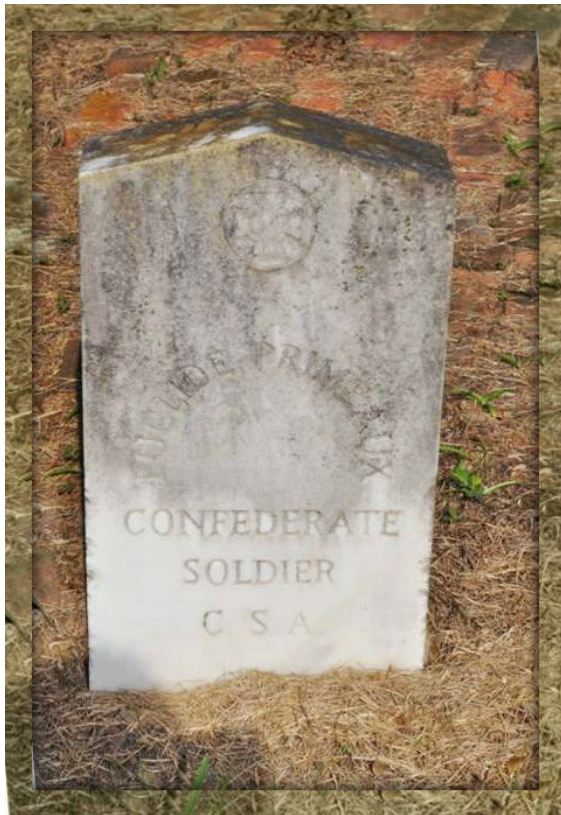


Euclide Primeaux and the Civil War Connection

In 1999, while working as the historian for Erath's Centennial celebration, an interesting church article written by the town's foremost historian Clement Bourgeois Jr. and Mrs. Robert Segura Sr. came across my desk. A passage in the article mentioned that four Civil War veterans were buried in the Primeaux Cemetery, south of Erath. At that time, my dad (Cap Bodin) mentioned that one of the names listed, Eulcide Primeaux, was (his paternal grandmother) Eve Primeaux Bodin's grandfather. With no additional time on my side to research it, I put on the back burner. In all honesty though, the amateur Civil War history buff and Erath historian in me never forgot that statement.

The paragraph written by Clement Bourgeois Jr. and Mrs. Robert Segura in the "Our Lady of Lourdes" Catholic Church history book in 1973-74 stated: "The oldest map from the Surveyor General shows no land owner as of 1848 in what is now Erath. We were then part of the Attakapas Country originally governed from St. Martinville. The closest settlers then were Jean and Charles Dugas who had large land holdings in the vicinity of what we know as Gross Isle. The oldest cemetery in this area is known as the Trahan-Primeaux Cemetery-is located at Gross Isle. At least four confederate soldiers are buried there: (two brothers) Pierre Aurelien and Euclide Primeaux-both of Company B, 7th Cavalry, C.S.A.-Adrien Brasseaux, Company C. of the same regiment, and Clairville Landry of the 18th La. Infantry C.S.A." (Bourgeois 1973-74)

Recently, in working with the ancestry.com site, coupled with the 150th Civil War Anniversary this year, I found my interest peaked once again. In the summer of 2011, I decided to go to the Primeaux Cemetery to see if (a) Euclide really did have a Confederate grave and (b) was it still standing after two massive floods in the low line Erath area.



On that hot and humid August morning, I visited the tiny cemetery to see if those four tombs were intact. Within minutes, I was able to verify that three of the four tombs were still standing. Although Adrian Brasseaux's name is listed in the Primeaux cemetery site online, I couldn't locate his tomb. As with many of the tombs there, my assumption is that flooding, vandalism or age damaged the tombstone through the years.

In all honesty, I was rather surprised to locate Euclide Primeaux's Civil War tomb almost immediately. It was intact and his name was undeniably on a Civil War tombstone. With no notices, nor dates engraved on his tomb however, my quest wasn't over just yet.

Through my weeks of searching, I began finding tidbits of information about him.

Eve Primeaux Bodin's father Euclide, was one of a dozen children born to Francois and Justine (Baudoin) Primeaux. Their twelve children included Pierre Aremlin (Aurelien) and his twin Francois, Suzanne, Joseph, Aspasia, Marie Uranie, Marie Cesaire, Marie Francoise, Emilite, Marie Valsaine, Onezide (Nizida), with the final child being Euclide Primeaux, Almost all records show Euclide's birth to be August 10, 1829, however in his interview in applying for his Confederate pension in 1907, he states he was born on August 9, 1829. *(Note: Mixed up birth and death dates, as well as different variations of name spellings were common at that time.)*

Euclide Primeaux married Remise Vincent in 1849, also of a very large family. Remise Vincent was the daughter of Joseph and Marie Louise "Lise" Landry Vincent. Euclide and Remise's children included: Emile, Emelia, Francois, Joseph, Pierre Despreaux (Dupre), Clairfait, Emitille, Umea, Éméla and Dulva Primeaux.

The 3rd child of Euclide and Remise, Francois Primeaux, was Eve Primeaux (Bodin's) father. As with most of the Bodin and Primeaux families I found in the census records during that era, Euclide Primeaux was a farmer in the Vermilion Parish area.

