Delcambre History
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Acknowledgments
I. Prolog

Derivative words associated with the Desambre name throughout this history are as follows:

1. Cambria - Roman for Wales;
2. Cambrian Mountains - Situated in Wales;
3. Sambre - A Celtic tribe associated with Belgae;
4. Cambre - A valley in France;
5. Chambray - Cotton fabric;
6. Cambrai - City in Northern France;
7. Cambray or Cambric - Fine linen of white cotton.

Del or Da L a are the articles for "of the" or [Family] of.

II. Celtic Beginnings

The first Celts were a French speaking tribe who developed as a distinct people emerging in the eighth century B.C. north of the Alps of Switzerland. They were linked by language, religion, and culture. They tended to be fair-haired, blue-eyed, light-skinned, rather tall, averaging 6 feet five inches and often about 250 pounds.

Modern people who speak the Celtic languages are found in France, Ireland, Scotland, and a few in England and Wales.

The Celts were energetic, and inventive. They introduced Europe to the use of iron. Iron was used for tools and most importantly at this time weapons. They developed the town concept of settlement.

III. The Migration to the British Isles

Celtic traders, soldiers, and craftsmen crossed the English Channel from the continent into Britain, bringing new tools, arts, fashions, and metalworking techniques. The most innovative Celts to settle in Britain were the Belgae or Belgin Tribes, from northern Gaul (present-day Belgium). They ushered in the concept of town building and the art of enameling.
By 85 A.D., the Romans had conquered all Celtic lands of Gaul, and the Celts were forced to flee to Britain and Cambria (Roman for Wales). Any Celts that remained were either absorbed by the Romans, or were killed.

IV. Invasion by Rome

The Romans under Caesar invaded the British Isles about 200 A.D. Caesar laid siege after siege to the strong hold of Alesia, until the defenders finally capitulated. However, most of the able-bodied escaped to safety through the Roman lines. When Caesar arrived he found only wounded and dead Celts. He vowed to destroy all Celts.

V. Roman Withdrawal

Afterwards the Roman troops were withdrawn from the British Isles (407-410 A.D.). This allowed the invasion (immigration) of the closely related Germanic tribes of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes from the continent.

According to tradition, the first important settlement was made about 429 A.D. by the Angles on the British east coast. For nearly two centuries, a steady stream of Teutonic invaders followed. They penetrated the Island, by way of inland waterways, and rivers, ravaging as they advanced. Roman civilization was destroyed. The Celts were taken in slavery, or killed. Some were driven to Wales, Ireland, and to the continent.

The Angles gave their names to the country, inhabited the south and west of London into Wales. They formed the Kingdom of Anglia on the British Isle.

At this time, in the 5th century A.D., there were three Kingdoms ruling the Isles. They were Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria. The three Germanic invading tribes were the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, sometimes called the Anglo-Saxon Tribe.

The tribe of Anglesey, which was of the Angles, was centered north in the Cambrian Mountains, in the Tre'r-Cereron sector in 410 A.D. Separate from this was the Belgue tribe together with the Sambre tribe.

The Druids, adulterers of Anglesey in Wales, were described as being very bloody, and sacrificed humans in times of crises. Often they used criminals, or prisoners of war (Celts).
VI. Definitive Tribes

It is known that the tribe of Belgue (name derived from tribes of Northern Gaul or Belgium), from which the Delcambres were descended, were in the Cambrian Mountains of Cambria (Roman for Wales), today called Wales.

The French speaking tribe of Belgue along with its branch teh Sambres, were subjects of the Kingdom of Anglia. Their main settlement was located on the border of Bريطia and Wales, in the Cambrian Mountains. However, war developed in 467 A.D. whereby the Belgue and Sambre tribes were pitted against the tribe of Anglesey. The Celtic tribes were defeated.

VII. Deportation

The French Celts were deported from this region in the 5th century.

In the 5th century the two churches of the British Empire, were trying to establish control of the Kingdom. In doing so they deported all Celts of ethnic background, from the British Isles. At this time ethnic (people not believing in Christ or heathens) Celts were considered a foreign people to the Anglo-Saxons. The churches involved were the Christian, and the Roman Catholics.

In Wales at this time the Scots were living in the north, and were deported to Scottra, or Scotland as it is called today. The Irish were on the west coast, and were deported to Iرانت or Ireland. The Cornish were in the south, and deported to Cornwall, a state of its own in the south of the British Isles.

The French, of ethnic stock and the British of ethnic stock, were deported to the Normandy Peninsula.

They landed at a place called Brittany, France which was named for them. Today the Celts of the region still consider the British Isles as their homeland.
VIII. Migration

The French speaking Belgue tribe with its branch of Sambres, elected not to stay in Brittany and continued their migration to the northern part of France. Finding a valley that reminded them of the mountains they had to leave in Wales, they decided to make that valley their home. They named the valley Cambrel, and were instrumental in building the township called Cambrai, France.

The final battle for their former territory was in 1066 when William (The Conquerer) of Normandy defeated the English king and established French or Norman title to the land. In the years 1067 to 1071 A.D., Norman barons were establishing large estates and fortresses on the same land held by the Realm of Anglia.

