and swamp for all those centuries must be the spirit of the murdered spanish soldier. He must have become tired and weary and wanted to find peace. That's why he led you to the treasure. Now you should go say a prayer for him and ask God to let him find peace. Once that is done, I don't think we'll ever see that light again."

The next morning, again in heavy fog, Raymond and Alfred ventured into the swamp. They erected a small wooden cross over the grave site. As they began praying, they experienced a cold chill in the area. Then suddenly, a misty form materialized over the grave. The mist took form. There was no doubt that the ghost was that of the spanish soldier. For a few seconds the form stood there before them in full armor. It pulled out it's sword and raised it toward the heavens in a last farwell, then disapated into the air.

They knew with certainty, that the soldier had found peace at last. Somehow, they would miss his presence in the form of the orange light. It was something they had gotten accustomed to having around them and taken it for granted.

The soldier's spirit had made them rich beyond their wildest dreams. Yet, they continued to hunt frogs and alligators in the huge, mysterious swamp. They went about somewhat hoping to encounter the strange phenomenal light.



GHOSTS OF THE CAJUNS

In 1846, Monsieur and Madame Paul d'Casteau, a French family of means became bored with the dull existence of everyday life. They were adventurous people who needed a change of atmosphere to spark their lives.

Their sixteen year old son Louis had become headstrong and restless. Although he was very intelligent, he had difficulty getting along with others his age. The d'Casteau's figured that maybe a change of area and a new way of life would be beneficial to their sons' manhood and attitude.

They had heard stories about the business opportunities and adventurous possibilities in the yet untamed wilderness of the vast swamps and marshes in South Louisiana.

The d'Casteaus' were contemplating a move to the new country, the United States of America. After giving the matter much thought and consideration, the d'Casteaus' decided to abandon their comfortable, yet boring way of life in the City of Limoges, France. They, like thousands of their countrymen before them would seek new adventures in that distant land.

Upon arriving at the city of New Orleans, Monsieur d'Casteau made inquiries about other French families who lived in the wilderness of South Louisiana. He was informed that there were many families of French origin who lived in the far reaching area of South Louisiana between New Orleans and Lafayette. In Particularity, along the gulf coast. He favored an area around Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes. This area, it appeared, was best suited for his purpose.

With bag and baggage, the d'Casteau family boarded a boat and traveled to Terrebonne parish. Upon arriving in the wilderness of lower Bayou Terrebonne, d'Casteau selected a parcel of land on the left descending bank. There he built a huge mansion of French design and a fur storage shed, as he decided to go into the fur trade.

Monsieur d'Casteau stood on the bayou bank looking down stream. The scene he observed was one he held in awe. The branches of the giant grey oaks intermingled over the center of the bayou, giving the illusion of a giant umbrella covering the water. The silver grey moss hanging from the branches into the water was a spectacular sight to behold. Yet he wondered.

Had he made a good decision? Could his family survive here? Would his son adjust to the strange ways of the people? Even though the natives were all of French origin, their ways and beliefs were foreign to his own. Would Louis become friends with the Cajun youths his age? Was it possible that he would become as hardy as they?

His mind still occupied, d'Casteau thought about the tales and legends he had heard concerning the area. The Cajun natives had warned them about the mysterious occurrences of the past. They had especially warned them to be very careful if they ventured outside on the nights when the moon was full. Especially, not go near certain places on those nights. But, d'Casteau and his son thought this to be nothing but foolishness and old wives tales. They could see nothing to fear.

He hoped that everything would work out for the best. If it didn't, he would take his family back to France. His thoughts turned to matters of more importance which needed his immediate attention.

Monsieur d'Casteau was concerned about Louis. He did very little to help his father with the business. He spent most of his time paddling up and down the bayou, admiring the beautiful oaks. He was fascinated by the huge trees and the mysterious moss fungus which grew on it's bark, then trailed downward into the water. He was amazed by the huge water moccasins nesting on the braches of the oaks, sometimes dropping into the water near him. He would spend countless hours studying the unexplainable phenomenon of the area. He especially like to paddle his pirogue under the trees late in the afternoon, when the rays of the sun filtered through small openings in the leaves, creating a feeling of being in another world.

On several occasions, Louis had tried to explain to his father, the exhilarating feelings he experienced under those ancient oak trees. Yet, he could not fully describe the hypnotic feelings which drew him to them. Thus, the relationship between father and son became strained.

