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DELIBERATE FRAUD AND MANGLED EVIDENCE

The Search for the Fictional Family of Anne Marie Philippe
of Natchitoches, Louisiana

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Genealogy has matured greatly in the seventy-five years since Donald Lines Jacobus founded *The American Genealogist* on the principles of sound scholarship and uncompromising ethics. Standards have soared, interest has exploded, and technology has revolutionized every aspect of the pursuit. Yet certain base elements remain. Nonsense is still offered to an unsuspecting public by those more interested in fun and profits than truth and accuracy. And evidence is still mutilated by those who see fit to twist it, bend it, amplify it, simplify it, hide it, or ignore it—either out of inexperience or from an assumption that genealogy operates upon a lesser plane than other intellectual investigations.

This paean to the parentage of Anne Marie Philippe covers such genealogical foibles in a tale *noir* that is more a caution to the casual researcher than a simple record of discovery.

THE PROBLEM

In 1970, as gullible novices and impecunious youths, my husband and I took up a collection in his family to employ a “professional” genealogist. On an exploratory trip to the courthouse in Natchitoches, Louisiana, we had met the affable Louis Raphael Nardini Jr. (now deceased), who introduced himself as a “local historian, author, and genealogist,” and then informed us that he had already traced my husband’s ancestral families to the 1714 founding of Natchitoches—the oldest settlement in all the Louisiana Purchase.

What luck!

The rendered report presented one particular family group in the manner shown below. I quote precisely. Readers will *please* not copy any of the following misinformation into their records.¹

¹ Regarding the *dit* names that appear in this “report”: a *dit* in eighteenth-century French society (both New World and Old) was a nickname that was commonly used as a substitute for a person’s surname. The *dits* given by Nardini in this piece of writing are spurious—as was “Athanasse Philippe dit L’Hauter” himself. To Nardini’s credit, his two books on the Natchitoches area apparently underwent editing. Their prose is not as infelicitous as this report, though their information is no more reliable.

Jacques Dupree dit "Sanspeur" (The Fearless)

Jacques Dupree, born 1690 in _____ Died 1736 at the Post of St. Jean Baptiste de Natchitoches Native of _____ Son of _____ Dupree and _____ He was a resident of Cannes Burle and Cote Des Allamonds before Setteling in Natchitoches in 1724. He Wed _____ At Cote Des Allamonds or at New Orleans to

Anne Marie Philippe, born 1707 at Strasbourg, Department of Alsace, France Died _____ at Post St Jean Baptiste de Natchitoches. She was a daughter of Athanasse Philippe, Native of Savern, Diocese of Strasbourg of Alsace, France and Catherine Hymel, native of Calmar, Diocese of Strasbourg Dept of Alsace in France

Note: The Ship L'Union From Nantes France, Landing at the Port of New Orleans May 28, 1719. There were Many Familys of German decent of the Alsace Loraine Area of France and who were setteled along the West Bank of the Mississippi River above New Orleans. Hinse Cote Des Allamonds or German Coast. Established in 1722 when the Fort was Placed There but Settlers were Occupying the area in 1720 early in that year.

Of the Log of the Ship L'Union Passinger List was. Athanasse Philippe wife Catherine Hymel One son Athanasse age 17 years and daughter Catherine age 12 years. They setteled in the Cote Des Allamonds Area in 1720

Ages Following are of the year 1719.

Athanasse Philippe dit L'Hauter" (Tallness or Bigand Tall) Hair Brown age 50 Hight 6'4" Eyes Blue Complexion Fair Occupation, Carpenter. Batherine Hymel Hight 5'6" Eyes Blue Hair Blond Complexion Fair age 46 years.

Jacques Dupree and Anne Marie Philippe were married before settling in Natchitoches. Their children were:

1. Jean Baptiste Dupree born 1730 Baptised 1735 at Natchitoches,
2. Robert Dupree born 1726 baptised 1735 at Natchitoches.
3. Joseph Dupree born 1727 baptised 1735 at Natchitoches.
4. Elizabeth Dupree Born 1733 baptised 1735 at Natchitoches.
5. Catherine Dupree born 1731 baptised 1735 at Natchitoches.