IX. Origins of the Hall of Heraldry

A) King Richard I

In 1189-1199 Norman King Richard I, (The Lionhearted) King of France and Ruler of Britain had an insignia, or monogram placed on everything owned by the crown. This placing of the insignia was the very beginning of the Hall of Heraldry.

Entrance into the Hall of Heraldry, at that time required great achievements as warrior on the battlefield. The French later changed the requirements to admit fellow countrymen who had rendered service in other ways.

B) War of the Roses

In 1413 the War of Roses was fought on Bosworth Field. King Henry III, immediately after slaying King Richard III, abolished the Hall of Heraldry. King Henry VII reinstated it in 1843 and encouraged the people of the Kingdom into the Hall. He supported entry through industrial achievement such as ship building, textile production, and international trade. A certain Pierre Gustave Montet Du Sambre, served in the war of Roses, on Bosworth Field.

X. The First Delcambre - Cambrai, France

Duke Alfred St. Julian Jean-Baptist Da La Chambre, was married to the Comptessa, Marie Angela Da La Houssaye, in 1566. The Duke was informed of a plant growing in the south of France, that could be used in the manufacture of cloth. He
decided to investigate. The fibrous blossom of this plant was later called cotton. He experimented with the fiber, and eventually developed a method to produce cloth. It was an extraordinary development. It was a tighter weave, and was less costly and stronger than wool. It could be made available to all classes including commoners. It had a warp of blue, and a weft of white. The name given to this cloth was Chambray after the Duke and the town.

For this service to France, Duke Da La Chambre was awarded his family coat of arms, which was entered into the Hall of Heraldry. From the period of 1566 to 1720 there is an absence of the Delcambre ancestors from the record, in this exact spelling, until the appearance of Jacques Philippe Delcambre.

XI. The Delcambre Crest

Significant features of the Delcambre Crest or Coat of Arms, (from Canterbury Arms of New York), are as follows:

1. There are three Plumes in the Crown, of the Panache on the Helmet signifying Welsh Royalty;
2. The Helmet designates the Family ranking of Duke for Duke Da La Chambre;
3. The Lion is for the British Isle;
4. The Sword in the right paw of the Lion signifies their superior Iron weapons introduced by the Celts;
5. The sinister hawk-like face and the clinched paw is for the barbaric tribes of Gaul;
6. Colors of Argent over Azure or silver over sky blue are the family colors;
7. The gules or red background is for Britain and France;
8. The rampant jumping from point to point signifies the migration of the Celts from Gaul to Britain, and back to Gaul again over a period of 5 centuries.

XII. Jacques Philippe Delcambre

In 1720, the name of Jacques Philippe Delcambre emerged in the records. He was born April 8, 1720 and died May 8, 1771. At his baptism his godfather was George Delcambre and his godmother was Antionette Fix... Jacques operated a shipyard and was a shipbuilder. He was also an exporter. His son, Jean Baptiste Joseph Delcambre, probably operated the export business and was the collector of customs at the dock of Brest, France. Jean Baptiste Joseph Delcambre also owned a brewery which supplied malt beverages to the Royal Navy. Jacques was born at Dauval (Parraise Nord), France and moved to Douai and then to Brest.
XIII. Charles Marie Delcambre

One of Jacque's grandsons, through Jean Baptiste Joseph Delcambre, became a ships captain and was in charge of one of his grandfather's ships. In 1799 this man, Pierre Jean Charles Marie Delcambre, after many voyages, sailed a ship of trade goods, to New Orleans, Louisiana, and is said, never to have returned to France. Instead, he traveled north, on the Mississippi to a town called Plaquemine, Louisiana. He then entered the Plaquemine bayou, and sailed west to the Grand Lakes, then south to the Berwick Bay. At that point he entered the Bayou Teche, and travelled north to a village called St. Martinville, Louisiana.

One rumor concerning Charles Marie Delcambre is that he was in league with pirates in New Orleans. This may give credence to the rumor that he faced a capital offense in France. He is also believed to have been of service to the French Navy during the Napoleonic Wars and later, together with Jean Lafitte came to the aid of Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815.

During this time on July 14, 1812, in St. Martinville Louisiana he was married to Constance Etie, from Chicot Noir, on the Berwick Bay. On his wedding day, he bought a pew in the St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church. In 1940 the practice of selling family pews in the church was abandoned and recently all family placques were removed from the pews and the records destroyed.

There is a legend that Charles floated cherry logs down from the north country and had a garde manger (in English a "pie safe"), built by the craftsmen in St. Martinville. The legend associated with this piece of furniture is that whomsoever owns it, shall never be hungry.