In time, the local Cajun youths abandoned their friendship with young d'Casteau. He had ridiculed their ways and superstitions, rejecting their friendship. As time passed by, Louis became engrossed and completely dominated with his attraction for this weird, yet so beautiful area. Some unknown, unseen force was drawing him to those mysterious oaks.

There was one ancient oak that stood apart from the others. It was legend that under that tree, the pirate Jean Lafitte had murdered several Cajun fisherman, when they accidentally came upon him while he was burying stolen treasure. It was also legend that on nights when the moon was full, the ghost of the murdered Cajuns had been seen roaming about the area, searching for those responsible, seeking revenge. Their souls could not rest until their deaths were avenged.

Then one night it happened. Louis had paddled his pirogue all afternoon, exploring, studying the area, just as he usually did. But, late that afternoon, he stopped by the legendary oak. He stepped ashore, and did not return home at the appointed time.

Dusk settled over the country side, then turned to darkness. The elderly d'Casteau became concerned when the full moon began to appear on the horizon. After several hours had passed and still Louis did not return, his concern turned to anxiety. What could have happened to Louis? Had he gotten lost? Was he hurt? If his pirogue had overturned, he would have surely swam to shore.

Monsieur d'Casteau walked to the bayou side as he had done several times in the past few hours. He looked up and down stream, then up stream and seeing nothing, he boarded his wooden skiff and rowed downstream. As he approached the huge oaks, he noticed the moonlight reflecting on the moss, giving the trees the appearance of massive mounds of glittering silver. Paul d'Casteau knew the physical dangers which lurked under those peaceful looking oaks. He thought about the huge moccasins that could drop into his skiff in the darkness; of the large alligators nesting in the water, capable of crushing his boat with one swipe of their muscular tails; of the large wildcats who were habitats of the oaks. Yet, he continued to row into the dangerous unknown. Although he was fearful, his concern for his son was greater than his fright.

As Monsieur d'Casteau moved along the bayou, he could feel the presence of the spirits moving about him. This did not bother him while he continued to search for his son. He searched the entire area, but found no trace of Louis or his pirogue.

As he approached the ancient oak mentioned as the legendary one, he felt that his eyes were playing tricks on him. The moss on the tree seemed to glow with a weird sort of light. He thought that he could hear moans and voices coming from its' direction. The closer he got to the tree, the louder the sounds seemed to get. He saw ghostly figures moving about under the tree. Surely it must be his imagination, he thought silently. As he rowed past the tree, his eyes focused on the bayou bank. There was no sign of Louis or his pirogue. Fear kept him from investigating. He continued rowing until he reached the safety of this dock.

Louis had not returned. d'Casteau was now frantic with worry for his son. What could have happened to him? He was an expert boatman with hardly any cause to worry about as far as accidents was concerned. He couldn't have gotten lost, because he knew the area too well and there was a full moon.

Was there any truth to those legends they had heard? Monsieur d'Casteau now began to wonder. If those legends were true, then his son could be in very grave danger!!! He tried to cast those thoughts from his mind, but could not.

The grandfather clock on the wall ticked away the minutes and the hours. d'Casteau paced the floor, moving toward the door each time he heard an animal sound outdoors.

Then at the stroke of mid-night, he heard soft footsteps on the porch. He rushed to the door, then hurried to swing it open. Then stepped back in fright at the sight that confronted him. The look on his face changed from one of concern to one of fearful apprehensive as though he had seen a ghost.

There in the door way stood Louis. But, this couldn't be!!! Louis had the look of the living dead about him. His eyes were glassy and un-blinking. His face was ashen as though the blood had been drained from his body. It held the look of someone frightened almost to the point of death. In the few hours he had been gone, his hair had turned snow white, without a trace of its' former color.

The shock passed and Monsieur d'Casteau regained his composure. He took Louis' arm and led him in the house. He could not believe the nightmare he was experiencing. This couldn't be real!!!

Whenever his father spoke to him, Louis would move his lips, but not a sound would come from them.

Monsieur d'Casteau realized that his son was in a state of shock. He helped him get to bed and covered him to keep him warm.

The elderly d'Casteau went to bed, but was unable to sleep. He tossed and turned all night long. Unable to sleep he wondered, what could have happened out there that caused his son to go into shock? What caused his hair to turn snow white in so short a time? He had to know.