Here ended the report's coverage of this "family."

IN SEARCH OF PROOF

In response, we asked Nardini for documentation of his data. When he did not reply, we set out to find that verification for ourselves. In the decades since, we have seen hundreds of similar "reports" this "professional" supplied to trusting clients. Like his other victims, we have failed miserably in our efforts to find support for accounts he provided—although abundant evidence exists to reconstruct many of the lines correctly. Anne Marie Philippe has presented a thornier problem, complicated needlessly by closed records and misguided editorial practices.

The Ship

The statement that Anne Marie's family immigrated aboard *L'Union* provides an obvious starting point for research. Most extant ship rolls for this period of Louisiana's history were published within twelve months of Nardini's report.

Forsyth and Zeringue's 1969 compilation covered five shiploads of Germans who arrived in 1721 (rather than 1719). No *L'Union* is among them.² Glenn Conrad's twin volumes of 1970 span the years 1717–24. Here, there does appear a ship *L'Union*, with a roll dated the "right" year (1719); and it enumerates "company employees, concessionaries, private passengers, soldiers, deserters, tobacco smugglers, illicit salt dealers, exiles, vagabonds and others." But it includes no German families, no one surnamed *Philippe* or *Hymel*, and no couple bearing the given names *Athanasse* and *Catherine*.³

Church Records

Nardini also stated that five children of Jacques and Anne Marie were baptized at Natchitoches in 1735, suggesting that at least one to five sacramental records exist there for the family—any of which might offer further data on Anne Marie's origins. Extant church records at Natchitoches begin in 1734, recorded variously in French, Spanish, and Latin. They yielded a variety of records that belie much of the detail in Nardini's "report."

According to those registers (augmented in one case by census data), the actual family unit emerged as follows:

JACQUES DUPRÉ *DIT* LASUISSE [not "*dit* SansPeur" as Nardini held], a soldier and native of Paris, drowned at Natchitoches on 25 June 1736 and was buried on 26 June.⁴ He married ANNE MARIE PHILIPPE (var. *Philipelau* and *Philippe Marthe*), who was born about 1709, a "native of the Palatine, archbishopric of Mayance [Mainz]." She died at the plantation of her second husband below the town of Natchitoches on 21 September 1781.⁵ She married secondly at

² Alice D. Forsyth and Earlene L. Zeringue, *German Pest Ships, 1720–1721* (New Orleans: Genealogical Research Society of New Orleans, 1969); hereafter cited as Forsyth and Zeringue, *German Pest Ships*.

³ Glenn R. Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1970), 2 vols.; hereafter cited as Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana*. For access to these volumes, see Donna Rachal Mills, *The First Families of Louisiana: An Index* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Mills Historical Press, 1992). In the years since Conrad, Forsyth, and Zeringue published these rolls, only two additional passenger lists of the era have surfaced; see Bruce Ardoin, "The *Baleine* Brides: A Missing Ship's Roll for Louisiana, 1721," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 75 (Dec. 1987):303–5; and the roll of *Le Tilleule*, 21–22 May 1720, in Albert J. Robichaux Jr., *German Coast Families: European Origins and Settlement in Colonial Louisiana* (Rayne, La.: Hébert Publications, 1997), 430–38 (hereafter cited as Robichaux, *German Coast Families*). Neither of these rolls include a Philippe–Hymel family.

⁴ Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803: Translated Abstracts of the Catholic Church Registers* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1977), nos. 131 (for Jacques's *dit* and his death/burial data) and 729 (for Jacques's nativity); hereafter cited as Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*.

⁵ Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, nos. 49 (for *Philipelau*), 313 (for *Philippe Marthe*), 729 (for nativity), and 1271 (for death, burial, and age at death). Anne Marie also left a lengthy and poignant will, but it sheds no light on her birth family or origins. It is among those records that

Natchitoches on 30 April 1737, Remy Poissot, who was destined for notability and prosperity on that frontier.

