

The Family Gilbert Antoine de Saint Maxent and Elizabeth LaRoche

Husband: Gilbert Antoine de Saint MAXENT

Baptism: 04 Apr 1727	in: St. Dagobet Church, Diocese of Treves
Born: 1724	in: Longy, Muerthe-et-Moselle, Lorraine, France
Burial: 09 Aug 1794	in: Ecclesiastical Burial by Friar Joaquin de Portillo, St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, LA
Died: 08 Aug 1794	in: New Orleans, LA
Emigration: 1747	in: to New Orleans
Marriage: 31 Aug 1749	in: St. Louis Church (later the Cathedral), New Orleans, LA
Father: Gilbert Antoine Saint MAXENT	
Mother: Elizabeth le COCQ	

Notes

The following text and a great deal of the data on his immediate family comes from the biographical book "Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent, the Spanish-Frenchman of New Orleans" by James Julius Coleman Jr., Published by Pelican of New Orleans, 1968. Additional information from the Personalities of Louisiana web site (www.enlou.com)

In or about 1542 Hernando De Soto of Spain discovered the Mississippi Valley but no attempt was made by Spain to colonize the area. Then after 140 years, 9 April 1682 to be exact, Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle set a stone marker at the mouth of the Mississippi River and claimed the entire valley for France. A colony was established and by 1721 about 8000 lived in the French Colony and the major town of New Orleans had a population of some 500. The Colony began a period of real prosperity when The Marquis De Vaudreuil became Governor in 1743. Shortly thereafter in 1747, a man in his early 20's arrived from France, a man who would have great historical and financial impact on New Orleans and the entire Colony; he was Gilbert Antoine de Saint Maxent (the son of Gilbert Antoine Saint Maxent and Elizabeth Le Cocq of Longwy, Moselle, Lorraine, France).

Shortly after his arrival in New Orleans he enlisted in the militia and quickly distinguished himself as a soldier and Indian fighter. In 1749 he married the recently widowed and wealthy Elizabeth La Roche, a creole. He applied his wife's dowry to the purchase of a building on Conti St. and became a supply merchant to fur traders. In 1753 Governor Louis de Billouart Kerlerec appointed St. Maxent, then a Captain, to the position of Colonel and commandant, Louisiana Regiment. As a reward for his military service against the British and the Chikasaw, Governor Kerlerec in 1755 granted St. Maxent exclusive trade rights with Indians of the Illinois and Missouri River countries. St. Maxent formed the Maxent, Laclede and Co. for the purpose of fur trading in these countries and he underwrote the total cost of Pierre Laclede's (LeclEde) expedition of August 1763 up the Mississippi River to establish a trading post. Laclede selected a site on a bluff just below the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Construction of buildings began in Feb. 1764 under the direction of Auguste Chouteau (Laclede's 14 year old Chief Clerk) and thus the city of St. Louis was born.

The King of France Louis XV became disenchanted with the Colony; no gold or silver, little agriculture, hostile Indians, unhealthy climate and corruption was rife. Thus, Louis gave the Colony to his Bourbon cousin Carlos III of Spain by a treaty signed 3 Nov. 1762 at Fontainebleau. It was not until March 1766 that

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Spain took control with the arrival of Don Antonio de Ulloa. St. Maxent initially resisted the Spanish but was a pragmatist and quickly accepted the 'new management' which antagonized friends and associates. To confirm his new loyalty he named Ulloa's Treasurer, Felix Martin Navarro, the Godfather of his daughter Marie-Antoinette. A rebellion by French and German settlers occurred in 1768. The new Spanish Governor Alexandro O'Reilly rewarded St. Maxent for assisting in suppression of the rebellion by giving him command of the White Militia, naming him Commissioner of Indian Affairs and ordering that all goods for the Indians must be purchased from the firm of Maxent and Ranson. In 1770 Luis de Unzaga became Governor and married St. Maxent's oldest daughter Marie-Elizabeth. St. Maxent's wealth and influence grew.

St. Maxent owned four plantations. One called de Marigny was immediately down river from New Orleans and today is known as Faubourg Marigny. A second was on Bayou St. John and a third was on the west bank used to run cattle. The fourth, Chantilly, and largest at 34,500 acres bordered Lake Pontchartrain. In addition to the fur trade he had several other businesses including a saw mill and a construction firm. To work his plantations and businesses he had over 200 slaves.