When the eerie light of dawn began to filter through the heavy fog, Monsieur d'Casteau got out of bed and dressed. He went out door into the thick, hazy fog. Then he went to the bayou side and looked around. Suddenly he realized that Louis' pirogue was nowhere in sight. This was strange! Louis' clothes were dry when he returned. So, how did he get home? He wondered.

Again, Monsieur d'Casteau climbed aboard his skiff and rowed away from the wharf toward the out line of the ghostly oaks. His thoughts went back to the night before, to the glowing moss on the trees and the voices he thought he had heard. Had they been real? Was there a connection between the legendary oak and his son's frightening condition?

As he approached the ancient, legendary oak, he spotted Louis' pirogue on the bank near it. He recalled that when he had passed there the night before, it had not been there. He pointed the bow of the skiff toward the bayou bank and steered it into the grass and jumped ashore. Upon inspecting the pirogue, he found everything intact. Louis' rifle, knife, paddle and canteen were all in their proper places. As he walked under the huge oak, he brushed aside the long streams of moss hanging down to the ground. He spotted Louis' straw hat under the tree. He stooped to pick it up, but noticed that it was covered with fresh blood. Fearfully, he stood without picking up the hat and walked around the tree, investigating the surroundings. Seeing nothing unusual, he returned to the hat and gathered it up. The blood on it was wet and sticky to the touch. As Monsieur d'Casteau began to walk away from the scene, he noticed a large spot of fresh blood on the ground. Cold chills ran through his body as he felt the presence of spirits about him. Hurriedly, he ran to his boat, pulled Louis' pirogue into the skiff and rowed away fearful for his life. He was now more puzzled than he had been before.

He had felt danger lurking in the fog about him. He had known that the danger was real, yet he also knew that it was not danger from any living man or beast. For the first time in his life, Monsieur d'Casteau had known the meaning of extreme fear.

Upon arriving at his house, Monsieur d'Casteau went directly to Louis' room. Maybe Louis would be able to tell him what had happened out there under those mysterious oaks. Louis awakened with a startled look on his face. But he recognized his father and smiled.

"How are you feeling this morning?" his father asked.

Louis stared at his father, but did not answer. Realizing that his son was still in shock, the elderly d'Casteau discontinued questioning him. Yet he must find out what had happened. He began to examine Louis from his head to his toes, looking for wounds. The blood on the ground and on his hat had come from somewhere. Was it Louis' blood?

After carefully looking over Louis' body and finding no marks or bruises, he was yet more confused than he had been.

"Get your clothes on," he instructed Louis. "We're going to see if we can figure out what happened last night."

But, Louis would not move out of the bed. He cringed in fear. His father took him by the arm and escorted him toward the front door. But Louis fought him all the way to the door. When they reached the doorway, Louis reached out and grabbed the door frame with a vice like grip and would not release it. He refused to go outdoor.

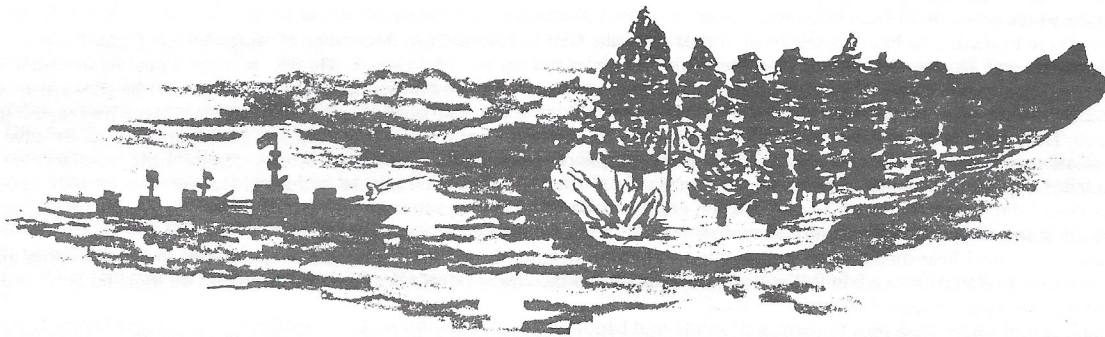
Louis' face regained the ghastly stare it had held the night before. There was no power on earth that could entice him to leave the safety of the house.

Thus it was that Louis never again uttered another sound for the rest of his life. Never again did he ever venture outside. He was this way until he died several years later, remaining a prisoner of fear forever.