Children of Jacques Dupré with his wife Anne Marie Philippe, only three of whom were baptized at Natchitoches and only one of whom was baptized in 1735:

- i MARIE CATHERINE DUPRÉ, b. Natchitoches, ca. 1729 (census), d. after July 1794;⁶ m. there three times: (1) 10 Sept. 1743, PIERRE BERNARDIN *DIT* LABONTE; (2) 3 Nov. 1748, PIERRE JOSEPH FRANÇOIS BARTHELEMY VILDEC *DIT* PEROT; (3) 26 Feb. 1770, JEAN LALANDE. (By her second husband, Catherine was the ancestress of the self-made millionaire and political activist, H. Ross Perot.)
- ii JEAN BAPTISTE DUPRÉ, b. Cannes Brulées, La., ca. 1731–33, d. at his Cane River plantation below the town of Natchitoches, 31 Aug. 1781;⁷ m. twice at Natchitoches: (1) 4 June 1754, ELISABETH VERGER; (2) 11 Sept. 1769, MARGUERITE LECOMTE.
- iii JOSEPH DUPRÉ, b. 4 Feb. 1735, bp. 6 Feb. 1735, d. at his Cane River plantation, 17 April 1782;⁸ m. Natchitoches, Feb. 1757, MARIE DE L'INCARNATION DERBANNE.
- iv ROBERT DUPRÉ (twin), b. 6 Dec. 1736 and bp. informally at birth for fear he would not live, d. before March 1781; m. Pointe Coupée, La., 28 Feb. 1763, MARIE JEANNE CAVÉ.⁹
- v BARBE ELISABETH DUPRÉ (twin), b. and bp. with Robert, bur. "at Cane River," 1 Jan. 1780;¹⁰ m. twice at Natchitoches: (1) 19 June 1752, JEAN LOUIS GAREIN; (2) 4 June 1754, CHARLES LEMOINE.

Eagle-eyed readers will have spotted three signposts pointing to Anne Marie's origin and parentage:

wandered from the parish courthouse into the Melrose Collection, Archives Department, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches; see Melrose folder 507 and appendix to this article.

⁶ Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, nos. 341 (for birthplace and first marriage), 354 (birthplace and second marriage), and 1005 (for third marriage). For date of last known appearance on record, see Register 15:11, Church of St. François des Natchitoches. For approximate year of birth, see age (58) on the 17 Aug. 1787 census of Natchitoches, Lac Noir district, Legajo 201, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain. A published translation is available as Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Natchitoches Colonials: Censuses, Military Rolls and Tax Lists, 1722–1803* (Chicago: Adams Press, 1981), 61; hereafter cited as Mills, *Natchitoches Colonials*. In 1729, the projected year of Catherine's birth, there was no priest in residence at Natchitoches to perform baptisms.

⁷ Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, nos. 729 (for nativity and first marriage), 999 (for second marriage), and 1269 (for death and burial). No record of Jean Baptiste's age or birth year has been found. He died before the 1787 census that gave age information for his sister Catherine. His birth is estimated at 1731–33, given the ca. 1729, Feb. 1735, and Dec. 1736 birthdates of siblings.

⁸ Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, nos. 21 (birth and baptism), 741 (marriage), and 1279 (burial).

⁹ Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, no. 49 (birth and baptism); document 1516, French Archives, Office of the Parish Clerk, Natchitoches Courthouse (for will and succession). Also see Robert's marriage contract, published as one of the translated abstracts in "Records of the Superior Council," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 24 (Oct. 1942):814–15.

¹⁰ Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, nos. 50 (birth and baptism), 723 (first marriage), 730 (second marriage), and 1237 (burial).

