

It is the eve before sending this document to the printers. It may be appropriate that I share several happy experiences which came to me during the course of tracing the descendants of ANDRE and MARIE-ELIZABETH (GRAVET) PIERRE.

In early July 1969 I had gone to Leopold, a small village in central Perry County in southern Indiana. While there I visited with Fr. Moll, the pastor of St. Augustine Church. I recall asking him something about the history of the parish and he responded that it would have a sizeable membership had not so many families moved to other locations.

This was the motivation I needed to begin a search for the names and whereabouts of the kinfolk of my grandmother, Mary Jane Rogier. She was one of the 45 grandchildren of ANDREW and MARIE ELIZABETH PETER. On a July morning in 1889 she and Joseph Bouillon were married in Saint Augustine Church. My grandfather was born in Hachy, Province of Luxembourg, Belgium and immigrated to America in the 1880's, eventually he came to Perry County to be with acquaintances from their hometown - Hachy.

My grandparents bought a farm in the hilly region northeast of Branchville and became parishoners of Holy Cross Church at St. Croix. By 1916 the family moved to the good farm land in Seneca County, in the flatlands of north central Ohio.

Like others of my grandma's cousins and siblings, they married and followed their spouse to other localities. Years passed and letters became less frequent and before long contacts were lost. Only a name of another cousin was remembered -- she married someone and they moved somewhere. And so the challenge was presented.

Any hobby has its spurts and sputters, I suppose. My first system of record keeping demonstrates this fact. Pages, done on a manual typewriter, show a multitude of splices as I inserted names of new families when located in the third, fourth, fifth, and even sixth generations. In these ten years, 1969 - 1979, I had collected 2,223 names. Only names, no dates, no birthplaces. I boxed up these files and packets of letters and stored the collection in my wardrobe. Meanwhile, I busied myself with making arrangements for a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity to visit relatives in Belgium.

AN EVENING IN JAMOIGNE AND LES BULLES

On a quite September evening 1979 I found myself in the little hamlet of Jamoigne. The church was the mother-parish for a vast region as early as the XIth century, the tower was a part of a Xth century chateau. Standing on the bluff where the church dominates the view, one gets a magnificent panorama of the quaint, quiet village, the valley and the neighboring hamlet of les Bulles. The River Semois wends its way westward through the valley in circuitous twists and loops, separating these two little communities.

I was particularly interested in the winding pathway that connects these two places. For three generations of young PIERRE/PETER boys from Jamoigne chose for their bride someone's daughter from nearby les Bulles. I wanted to retrace that narrow, winding path and re-live those happy moments and memories that were once of my great-great grandfather.

Descending the steep embankment by a route of smooth stepping-stones, I was soon at the river's edge of the serpentine Semois. A better athlete than I could have safely broad-jumped the narrow stream at this point. I didn't. I crossed over at the hump-backed stone bridge and shuffled along the dusty, well-worn path, lined with scrubby, gnarled trees, passing grazing fields. I was hoping that I might find some tracing of a heart-shaped design etched in the bark, attesting to their affection during courtship days--"A.P. aime M.E.G."

In les Bulles I rejoined my cousins, Roland Bouillon and his family. We made a hurried tour of the church and town square. Here, in the communal town hall, on February 5, 1832, our progenitors, ANDRE and MARIE-ELIZABETH were married and had their union blessed, according to prevailing custom, in the parish church.

They became parents of a son, JAMES, and three daughters, ELIZABETH, ANNE-MARIE and VICTORIA. The youngest, Victoria, my great grandmother, was not yet eleven months old when the family trod the pathway between Jamoigne and les Bulles for the last time after having said ADIEU to their parents, relatives, and old neighbors before their departure for America. On my solitary stroll, I heard no lingering sighs of their heavy sadness mixed with happy expectation on leaving for Leopold, in faraway Indiana. The calendar was October 1841.

LEOPOLD TOWNSHIP, PERRY COUNTY, INDIANA

Entering the port of New Orleans in January 1842, the new immigrants came directly to Leopold. In time, three more sons were welcomed to the family, - ANDREW, JOHN BAPTISTE, and AUGUSTE.

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However, a double sorrow visited their home in mid-October 1854. Anne-Marie, nearly 16 years of age, fell victim of the raging typhoid fever epidemic and was joined in death five days later by her little brother Andrew, 11^{1/2} years old.