What could possibly have happened on that night when the moon was full? Where did all the blood come from? How did Louis get across the bayou without getting wet? Why did the moss covered trees glow in the moonlight? Where was Louis' pirogue when his father had passed there during the night? Had someone paddled Louis across the bayou then returned the pirogue on the other side? Were the moans and voices Monsieur d'Casteau heard the voices of the spirits? What was so frightening, that it cause Louis' hair to turn to snow white? What caused him to go into shock and remain thus for the rest of his life?

Did the spirits of the murdered Cajuns mistake Louis who was a stranger for one of Jean Lafitte's pirates? No one is certain, but if you want to find out, you might try spending the night under the legendary oak tree. Then maybe you can tell us!!!!!! Goodnight.





CAJUNS WIN DU WAR IN DU PASIFICK

Grandpere Francois' family celebrated his fifty eight birthday with a surprise party. It was a joyous affair. It was the first time that all of his family had gathered together in many years. They were in good health. Francois was a very happy man.

When the party ended, Francois went ot the front porch and sat in his old rocking chair. All of his neices and nephews gathered around him with his grandchildren.

One of his grandchildren asked, "Grandpere, would you tell us about how you joined the army and won the war all by yourself?"

"Mais non, my petit enfant, I did not won du war all by myself. If you oncles, Jacque and Tee - Will are not wit me over dare, you grandpere could not have beat dem japs. They sur help me a lot. But if you will be quiet and listen, I will told you all about dat.

"All you little ones know dat your grandpere and you oncles, they never learn to read and write like you can. Dat sometime cause sum big problems as you gone to see."

"We us Cajuns, we hear about du war, we don't git bothered none at all about dat, because dat war are gone on sum ware on du other side of du Gulf of Mexico. So we go on doing like we want just like we always do.

Den one day we all leave Bayou - go - to - Hell and we go over to Mr. Boudreaux's sote up du bayou. Now Mr. Boudreaux he are a very good man and he are very smart because he go to school for a few weeks. He never stir us rong. But he tell us dat we all got to git ourselves to town and register for du draft because we is all eighteen years old and more. None of us know wat dat thing he talk about, So we ax him wat dat draft is ? He say that we got to register wit du government for du draft, so dat they can call us to went and fight du Japs and du Germans in du war.

"Your Oncle Jacque, Tee - Will and me, we not mad at nobody and we don't want to fight nobody. So we tell Mr. Boudreaux dat we not gone to register wit du government because dem Japs and Germans didn't never do us nothing.

"But," Mr. Boudreaux say, "du Germans sank one of our boats and du Japs they bumed Pearl Harbor and sank most of our fleet. Don't dat make you mad?"

"Well now, dat's one different story. If they sink one of our shrimp boats and bumed Pearl Aubert's place on Locust Bayou, den we gone to register for draft and fight those Japs and Germans. You grandpere tell Mr. Boudreaux, dat they make one big mistake to start sum trouble wit du Cajuns.

"Den on another thought, we not gone to wait for du draft. We gone to join du army and we gone to fight dem right now." I tell Mr. Boudreaux.

"So, me you Grandpere, you Oncles Jacque and Tee - Will, we join du army and they send us way over dare to sum foreign country in Texas for to git sum training. Mais cher enfants, you should have saw you grandpere in his soldier uniform. He was du most prettiest soldier in dat hole army.

"Let me told you about how you grandpere he learn to sign his name. Wen we see dat soldier to join du army, he give us sum papers to fill out. I tell him dat we didn't no nothing about filling out papers because we don't no how to read and write. Den he tell us dat he are gone to fill dim papers for us. After he fill out du papers, he say we got to sign dim papers. He show us how to make signature wit to little marks like cross.

"I look at Jacques' and Tee - Wills' papers to look how they sign dare name. I see dat they sign just like me. So I ax sum soldier why dare signature is just like mine. He explain dat are signature are just like mine because we is brothers. Well dat make lots of cents and dat explain everything.

"Everything gone alright for du first few days. Dem one day four big soldiers with sum big guns on dim sides, they cum and git you grandpere and you Oncles and they bring us to a place wit bob wire all around it. Den they put us inside dat fence and left us dare.