- 1 The Catholic registers (specifically, the baptism of a Poissot son in 1750) identify Anne Marie as "Anne Marie Philippe *Marthe*."
- 2 The 1754 marriage record of Anne Marie's son Jean Baptiste Dupré identifies his mother as "Anne Marie Philippe, *native of the Palatine, archbishopric of Mayance* [Mainz]."
- 3 This same entry identifies Jean Baptiste as a native of *Cannes Brulées*—a settlement on the Mississippi River, some 25 miles above New Orleans, in the region called *Les Allemands* or the *German Coast*.

The trail of evidence ended here at Natchitoches. *Cannes Brulées* offered even less potential; its early records are largely destroyed. Those available for New Orleans research shed no additional light. As a result, Anne Marie's origins remained an enigma for nearly two decades.

NEW EVIDENCE

In 1987, the Catholic archdiocese of New Orleans, whose records are not open to the public, began publishing translated abstracts from its earliest registers. Included are settlers along the Mississippi River above and below New Orleans and some much further afield. Therein lies the needed evidence, in bits and fragments, published in a format that well camouflages Anne Marie's identity.¹¹ Although another decade has passed since her ancestry became discoverable through this publication, no one has yet traced in print the trail of evidence that proves her parentage and place of birth. Hence, this article.

Understanding the Source

The archdiocesan series does not present its data in their original order. Rather, entries are shuffled into an alphabetic sequence, by one spelling of the surname of the "principal" party. Marriage records are divided into two parts. Details on the groom are assigned to his surname's place in the alphabet, while the portion of the entry that relates to the bride is placed elsewhere in her "proper spot" between *A* and *Z*. Worse, there is no overall index to access thousands of "buried" names of parents, witnesses, and other associates.

A search of the "appropriate" alphabetic section in volume 1 yielded several entries under the general label "DUPRE [@DEPRES, DUPRES, DUPREZ]" (pp. 92–93). At first perusal, one would conclude from them that two or three Jacques Duprés resided in and around the colonial capital during the 1720s—all with different wives. No spouse was named Anne Marie. A similar search of the *Ps*,

¹¹ *Archdiocese of New Orleans, Sacramental Records, Volume 1: 1718–1750* (New Orleans: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1987); hereafter cited as *Archdiocese of New Orleans Records*. The "originals" from which the abstracts were made are merely copies of copies previously sent back to France. The actual originals were destroyed in New Orleans's fires of the late eighteenth century.

which offer a “PHILIPPE [@PHILIPPE]” section (p. 207), produced more frustration: no one of the right name, in the right time period, with the right spouse and parents.

At this point persistent researchers part company from the fainthearted. Solving this research problem required a word-for-word, page-by-page reading of the entire volume—indeed more than one such reading, to absorb all clues amid a myriad of name variations and phonetic spellings.

Crucial Entries

Yet another Jacques Dupré lounged obscurely amid *undindexed* names in the *B* section of the book [boldface emphasis added]:

(p. 26)

BONSERGEANT, Charles (Charles and Marie Talandie), native of Angers, m. Marie TEDT, Oct. 28, 1730, w[itnesses:] Jacques DUPRÉ, the bride's *beau-frère* [brother-in-law or stepbrother], Anne Marie TEDT, the bride's sister, Pierre MARTINOT, Nicolas DARTEL, surnamed EURARD (SLC, M1, 222).¹²

None of the individuals associated with this *B*-section Jacques appear with his counterparts in the Dupré section. More promising is the coupling of this Jacques with an *Anne Marie*, in a manner that implies their marriage. The fact that the sister bore the same surname as the bride does not suggest that the sister was unwed—in this society, females retained their maiden names after marriage.¹³ But *Tedt*, of course, was not the surname “needed.”

A cross-check for the bride's half of the Bonsergent record produced another thicket of evidence to cut through:

(p. 245, *T* section)

TEDT, Marie (Philippe SCOUP and Anne Marthe [MARTHE?]), native of Dicklingen, widow of Jean Louis DE PAIN, dec. at Natchez, m[arried] Charles BONSERGENT, Oct. 28, 1730 (SLC, M1, 222).¹⁴

¹² To decipher this publication's parenthetical code: in the quoted text, “SLC, M1, 222” stands for “St. Louis Cathedral, Marriage Book 1, p. 222.”

