



## Louisiana Ancestors War of 1812

By Damon Veach

The historic Locust Grove Cemetery, once the private burial ground of the Luther Smith family, is now owned and maintained by the State of Louisiana. It is located in West Feliciana Parish, on a well-marked but small wooded road branching off from Highway 61, just north of St. Francisville. This peaceful little graveyard was the center of attention earlier this month when the General Robert McCausland Chapter of U.S. Daughters of 1812 held a patriotic ceremony to dedicate a bronze marker which was placed on the grave of General Eleazar Ripley, one of the heroes of the second conflict that our nation fought against England to establish its sovereignty.

Shaded by gnarled moss-covered trees, this cemetery is the resting place also for young Sarah Knox Taylor, daughter of General (and later President) Zachary Taylor, and first wife of Jefferson Davis, later beloved President of the Confederacy. Sarah had died of malaria here at Locust Grove Plantation, home of her young husband's sister, Anna Davis, wife of Luther Smith. Another close relative of Jefferson Davis who lies buried here is his brother, Dr. Benjamin Davis.

Eleazar Ripley was born in 1782 in New Hampshire, of distinguished ancestry. Educated in law, he served two terms in the Massachusetts Legislature. He married the daughter of a minister, Love Allen. She bore him a son and a daughter. When hostilities began with England in 1812, he enlisted in the army and was given a commission as Lieutenant Colonel by President Madison. For two years, his regiment was involved in bloody conflict with the British and Indians, and for his leadership, he was promoted to full Colonel.

It was in the summer of 1814 that he reached the peak of his military career, when he was called on to take command to the Battle of Lundy's Lane, due to the sudden wounding of Generals Scott and Brown, his superior officers. Here his success earned him the battlefield promotion to Major General. His fame was further increased in the attack on Fort Erie, and Congress presented him with a gold medal. Unfortunately, he was severely wounded by a shot in the neck, from which he never fully recovered. After the end of the war in 1815, he remained in the army for five years, building up the east coast defenses.

Meanwhile, his wife had died, and his two small children had been sent to his brother, General James Ripley, in Maine. In 1820, Eleazar traveled to Louisiana and set up a law office in New Orleans, but he soon moved to the small town of Clinton. In 1832, he was elected to the State Senate, and in 1834, to the U.S. Congress. In 1830, he had married Mrs. Aurelia Smith Davis, the widow of Dr. Benjamin Davis. The couple had only one child, a daughter who died in infancy.

Ripley's children by his first wife came to live with him. The daughter soon married Judge Thornton Lawson, but they left no descendants. In 1836, Ripley's young son, serving in the army in Texas, was put to death by General Santa Anna, along with a group of other American captives.

In 1839, death brought to an end the quarter of a century of public service of Eleazar Ripley. He died after a short illness at his plantation in East Feliciana and was buried in his wife's family burial grounds, called "God's Acre."

The dedication of the marker to General Eleazar Ripley marks the 14th consecutive year that the McCausland Chapter has dedicated a marker to a soldier of this early war to maintain

American independence. Previous soldiers of the War of 1812 who have been memorialized in this manner are: General Robert McCausland of West Feliciana; General Philemon Thomas of East Baton Rouge; Lieutenant David McCans of East Feliciana; Private Philip Richardson of East and West Feliciana; General John Joor of Wilkinson Co., Mississippi; Corporal Joseph Phelps of East Feliciana; Captain Zachariah Lea of Pike Co., Mississippi; Private James Groves of Sabine Parish; Private Robert Fluker of St. Helena; Private James Isaac Taylor of East Feliciana; Private Charles Daniel Comeaux of East Baton Rouge; Corporal Fergus Duplantier of East Baton Rouge; and Lieutenant John Jones Austin of West Feliciana.

Most of these were ancestors of chapter members and served from the old West Florida section of Louisiana. Several of the graves were in abandoned family cemeteries which were located and restored by this historical-minded, and dedicated, group of ladies. One of their outstanding members is Mae Haase who probably rates the title of "outstanding preservationist" for her work in many historical/genealogical societies throughout Louisiana. Mrs. Haase is secretary of the State Society of Daughters of 1812 and chapter vice-president for the McCausland Chapter.

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Sister Dorothy Bachelot, 317 W. University, Lafayette, La., 70501, would like to learn the parents of Celestine Ducote who married Constance Gagnard. They were from Avoyelles or St. Landry parishes. They had a son named Joseph Celestine Ducote who was born around 1826 in Mansura, La.

Also needed is information on the parents of Adeline Mary Meche, who married Eugene Bearb in 1849 in St. Landry Parish, and the parents of Eudemie Roy, a Canadian orphan, who married Celestine Istre in 1858 in St. Landry Parish.