On April 19, 1822, in St. Mary Parish, Constance Etie sued for a separation from bed and board, stating that Charles was frequently intoxicated, beat and abused his wife, failed to provide for the minor children of the marriage, and would abandon her for frequent periods of four or five months at a time. Giving testimony to this effect, in the form of an affidavit, was one certain Ursin d'Arby. Later this same year, Charles had apparently returned, and counter-sued Constance Etie and Ursin d'Arby. He sought damages for destroying his house, which was located on lands of Pierre Borel (his father-in-law), taking some 90 head of horned cattle and two branding irons. He also alleged that Constance Etie had for some 6 months previously, and continuing to the present (October 1822), lived in an open and habitual state of adultery with Ursin d'Arby.
Apparently a reconciliation followed shortly thereafter as the suit was dismissed at the plaintiff's costs on October 11, 1824, the year Louis "Poufette" was born. Charles also served as Tutor to Constance's sister's (Leocadie Etie) four minor children after the death of her husband, Bernard Miguez, Jr. (Leocadie Etie married Bernard Miguez, Jr., 9-18-1826). Afterwards in 1832, Emile, the last of the children of this marriage was born. At that time Constance was 40 and Emile is listed as an idiot, probably Down Syndrome, by the census of 1840.

Charles Marie Delcambre disappeared sometime between 1832 and 1849. Rumors abound as to his disappearance. Philias Delcambre has handed down a story that one morning Charles went to work in the fields. Late in the evening, when he failed to return, the family went to search for him and found only his hoe. No trace of him was ever found after that. Some say that he returned to France, died enroute and was buried at sea. Still others say he might have fallen a victim to foul play.

XIV. Louis "Poufette" Delcambre

Louis "Poufette" Delcambre was a red haired man who wore a full beard in later life. He was a cattleman and race horse enthusiast. It was said that he knew cattle better than any man in the parish. He had only to glimpse at cattle or horses and could tell who they belonged to or who was the breeder.

At the corner of Main and Lewis Streets, in the year 1871, Poufette and a man named Charles Clere, bought a piece of property two arpents on the east side of Main Street to the Bayou Teche. Poufette and Charles Clere built a stockyard there. This venture lasted for a number of years until the property was eventually sold to the Gebert family.

Poufette's passion was horse racing. If one had business with him on a weekend, it was necessary to travel to the Smith's racetrack, south of New Iberia, about 7 miles, at Rynella, where he spent most of his weekends, or to whatever other racetrack at which he would be. It mattered not where the races were held. Whether they were in New Iberia, Vermillionville, Lafayette, St. Martinville, or anywhere in St. Mary Parish, Poufette would be there.
It has been said, that Poufette accepted a significant challenge from a man in Pont Breaux (Breaux Bridge) by the name of Emile Babin, in 1866. The stakes were apparently so high, that Poufette, his friends, and half of the citizens of New Iberia made the trip. They traveled by horse and buggy, horse back, wagons loaded with people, and even on foot. The trip to Breaux Bridge and the racetrack was some 20 miles or better over rough roads. At this writing I do not know who won (see horse racing in New Iberia, by Glen Conrad).

XV. The Death of Marie Delcambre

On July 11, 1918, Marie Delcambre, wife of Adler Louis Delcambre was returning from New Iberia to their home which was about two miles southeast of Jefferson Island and one mile north of highway 14. Their travel was by horse and buggy. On the way they stopped at the home of Emar (Aymond) and Leonide Delcambre. The home was located at Bayou Petite Anse and the Migues Road. Their daughter, Rella, was 12 years old and Mary Lou, Marie's daughter was almost 6 years old. Mary Lou was tired from the trip and asked if she could spend the night with her cousin, Rella, Uncle Emar and Aunt Leonide. Marie consented.

During the afternoon's visit, Marie constantly rubbed her gold wedding ring in her hand until it was quite warm, then placed it next to her eye. She had complained of a sty. She did this for hours until it was time to travel the last two miles home.

Early in the morning, the next day, two men on horseback arrived at Emar's saying that Marie was very sick. Emar, Leonide, Rella, and Mary Lou traveled immediately to Uncle Blanco's. The two men on horseback rode to town to bring back the doctors.

When Rella and her family arrived they saw that Marie's face was extremely swollen at the place where she had been placing her wedding ring. Marie was delirious and tried often to speak to Leonide but the message was unclear. The doctors arrived soon afterward and lanced the eye. They spent several hours with her and advised by midmorning that she had blood poisoning and would not live. By 11:00 A.M. on the morning of July 12, 1918, and at the age of 27 years, she died.

Several days passed before Leonide realized the message Marie was trying to tell her. On the day before she died, she had taken Mary Lou to the studios of I.W. Carroll, in New Iberia, for a formal photograph. It was the last photograph taken of them together.
The photo was large, about 12 inches high by about 10" in width, set in an oval frame. It depicted a tall dark-haired woman with a young brown-haired child, both standing, as I recall. I had seen the picture at Pa-pop's house (Odilon Delcambre) many times in one of the upstairs closets but never knew who it was.

Acknowledgments

The foregoing is derived from many sources. They include the following: 1) the Civil Suit records of St. Mary Parish, 2) a previously well done work of Knowlton A. Delcambre, which was revised and was the fundamental source for the early history. His work was without footnotes but referred constantly to information received from the Mayor of Brest, France. Much of the information is a matter of well documented fact; and most importantly from 3) my conversations with Rella Delcambre Broussard which was the source for many stories, legends, and rumors that had been passed down to her. Many of these are not included. She is also the one who inspired many of my "treasure hunts" to the Civil records.