¹³ In Louisiana, this custom was retained until well into the nineteenth century.

¹⁴ The name also appears as *Beausergent* in Louisiana records. See, for example, Charles's 3 Jan. 1738 acknowledgment that he had assumed the debt of Louis Dupin, whose widow he had married; a translated abstract appears in “Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 9 (Oct. 1928):711. Charles Beausergent/Bonsergent *dit* Langevin, at his first marriage on 21 April 1727, was a resident of Cannes Brulées, where Jacques and Anne Marie's son, Jean Baptiste Dupré, was born ca. 1731–33; see *Archdiocese of New Orleans Records*, 1:26, for that 1727 marriage. A ca. 1731 census of the German Coast, as published, places “Dupré, Jacques” on a tract of 4 arpents next door to “Beau, Jacques,” who was described as a sergeant with 4 arpents of his own. As no other contemporary record has been found for a *Beau* of any given name or a *Jacques* Beausergent, it is likely that this pair of adjacent settlers were the brothers-in-law, Jacques Dupré and *Charles* Beausergent. For the census, see Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana*, 2:55.

No editorial note explains why the surname of the bride (and her sister Anne Marie) differed so curiously from that of their father. The bracketed repetition of the mother's second name, in all capitals with a question mark attached, suggests that the diocesan compilers were uncertain whether *Marthe* [*Martha* in German] was the mother's family name or whether that family name is missing. Yet such confusion over nomenclature is relatively common in colonial Louisiana's records, given the mix of French, Spanish, German, and Anglo settlers. French scribes so often slaughtered German orthography that a misrendering of Germanic surnames was more the norm than the exception; and many record keepers simply used a German's "Christian" name in lieu of an unfathomable family name.

Still, amid this muddle, sharp-eared researchers should have heard bells ring upon reading the bridal portion of the entry:

- 1 Anne Marie, wife of Jacques Dupré, commonly appears under the surname *Philippe* at Natchitoches—although one record surnames her *Philippe Marthe*;
- 2 Marie Tedt and her sister Anne Marie Tedt, had a father named *Philippe* and a mother named *Marthe*; and
- 3 Marie Tedt was Jacques Dupré's sister-in-law or stepsister.

The archdiocesan abstracts offer no further data on the Bonsergeant–Tedt couple or on the Scoup *dit* Tedt family in either the *B*, *S*, or *T* sections. However, the page 245 Scoup entry—identifying the 1730 bride as the widow of one Jean Louis DePain who had died at Natchez—introduces other considerations. Negatively speaking, a burial record for DePain at Natchez will likely not be found. No ecclesiastical records exist for that settlement, situated some two-hundred miles above New Orleans on the Mississippi River. However, one noteworthy event happened at Natchez during this era. In November 1729, the Natchez Indians revolted against harsh measures imposed by the local French commandant. A massacre erupted. Two lists of those killed in the massacre and in subsequent hostilities through August 1730 were compiled for civil authorities in France. Both lists carry the name "Jean Louis Dupin."¹⁵

The *D* section of the archdiocesan abstracts offers no marriage record for any DePain, Dupin, or similar spelling. Nor is one found in the *P* section, a possibility that must be considered because the name could have been carelessly written in the register without its particle "de" or "du." However, the trail of the second husband, Charles Bonsergeant (var. Beausergent), can be followed from the German Coast back upriver to the post of Pointe Coupée, almost to Natchez. There,

¹⁵ Archives of the Colonies [AC], C13a, 12:57–58v, dated 28 Nov. 1729; and AC, G1, 464, dated "1 November 1729 to 1 August 1730," Archives Nationales, Paris. A published version is available in Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana*, 2:131–44.

on 8 January 1737, as the widower of "Marie Kette, who died in the Cannes Bru-lee," Charles wed again.¹⁶ No hint of children has been found for the couple.