"After a little while, daree cum a captain. He ax us ware we cum from. I tell him from Go-to-Hell. He ax ware us was born. I tell him Go-to-Hell. Dat captain he begin to git real mad. He ax if us Americans citizens. I tell him dat we is Cajun citizens. He ax why we all sign name just alike. I tell him dat we sign du same because we is brothers wit same last name. Dat captain now git sum real mad. He say dat we must be foreign spies because we don't talk good English and can't read. Den he say dat unless us can prove dat we is native born Americans, he are gone to shot us as spies.

"Now dat captain him git sum Cajuns real scared wen him say dat he are gone to shot us like spies. We don't even no wat dat is, but it sur sound real bad. Wen du captain him he are leaving, I ax him to send us a priest.

"Right after us finish eating dinner, a priest he cum to us tent. He say his name is Father Benoit I tell you oncles in French dat Benoit is a good Cajun name.

"Father Benoit, him he hear us talk French and he begin to talk sum French to us. We sur sum glad to hear him talk our native talk. We even more glad wen he tell us dat he are from Bayou de West dat are not far from Bayou - go - to - Hell.

Du good father he fix everything wit du captain. He even prove to du captain dat we was born, native born at dat. He write to our parish priest and git sum copies of our baptisted and born papers. We sur was sum glad that we was born.

"Du captain he send us back to our company. Du Sgt. he ax was sum glad to saw us again. Him sur did miss us wen we was gone. We no dat because he cry wen he see us. He say dat things was not du same wen us Cajuns was not around.

"But, he got one big surprise for us. Wen us are gone, he git sum more Cajuns in his company. Du Sgt. he say dat he are gone to make me, you grandpere a Cpl. in charge of all dim Cajuns. He also gone to put me in charge of all du latrines. He say dat if anyone could lead those Cajuns to disaster, den you grandpere was du man who could did it. He give us big complement.

"We got one real good Sgt. He spend lots of time to train us Cajuns to be best soldiers. But he got one real bad problem. Wen he say left face, du Cajuns they all go du right way, but those other soldiers they go du rong way. But it are not dare fault and got to be excused because they is mostly Texans and udder yankees, and they don't no no better. But the Sgt., him he make real good soldiers wit all du soldiers. But us Cajuns is du best soldiers of all.

"None of us Cajuns hadn't saw a boat ever since us left Bayou-go-to-Hell. They tell us dat we gone to see sum big boats wen we git to California. Wen we git dare I thought dat all du boats from du gulf is dare. So far as you eyeballs ever could see, dare were nothing but sum big boats with guns on dem. Those boats, they is no good to travel for sum shrimp because they got no nets on dem, none at all.

"It took to days and to nights to git all those soldiers on dem big boats. Den at night in du dark, du boats, they move out in the gulf.

"Everything is gone O.K. for du first few days. Den we git into sum big storm. Dat are not bad enough. Den the Sgt. him he cum find me at 2 o'clock A.M. in the morning. He tell me dat I got to go pull sum watch on du bow of du boat. I ax him wat for I got to watch for, and him he tell me dat I are to watch for sum mines in du water.

"So your grandpere Francois, he haul his self to du top of du boat, Den I open big iron door to go outside. All dat I could saw was sum water from du gulf. Du waves dem they was so high that your grandpere could not never saw du top of du water. Du Sgt. he want Francois to watch for sum mines, but I think to myself, if you grandpere he gone out dare to watch for sum mines, den who gone to watch for your grandpere if he git wash away into the gulf. You grandpere he think to his self, he don't no wat du mine look like any nohow. So I don't go outside to see for du mines. Me, I find myself a place on du boat to hide and go to sleep. Du Sgt. he find me sleeping and he wake me up. He say he are gone to court martial you grandpere because he leave his post. He say dat he are gone to put me in jail. I tell him dat du Sgt. should give example of watching for mine in du storm, den du udder soldiers they follow example.

"Du Sgt. he tell me dat he are gone to pull du watch, but dat he are still gone to court martial Francois. Du Sgt. him he walked out dat door and you grandpere him he closed dat door, du captain he cum tell you grandpere dat I are to stand guard at dat door and not to never let no body go through. I lock du door with du Sgt. outside and du captain he walk away and leave Francois in charge of dat door.

"After du captain is gone I hear du Sgt. hitting on du door. He want to cum inside. But du Captain he tell me not to open dat door and to make sur dat it stay closed. Wen du boat go down between du waves den cum back on top du water, I don't hear du Sgt. hitting on du door no more. I don't thought dat du Sgt. gone to court martial you grandpere no moe.