An 1861 map of Perry County, Indiana indicates that Andrew Peter was owner of nearly 200 acres in Section 2 and 34 of Leopold Township. The first site would be about one mile west of the village of Leopold, the second tract was another mile northwest. Unfortunately, I have not made myself familiar to either of these homesteads.

A FORTUNATE RENDEZ-VOUS

One August afternoon in 1982, a young David Peter from an up-state city (Ft. Wayne) came probing in southern Indiana in search of his roots. We made a rendez-vous, the first of the five times that we have met. Recognizing our common interest, we shared our materials, adopted the coding system used herein, and agreed to pool our energies in this worthwhile project. Dave was proficient on his home computer and developed the appealing format for the enumeration of the families.

We both worked intermittently and exchanged our additions. Last April 1989 I received a phone call from Dave and he goaded me to shift into a higher gear with the hope that some publication would be forthcoming.

It is now twenty one years since I first started this project. Many letters; many newspaper clippings; some interviews, phone calls, doorbells; going to several family reunions; -- these, dear cousins all were not jobs, these were joys.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I personally thank my many cousins in neighboring Perry County for your kind assistance. In particular, I mention Antoinette Saalman, Tell City; Anna C. Wheatley, Tell City and Patricia Ann James, rural Tell City. My gratitude also goes to Dorothy Sanders, Hawesville, KY; Kathryn Elliott, Dale, IN; Kay Gibson, Lowell, IN; Anna C. Goldman, Danville, IN; Mrs. Clarence (Olivia) Hagedorn, Ferdinand, IN; Mrs. Fred (Marie) Peter, Evansville, IN; Mrs. Firmin (Dorothy) Clouse, New Riegel, OH; and Victor and Agnes Ward, Tiffin, OH.

Also, deserving much of my gratitude are: Esther Mary Nash, Topeka, KS; Mrs. John (Alice) Chopot, Colville, WA; Rev. Martin A. Peter, newly appointed pastor of St. Pius X Church, Indianapolis, IN; and Ronald L. Peter, Owensboro, KY for providing us with and permitting us to use their respective family records. There are dozens more deserving mention, please accept my heartfelt appreciation,

But still, there was fragmentary compilation for some families, especially for the GRAVES, HUMBERT, DUMOULIN, SCHREDER and BROYLES branches as late as January 1990. I want to acknowledge the extraordinary cooperation and assistance received from Mary Alma Philpot, Louisville, KY; Marie Louise Scheetz, Kokomo, IN; Kathleen M. Robinson, Phoenix, AZ; Nora C. Mattingly, Brandenburg, KY; Mrs. Kenneth (Arlene) Schreder, El Toro, CA; Mildred J. Fox, Manteca, CA; Cynthia Louise Stover, Golden, TX; and Elizabeth E. Ferguson, Pittsburg, PA.

Apologies go to those where incorrect and/or incomplete information is presented. Pardon is asked of those who find misspellings, errors in dates or any other egregious mistakes. I believe your warm heartedness will make every allowance due for the unavoidable shortcomings or omissions. I hope that you will enjoy reading our efforts and take much pleasure in the remarkable photo gallery collected in these pages.

Last of all, I express deep gratification in being a collaborator with Dave on this gigantic project. I'll have a chance to swing by Fort Wayne at the end of this month enroute to visit my aged father, Joseph Edward Bouillon, on the occasion of his 98th birthday anniversary. I am sending a very special and warm thanks to Janie, Dave's wife, for her patience shown during these many months and evenings.

May 5, 1990

Bro. Rene¹ Bouillon, O.S.B.
St. Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN 47577-1010

PS:

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by: Br. Rene Bouillon, O.S.B.

Some additional acknowledgments must be added to Br. Rene's list. Janet Hoffbauer, Tiffin, OH; Don Rogier, Risingsun, OH; James Peter, Tell City, IN; Gary Peter, Selden, KS; Glen Peters, Topeka, KS; Fred DuPont, Fremont, OH; Mary Deeds, Terre Haute, IN; Eleanor Peter, Entiat, WA; Jeanne Chicca, Silver Springs, MD; and Vicky Goffinet, Tell City, IN. Each contributed something special to the effort. It was a real pleasure to have the cooperation and assistance of so much of the family.