Thus ended the hope of finding additional records trailing Marie Tedt to her parents. However, in scanning the archdiocesan records for other renderings or misreadings of "Scoup," one finds [*boldface emphasis added*]:

(p. 243, S section)

SOUSSE, Marie (Philippe, burgher of Etelein near Alberque [Arleberg region in Austria? Heidelberg?], and Anne MARTIES), m. Jean François CRONIER, Jan. 17, 1726 (SLC, M1, 99). [*Editorial brackets appear in the published abstract.*]

(p. 60, C section)

CRONIER, Jean François (Louis, carpenter, and Anne VIGNON, burghers of Fonuel, Diocese of Langres), resident of Natchitoches, m. Marie SOUSSE, Jan. 17, 1726, w Jean LAPOSTRE [LA-POTRE], resident of Natchitoches, Jacques DUPREZ, soldier in the garrison at Natchitoches, LE JAICOYE [LEGER DE COYE], resident of Natchitoches, Pierre CUSSON, resident of Natchitoches, Charles DORRE (SLC, M1, 99). [*Editorial brackets appear in the published abstract.*]

The paper trail from Natchitoches to the German Coast had yielded another marker.

While these two regions were more than six-hundred miles apart by water, they were linked by a water highway that began on the Mississippi River at New Orleans and ended with the Red River log jam at Natchitoches. Travel between the two regions occurred continuously. After the marriage above, Cronier took his Marie back with him to Natchitoches, where he appears with a wife on the 1726 census of inhabitants—one house from that of Pierre Cusson, a witness at their wedding.¹⁷ Cronier died at the hospital in New Orleans on 20 December 1729 and was buried there the day after Christmas.¹⁸ No further reference to a Widow Cronier or Marie Soussé has been found, either at Natchitoches or in the New Orleans–German Coast area.

¹⁶ *Diocese of Baton Rouge, Catholic Church Records, Volume 1: 1707–1769* (Baton Rouge: The Diocese, 1978), 142. This publication follows the same editorial arrangement previously described for the New Orleans records.

¹⁷ AC, G1, 464:17–18, Archives Nationales; for a published translation, see Mills, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 5–7. Soldiers such as Jacques Dupré were not enumerated, although wives of soldiers were. The census's failure to show a wife for Dupré among the civilian population in 1726 suggests that he had not yet married. The date of the census is given officially as 1 Jan. 1726. However, in light of Cronier's marriage on 17 Jan. 1726 in New Orleans, it was obvious that the census could not have been taken sooner than late January or early February, allowing time for the newlyweds to travel upriver to the Natchitoches outpost.

¹⁸ *Archdiocese of New Orleans Records*, 1:60, gives the name correctly as Jean François Cronier, but does not give his death place or death date—only the date of burial. Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana*, 2:130, transcribes from the same record used by the archdiocese, but renders the surname as *Bronier* and gives more-specific death data.

Testing the Theory

If this trail of evidence is viewed correctly here, there should have existed in Louisiana a family unit similar to the following:

PHILIPPE SCOUP (or SOUSSE) *DIT* TEDT married MARIE MARTHE (or MARTIES)

Children:

- i MARIE SOUSSE, m. 17 Jan. 1726, JEAN FRANÇOIS CRONIER of Natchitoches.
- ii MARIE TEDT *DITE* SCOUP, m. (1) before Nov. 1729, JEAN LOUIS DEPAIN/DUPIN; (2) 28 Oct. 1730, CHARLES BONSERGENT.
- iii ANNE MARIE PHILIPPE (MARTHE), m. ca. 1729, JACQUES DUPRÉ of Natchitoches.

The multiplicity of Maries in this hypothetical family is inconsequential. As explained by the French priest in charge of the first set of Catholic registers I ever consulted: "Oh, not to worry; all little Catholic girls were named Marie back then." While his point was a tad overstated, the practice was indeed common. It was not so prevalent amid the German Palatines as among the French; yet even among the Germans it was common. Partly this was because German families typically used a child's middle name as its "call name." Partly it is attributable to the habit of Louisiana's priests, when faced with a difficult German (and later, American) female name, of simply substituting the revered name *Marie*. Apparently the thinking was that if a Catholic female's name *didn't* include the Marie, it *should* have.