"When du day time cum in du morning, du storm it are all gone. Du Lt. him he can't find du Sgt. on du boat. If du Sgt. are not on du boat, den he must be off du boat. Wen du Lt. him he can't find du Sgt. he make you grandpere Francois du Sgt. to take du place of du Sgt. dat are gone wit du waves.

"After 32 days we cum to dat little island in du middle of du gulf. Those big guns on du boats they start to shoot at dat Little island. I don't thought dat nothing could stand alive after all dat shooting. Before du shooting stop, du Lt. him tell us to load ourselves on those little boats and git ready to shove off.

"Wen we git ourselves to dat beach, us find out dat du Cajuns is du first ones dare. Us dig little holes in du sand like du Lt. him he tell us to do. Den du Lt. him he pass by me wit sum udder men and he say to your grandpere for us to hold du beach. Now any dam fool no dat you can't hold du beach because du sand it pass through you fingers. But I listen to him and we stay on du beach.

"Pretty soon we hears lots of shooting gone on in du jungle. Den du Lt. him he is wounded. Du captain, him he send you grandpere to little bars and he make me for sur du Lt. and company boss. Du first thing I do, I make you oncle Jacque du Sgt. and Tee - Will a Cpl.

"Den I tell du Cajuns dat I got enough of playing around, dat we is to take dat island away from those Japs. Du Cajuns charge du Japs and they take 7000 prisoners and we took du island.

"Wen du shooting are all over, our colonel him he went to git on du big boat, but he fall off and he drown. Den du general MCoughtho him he make our captain to du colonel and du colonel him he make you grandpere du captain. Du first thing I do, I make Jacque du Lt. and Tee - Will du Sgt. Us are gone up sum moe.

"We only stay on dat little island for only five days. Den du colonel him say dat we is gone to ware du big fight are gone to be at. But him he don't told us ware dat are gone to be at.

"For seven days us ride dat big boat again. Den one morning in du A.M. du big guns on those boats start to shooting again. But mais petit enfants, dis time things is a lot different than before. Dare are sum Japs dat are shooting at us with sum big guns from du island and dare planes is dropping sum bums on our boats.

"Du colonel him he tell us git in du little landing boats and to hit du beach. Me I don't no why they want us to hit du beach, it look moe better if we hit du Japs instead. First they tell Francois to hold du beach, den they tell him to hit du beach. It don't look like general MCoughtho could make up his mind wat he want du soldiers to do. But I are a good soldier, so us git into du little boats and we go to du beach.

"Mon Dieu, you talk about something. Du Japs they got sum planes in du sky and they is shooting at us and dropping sum bums all around du little boats. Is was good thing you grandpere had him lucky rabbit foots with him. It make those bums fall sum other place and it make dem bullets go around us.

"Wen us git to du beach, those Jap planes is still shooting at us. Dare must be at least 500 or at less 400 planes up dare.

"Like you petit enfants no, all du Cajuns is all real good shots. I tell du Cajuns to took careful aim and lead those planes like they was hunting ducks back home and to shoot dem out of du sky. About four hours later, after du Cajuns has been knocking du planes down, some smart alec, he cum tell those Cajuns dat they can't shoot down du planes wit du stars on dare wings. Now who dat smart alec thought he was? Wat he mean to tell a Cajun dat he can't shoot down du planes wit du stars on dem? We gone to show him one or to things. Wat he no wat a Cajun can do? Du Cajuns begin to take more careful aim, den they git some excited shooting at du planes, they have real good time like shooting duck back home in close season and gitting sum over du limit.

"After they shoot down about 300 Jap planes and about 25 wit du stars on dare wings, I git word from du colonel to stop shooting down du planes wit du stars on dem. Dat are like du game warden tolding a Cajun dat he are gone to catch him next time. But I make dem stop shooting at du planes wit stars on dare wings any way.

"Wen du sun begin to go down we is still mostly all still on du beach. Only just a few soldiers was go in du jungle. But, I Captain Francois git one very good idea. I send a little boat to du big boat to git sum lots of navy beans and sum rice wit lot of garlic. I make sur dat all du soldiers git plenty beans and they eat until they is all ful. Den I tell den to settle for du night.