In terms of my online search for his Civil War records however, I found that to be a much more difficult task. The entry records I searched, showed no Euclide Primeaux documents at the beginning of the war. During that era, the Primeaux surname (and most first names) had a number of spelling variations, often stagnating my search. I did find some that could have possibly been matches, but I wanted to be as certain as possible. Also evident in my mind was the knowledge that there was a 2nd Euclide Primeaux born a decade later, so I wanted to verify that this was "our Euclide" so to say.

Finally, I stumbled across the Louisiana Secretary of State Confederate Pension Applications online index and found his name spelled correctly. In a final attempt to verify he did indeed serve, I ordered the records to see the proof once and for all.

On September 3, 2011, I received the hard copy documents. Evidence of his participation in the war is cited in his 1907 application to receive an \$8 a month Civil War pension. For me, the final leg of this journey was seeing the year of his birth "1829."

In the records, I was able to learn a little more about him and his family. (Just a side note, this interview was conducted more than four decades after the war ended. In realizing this, I found myself thinking... *"could I remember what happened 42 years ago and how accurate would the information be?"*)

Documentation shows that his family was very poor, and at 77 years old, he was living between his six surviving children rotating his schedule with them on a weekly basis. He appeared to be in failing health. Also, just as I suspected, he was illiterate. The document has his (signed) "x" at the end of the form with the Clerk's office.

Additionally, it also shows that his wife Remise died around 1903. Apparently by that time in his life, he had lost 4 of his 10 children. When asked how many children he has, he states *"six, two boys and four*

girls.” Most records I have found stated he had 10 children. I have found evidence of deaths for at least three of his children by 1907.

On the pension interview sheet it states he was born in Lafayette Parish. At the time of his entry in the Civil War, he would have been about 33 years old. He notes that he enlisted in the Civil War at Camp Pratt in May of 1862 and served in the Infantry, Fournet’s Battalion, Company E, he names Miles Legion and that he was taken as a prisoner at Port Hudson. In the interview document this question was asked: “If a prisoner, in what camp, and where were you released, and to where sent?” He responded “I was taken a prisoner at Port Hudson two days before the port surrendered. I was released or rather ran away from the Yankees and came home. After that, I joined my regiment at Alexandria.”

I also found in the Primeaux Cemetery records online that Hortense Comeaux Primeaux was also buried in the Primeaux Cemetery. With that information, I personally feel it may have been Euclide’s nephew who served and is buried with him, not his brother. Note: Euclide was born in 1829 and his nephew (*the younger Pierre Aurelein*) in 1832. They were much closer in age than the two brothers. It is possible that both father and son served, but I haven’t found evidence to that effect as of yet. Either way however, whichever Pierre A. Primeaux it is buried with Euclide, without a doubt, there is a definite Bodin/Primeaux family connection to our family.



Clairville Landry is the 3rd Civil War soldier in the Primeaux Cemetery. (He was my dad Cap’s great, great, great uncle on his mother’s Landry side of the family.) Ironically, we found out through the process that Clairville is also my mother Gertie Hebert Bodin’s great, great, great grandfather as well! (Gertie’s great, great grandmother was Elodie Landry Suire, Clairville’s daughter.)



The 4th soldier is also family to my father on his mother’s Brasseaux side. Adrian Brasseaux is Cap’s great, great, great uncle on the (*maternal*) Brasseaux side and his 3rd cousin on his (*paternal*) Primeaux side. Adrien Brasseaux’s mom was

Suzanne Primeaux and his father was Auguste Brasseaux making the family relatives with Adrian on both sides of my family.

If you are confused at this point, welcome to the club! I often laughed at myself because my brain felt like knotted yarn, however with my stubborn streak I was bound and determined to untangle at the very least, “some” of this.

Now with that said, allow me to go on record as saying that I still struggle immensely with the south’s participation in the Civil War and reasons for their fight. No matter how much I try, I can’t deny that fact,

nor can I comprehend the “whys” of it. However, I was still intrigued that these men were my ancestors. I am not quite sure why it did fascinate me... all I can say is that it did.

As an educator and historian, I know we can't change the decisions made by past generations, nor change history. The only thing we can do is accept it and try to make sense of the many lessons learned from it.

I found this quote by Alex Haley that I felt was a great way to end the article.... *“In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future.”* I feel their past has become a bridge for our actions. Sometimes the best lessons learned come from decisions made by prior generations, whether it be ones that are right or wrong. Simply put, it is up to us to learn from past generations, just as future generations will learn from ours.

With a historian's heart, I felt it was important to share this story in my dad's book. Undoubtedly, I am glad I allowed myself to travel on this unique path because it allowed me to view my ancestors in a different light.

Ironically, in all of the hours I spent researching my family's history, one day it dawned on me that I had truly gone beyond the mere names on my family tree or names on tombstones, I was finally seeing some of the human beings at the root of our family. So for this *“historian at heart”* it was a well traveled journey that I will forever treasure.

Citation 1: Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Directory 1973-74-page 5; written by Clement Bourgeois Jr. and Mrs. Robert Segura