Sister Bachelot would also like to have the baptismal records of: Felicia Guidry, daughter of Joseph Guidry and Emilite Saunier, Denis Istre, son of Fostan Istre of Lyons Point and Melanie Bearb; and Edmond Pierre Bachelot, born about 1847 in the New Orleans area or along the River Road toward Baton Rouge.

Felicia Guidry was married to Joseph "Omer" Constantin Oct. 18, 1870. Denis Istre was born about 1872 and married Leotie Constantin. Edmond Pierre Bachelot was a son of Pierre Bachelot and Marie Celine Wiltz.

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Jacquelyn R. Smith, 4800 Bergerac St., New Orleans, La., 70129, needs help on St. Jacques Landry and Mary Clara Tazuin. They had two children: Vivian M. and ?????. Vivian was married to Louis Gerhauser, and they had two children — Anna Vivian and Eleanor. Louis died at the age of 22, and Vivian remarried to James Armit. Their two sons were James and St. Jacques.

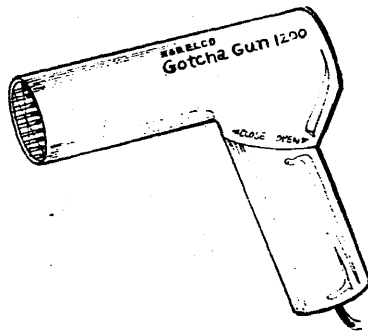
After Mary Clara's death, St. Jacques Landry is thought to have married Amelia Copping (Landry), his brother's wife. Amelia and Albert Landry had two sons, Albert and Cyril. Albert and St. Jacques father was Jacques Landry, and their mother was a Jourdon.

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Correspondence to this column should be directed to Damon Veach, The Times-Picayune Sunday Desk, 3800 Howard Ave., New Orleans, La., 70140.

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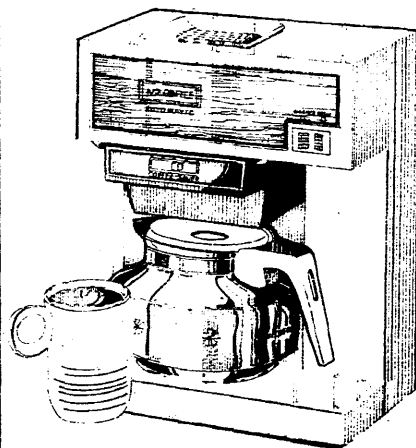


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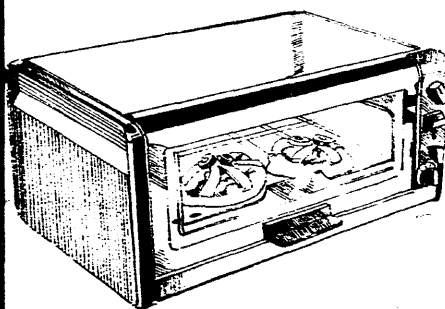
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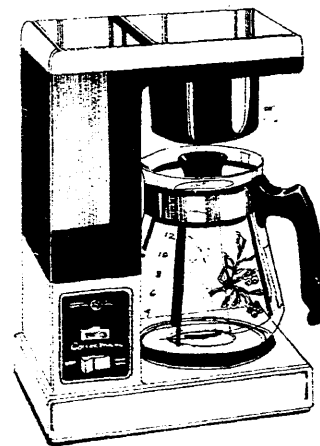
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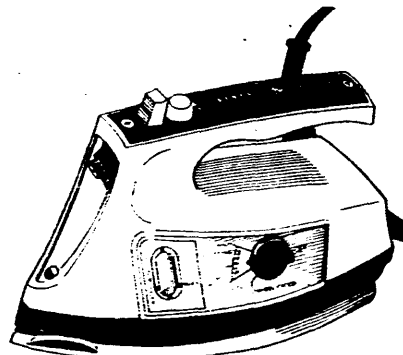
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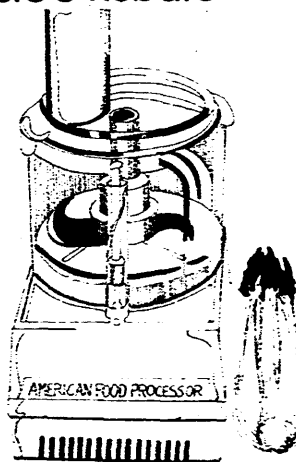
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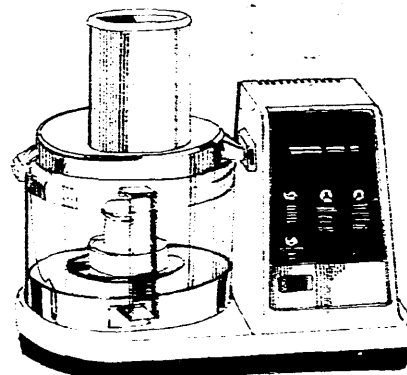
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