"At 2 o'clock A.M. in du morning, dare is sum loud burps along du beach. Sum times it sound like machine gun fire. But it are only du Cajuns releasing sum gas. Du Jap soldiers, dem they thought dat us had put sum other deadly gas on dem. They leave dare positions and run like hell into du jungle.

"Wen daytime cum in du morning, I give du order to du soldiers to go after du Japs. Du Japs dem they begin giving up by du thousands. Captain Francois, him he don't figure dat out. Du Japs they look like they is afraid to die or sumthing.

"Du General, wen he hear dat Captain Francois got du Japs at a fast run. He tell du radioman dat I are now promoted to Colonel Francois. Du first thing I do I make Jacque a Major and Tee - Will a Captain. Us is sur moving up in du Army.

"For four days us march to Manila. We don't hardly ever see no Japs at all. Colonel Francois he think to his - self dat dare is sumthing rong sur nuff. Du spotters they see only just a few Japs and they is running like hell to fast retreat to dare rear and they is screaming, "run, run, du Cajuns are coming." Colonel Francois, he no dat sumthing are rong. Why is du Japs afraid of few Cajuns?

"Wen we git into Manila, us don't saw no Japs none at all until us git to Manila Bay. Den we saw du Japs running so fast dat they almost walk on top du water to git away from us Cajuns. They is all gone fast like to du Jap boats in du bay.

"I tell radioman to told General MCoughtho dat those Japs is all gitting on du boats to git away from us. While us waiting to hear from du General, du planes wit du stars, they are buming du Jap boats and shooting at dem. Du Jap soldiers and sailors they is jumping in du water and den they swim to du open gulf away from us. Only just a few they swim toward du beach ware Major Jacque and sum udder Cajuns is waiting wit sum rifles. One Jap soldier, him he swim to ware Jacque ia waiting and he ax Jacque, "is you a Cajun?" Jacque look at dat Jap with dat big grin on his ugly face and he say, "Ya I are a Cajun." Dat Jap turned around fast like and he swim like hell to du open gulf to git away from du Cajuns.

"You grandpere, Colonel Francois, he can no understand why du Japs is so afraid of a few Cajuns. Must be they hear about Cajuns being best soldiers.

"But Colonel Francois, he don't worry about dat right now, because du radioman he got sum good news from General MCoughtho, dat say, "Nice gone Francois, I am sending you sum stars. You is now a one star general. Will see you later."

"Could you ever thought about dat? Me you grandpere Francois is now du General of du hole army on du island? You no wat du first thing I do? Dat's right. I make you oncle Jacque a Colonel and Tee - Will a Major. I even make du radioman a captain.

"Right after I promote everybody, a soldier, he bring me a little Jap General. Du Jap fall at my feets crying, "I so sorry, Sir. Please Sir, I tough. I no make good Gumbo."

"Du Cajuns already no dat Japs can't make good Gumbo, dat only Cajuns can make good Gumbo. But why he want to told me all about dat?

"A young Japanese American soldier, him he ask, "General Francois Sir, do you want me to question dis Jap general for you?"

"Why hell yeah son, ask him why du Japs is so afraid of du Cajun soldiers.

"Du soldier, him he talk to dat Jap General in him native talk for a little while, den he bust out laughing until he git tears in his eyes. Now General Francois, he want to no wat are so funny.

"Wen du soldier stopped laughing and him he dry his tears, he tell General Francois, "Sir, you'll find dis hard to believe, but I no why du Japs is afraid of du Cajuns."

"Du Japs captured one of du first soldiers on du island and they questioned him about how many troops were on du beach. The American told dem dat dare was a hole division of Cajun soldiers on du beach and dat du Cajuns make Gumbo with du Japs they kill in battle.

"Now you grandpere, him he no dat in du schools they teach you dat du Japs surrendered wen we dropped dat big bum on Japan. But you grandpere can told you for sur dat du reason dat du Japs surrendered is because, I git dat little Jap General to talk on du radio to Japan and tell dem dat General Francois' army is gone to Japan and dat if day don't surrender, dat du Cajuns were gone to make Gumbo with dare enemies. Dat's for sur why Japan hurry to surrender to General MCoughtho.

"And dat are how du Cajuns they win du war in du Pasifick."

THE END



A BY - GONE ERA
IN
MEMORIES OF A PORCH IN THE SUMMER
BY
UNA NAQUIN

When I was growing up in the small community of Point Aux Chenes where I was born, compared to the standards of today, my family would have been considered underprivileged.