St. Maxent participated in the American Revolution as a Spanish Officer. He played a key role in the capture of Mobile from the British in 1780/1. En route to Mobile in Jan 1780 he became a hero for saving the men of his regiment when their ship floundered and sank. During the battle he advanced the Royal treasury the funds to pay and supply the troops. He was awarded titles of Commandant of the Louisiana Militia and Captain-General of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

On an 1782 business/political voyage to Spain his ship was captured on the return by a British Frigate. He and crew were imprisoned in Jamaica. In early 1783 his son-in-law Bernardo de Galvez, Captain-General of Cuba, obtained his release. While in prison he financially assisted imprisoned Spanish officers who were treated very poorly thus further endearing himself to the Spanish regime. However, this imprisonment interrupted the critical timing of his commercial ventures and led to severe financial and legal difficulties. His business competitors were quick to make accusations. In late 1783 he was charged with illegal money (specie) trading and various failures to honor/repay loans. The trial revealed for the first time the extent of his wealth, greater than any other in the Colony. He was relieved from duty as Lt. Governor and Captain-General of Indian Affairs. The charges were dropped in 1785 but his possessions remained under embargo pending settlement of his affairs. His reputation was badly damaged. His Conti St. offices were destroyed by the great New Orleans fire of 1788. He retired in 1790 with the pension of a Lt. Col of the Infantry. He settled all his debts by 1791.

A new Governor arrived in 1791, he was Francois Louise Hector, Baron de Carondelet of Belgium. St. Maxent and the Governor became fast friends. St. Maxent was recalled to duty to rebuilt Fort St. Phillip and Fort San Felipe in Plaquamines, south of New Orleans since there was fear of the French returning. The Forts were completed as promised and he was lauded with a recommendation for promotion to brigadier-general on 4 June 1794. However St. Maxent became ill in July and died age 70 on 8 August 1794 in the house of friend Lorenzo Sigur, just outside the Old French Gate in New Orleans. A few years later, the state of politics among European powers induced Spain to cede the Colony back to France, just in time for Jefferson to buy the entire territory for the United States (the Louisiana Purchase).

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Marriage Notes

Wife: Elizabeth La ROCHE

Born: 1734 in: New Orleans, LA

Died: 09 Feb 1809 in: New Orleans, LA

Father: Pierre-Francois La ROCHE

Mother: Francoise LUCE, des JARDIN

Notes

Elizabeth was a Creole - a French citizen born in the colonies. She had been widowed and was able to bring a dowry of 5000 pesos (equivalent to about \$250,00 in year 2000 values) to her marriage to Saint Maxent. The dowry was well spent since by the decade of the 1770s she had 9 very promising children and was the Grand Dame of Louisiana. Her husband was richer than the Governor and they lived in opulence with household slaves and with all the comfort and luxury that money could buy and bring from Europe. After Saint Maxent's death she went to Mexico to be with her daughter Contessa Antoinette Marie Anne Joseph. Her daughter was the Widdow of Don Manuel de Flon (Conde de La Cadena) and she had inherited her husbands vast holding in Puebla. Elizabeth returned to New Orleans shortly before her death.

Elizabeth's parents: Pierre-Francois La Roche (born 21 Mar. 1707 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada; he served as a French Militia Officer; died abt 1736 in New Orleans) and Francoise Luce, des Jardin (born about 1715 in Dunquerque, Flanders, France); they married 25 June 1733, New Orleans, LA. Her paternal Grandparents: Jean LaRoche (born 1668 in Montreal, died 25 Feb 1712 in Montreal) and Marie-Madeline Lereau (born 29 Sep 1669, Quebec, Canada); they married 19 July 1683 in Montreal. Her maternal Grandparents: Pierre Luce (born abt 1685 in Dunquerque) and Marie Jeanne Duboise (born abt 1685).

CHILDREN

1	Name: Marie-Elizabeth Saint MAXENT
	Baptism: in: by Friar Dagobert, Superior, Capuchin Order, Province of Louisiana
F	Born: 03 Feb 1752 in: New Orleans, LA
	Died: in: Spain
	Married: 1770 in: New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Luis de UNZAGA

Notes

2	Name: Marie-Felicite Saint MAXENT
	Baptism: 11 Jan 1756
	Born: 27 Dec 1755 in: New Orleans, LA
F	Died: 1800 in: Madrid, Spain
	Married: Abt. 1772 in: New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Jean Baptiste Honore d' ESTREHEN
	Married: 02 Nov 1777 in: New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Bernardo Vincente de GALVEZ

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Notes

Marie Felicite relocated to Madrid, Spain after Don Bernardo's death in 1786. Her titles included Viscountess of Galvez-town, Countess of Glavez, former 'Virreina' of New Spain and 'Gobernora' of Louisiana. She was expelled from Spain from 1790 to 1792 for what was considered subversive activity - not nice words about the queen. Marie Felicite was the godmother of Bernard Phillipe de Marigny de Mandeville, a renowned colorful playboy of New Orleans.

3 M	Name: Gilbert Antoine Saint MAXENT
	Born: 01 Nov 1758 in: New Orleans, LA
	Married: 03 Dec 1782 in: Parroquia San Luis, New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Maria de LIVAUDAIS
	Married: Abt. 1793 in: Iberville, LA
	Spouse: Marguerite MOLLERE

Notes

Gilbert Antoine III was a Captain in the Louisiana Regiment. In 1778, Gilberto as he was then known, was assigned as military commander of Venezuela, LA and subsequently in July 1781 the commander of Galveztown, LA. Both were in lands from which the British had been driven. These two new communities were for families brought from the Canary Islands at the King's expense and were to be supplied from his father's New Orleans warehouse. Antonio was there for over 6 years. Neither community exist today. In 1795 Antonio became the Commander of Fort San Felipe.

4 M	Name: Maximillian Francois Saint MAXENT
	Born: 22 Apr 1761 in: New Orleans, LA
	Died: 25 Nov 1825 in: Cuba
	Married: 20 Mar 1805
	Spouse: Maria Irene FOLCH

Notes

Maximillian served as the Spanish Governor of West Florida.

5 F	Name: Maria-Victoria Saint MAXENT
	Baptism: 18 Jun 1763 in: by Friar Dagobert, Superior, Capuchin Order, Province of Louisiana
	Born: 30 May 1763 in: New Orleans, LA
	Died: in: Mexico
	Married: 24 May 1781 in: New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Juan Antonio de RIANO

Notes

Maria-Victoria remained in Mexico and inherited her husband's vast wealth.

6 F	Name: Marie-Antoinette Joseph Saint MAXENT
	Baptism: 19 Mar 1766 in: St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, LA
	Born: 28 Jul 1765 in: New Orleans, LA
	Died: 1833
	Married: 01 Feb 1782 in: New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Manuel de FLON

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Notes

Antoinette's Godfather was Felix Martin Navarro, Treasurer to Governor Ulloa.

7 F	Name: Marie-Anne Joseph Saint MAXENT	
	Baptism: Oct 1767	in: St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, LA
	Born: 28 Jul 1767	in: New Orleans, LA
	Died: 1833	in: New Orleans, LA
	Married: 25 May 1792	in: New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Joaquin de OSORNO	

Notes

Her baptismal name was Antoinette Marie Anne Joseph de Notre Dame de Mont Carmel de St. Maxent. Her Godfather was M. Antoine Ulloa, Chevalier Commandant of the Order of St. James, Governor and Captain-General of Louisiana. In Dec. 1795 she, acting with power of attorney for her husband Joaquin, purchased a house at 41 Hospital St., New Orleans now 913 Gov. Nicholls St.). The house was built by Mauricio Milon for Fabriel Peyroux, begun in 1781 and completed 1784. It is a substantial Bayou St. John plantation style dwelling with basement and two upper floors. The ground are ample; 160' by 128'. Marie Anne lived there until her death in 1833. The house was sold to satisfy estate debts. Less than a year later her daughter Marie and husband Louise Sere bought the house - it was her girlhood home. She lived there until her death some 40 years later.

8 F	Name: Marie-Heloise Mercedes Saint MAXENT	
	Baptism: 25 Feb 1774	
	Born: Abt. 1771	in: New Orleans, LA
	Died: 22 Mar 1831	in: New Orleans, LA
	Married:	in: New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Louis Baron de FERJET	

Notes

Maria Heloise 'Pupon" may have also married a d'Estrehen.

9 M	Name: Celestin Honre Saint MAXENT	
	Born: 1773	in: New Orleans, LA
	Married: 05 Aug 1794	in: Parroquia de San Luis, New Orleans, LA
	Spouse: Maria Teresa Henrieta CAVALIER	

Notes

Celestino was a Captain, Third Louisiana Regiment. He fought in defense of Oran, Algeria, was posted Panzacola, LA (Pensacola, FL) in late 1790's and was a defender of Baton Rouge in 1810 against the British.