Our parents, not having had the opportunity to obtain an education, were illiterate Cajuns who spoke very little English. Our home had neither electricity, plumbing, nor telephones, or other conveniences which we enjoy today.

However, our home possessed a treasure that money could not obtain. A secure, carefree childhood that is almost non-existent in our present day, fast-paced society. Often times, we reminisce the tranquillity of the past.

In our present era, our weather-beaten, clapboard house would be looked upon with awe, as being rustic and antique. The front porch, with its four evenly spaced rough-hewn columns, was our main refuge from the smoldering heat in the summer months. "La Gallree" as the porch was called, extended across the entire width of the house. It's warped, splintery, wide cypress board floor was not decorative, but our entire family was content as we relaxed in the atmosphere of togetherness after a busy day on the farm. The antique rocking chairs, with deerskin seats, groaned and creaked in unison as we rocked to and fro. The sound blending with the chirping of the birds, the croaking of the frogs, and the other sounds of the surrounding marshland, which was audible all around us.

I often recall and visualize the tranquil scene of dusk as it made its languid descent upon the scenic countryside, painting the massive oaks a deeper shade of green; tinting the flowing garlands of Spanish moss a somber slate of gray; obscuring the leathery leaves of the Gardenia shrubs which grew near the porch. The beautiful, waxy like, cream-white blooms glowed like beacons at sea in the waning light, emitting an essence rivaling the finest perfumes.

Our refuge, the porch, was the center of activity when the gardens began to bear. Numerous bushels of a wide variety of vegetables were dumped on the floor. Then all hands, large and small, were kept busy shelling, snapping and slicing the produce preparing it for canning. We had to preserve a huge amount of produce, as seven growing children could consume a tremendous amount of food in one year. Fortunately, living in the country, we were able to raise a few domestic animals such as hogs, chickens and a few milk cows. Fruit and wildlife were also plentiful at the time.

I can also recall our pleasure when several emerald green watermelons were rolled out of a dripping burlap sack. These had been cooled by submerging them into a deep well for several hours. Mouths would water as the melons began to snap and crackle when the sharp knife was thrust through the rind, and its bulging center would split open. We couldn't hold back the exclamation of anticipation when the rosey pink liquid trickled onto the cypress floor.

Often times as youngsters, we enjoyed crawfish picnics in the shade of the porch. These tiny specimens we captured by using bits of string from which chicken intestines dangled. The bait had a tendency to float, but this problem was quickly resolved with a rusty nail for a weight. Our favorite fishing spot was a muddy ditch which meandered along the dusty, gravel road in front of our house. In that era of time, the traffic was so light, that even the youngest toddlers were allowed to participate. There was no danger of drowning either, because the water was only a few inches deep.

Because we didn't have any toys to occupy our spare time, we developed a keen interest in nature. One of our favorite observation posts was in the shadow of a knarled muscadine vine which sprawled over a rickety, wooden trellis against the left side of the porch. Numerous species of birds built their nests in its thick growth. They boldly fed their young while curious eyes watched.

It wasn't unusual, at dusk, to see several young bunnies scampering across the lawn in search of tender shoots to nibble on. Some of them may have become our Sunday dinner at a later date.

Other visitors, which were not as welcome, were the bats that were often blown onto the porch in clumps of moss during severe storms. Their shrieking and clawing to escape never failed to bring screams of terror from all the children, no matter how brave they had been before.

The people of those days did not have any means of transportation, except by boat. Going to the grocery store was a chore in itself. Beings they were unable to go to the store to obtain necessities, they relied on the "Rolling Merchandiser," which passed every week. It brought the requirements of every day living, as well as a few frivolities to the bayou inhabitants. My mama bartered chickens and eggs for materials to make our school clothes.

During the summer, she would roll the old treadle sewing machine to the front porch. Then she would transform many yards of cotton percale into beautiful dresses while her anxious brood watched.

Finally, after insistent pleading, she consented to let me try my hand on her trusty, old Singer sewing machine. To her surprise, I had inherited her natural talent with fabric. Soon, I was making my own clothes. My interest in sewing has never diminished. I am certain that my success as a seamstress was influenced by those many sewing sessions on the front porch.

Although our hard working parents were denied many of the luxuries we take for granted today, they were never poor in love and spirit. They maintained a deep faith in their Creator, love for their family, trust in their fellow-man and peace of mind. They sought nothing more and were truly blessed.

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