The real family to match the hypothetical one was not difficult to find.

Between 1717 and 1721, a Scottish entrepreneur named John Law, serving as Comptroller General of France, created the Company of the Indies (or the "Mississippi Company") to settle and govern Louisiana. Among the European settlers he sent to the colonies were five boatloads of German and Swiss passengers who had contracted to work for the company. Unknown to the emigrants, the company was bankrupt; and the conditions under which they were transported earned their carriers the infamous label, "Pest Ships." As one authority reports:

Many died of sickness in the French ports and at sea; many others died of starvation after their arrival in Louisiana. . . . Some of the ships sailed with infected passengers aboard; in addition, scurvy abounded, which resulted in a high death rate during the voyage. For example, of 815 Germans and 47 Swiss who came to Louisiana on four [of the] boats, only (about) 200 reached their destination. In New Biloxi [where they were landed], east of the mouth of the Mississippi, no provisions had been made for the care of the immigrants. Many also died because they were not brought inland immediately, some from starvation, others from the unfamiliar climate.¹⁹

¹⁹ Helmut Blume, *Die Entwicklung der Kulturlandschaft des Mississippideltas in kolonialer Zeit, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der deutschen Siedlung* (Kiel: Geographisches Institut der Universität Kiel, 1956), available as Ellen C. Merrill, trans. and ed., *The German Coast Dur-*

The roll of one of these ships, dated 23 April 1721 at the port of L'Orient, France, cites twenty-two men, thirty-four women, and fifty-three children who had survived the dockside decimation and were slated for transport aboard *La Durance*—the company's own vessel. Included were:

Philippe Adam CHOUP 1 man, 1 woman, 3 children²⁰

No further trace has been found of Choup or his wife. An extant 1721 census of the colony does not bother to enumerate, by name, the five men, eleven women, and fourteen children who had lived to labor on John Law's personal concession in the area now known as Louisiana's German coast.²¹ Whether Philippe and family were among these is unknown. Similarly, the 1722 and 1724 censuses of the river from New Orleans through the German settlements do not include them.²² Whether Philippe and his wife even reached Louisiana's shores is uncertain. Extant evidence points only to their daughters, who (if orphaned) would have been taken in by German relatives.²³

PROVING ORIGINS

The trail of records on this family had led from Colonial Louisiana to four European sites: (a) L'Orient, France, the port where the family was registered for transport; (b) "Mayence" [Mainz] in the Palatinate, the archbishopric in which Dupré's wife is said to have been born; (c) "Etelein near Alberque [. . . Heidelberg?]," where the father of Cronier's wife is said to have been a "burgher"; and (d) "Dicklingen," presumably Germany, where Bonsergent's wife reportedly originated.

The first clue adds nothing to the evidence that is not generally known: German debarkation from a French port was commonplace, considering the geography of Europe. The fate of John Law's German recruits was not common, however. Estimates of their number range from 2600 to 4000—of whom 1600 to 2000

ing the Colonial Era, 1722–1803 (Destrehan, La.: German-Acadian Coast Historical and Genealogical Society, 1990), 10–11; hereafter cited as Merrill, *German Coast*.

²⁰ Forsyth and Zeringue, *German Pest Ships*, 29.

²¹ Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana*, 1:6. For the site of the concession on which Law's Germans were placed, see Robichaux, *German Coast Families*, chapter 7; and Morris Arnold, "The Myth of John Law's German Colony on the Arkansas," *Louisiana History* 31 (Winter 1990): 83–88. Robichaux's superb new study, while it provides an astounding amount of data on the German Coast families—including several *La Durance* passengers—does not identify the origins or family members of the passenger Philippe Adam Choup.

²² Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana*, 1:8; Merrill, *German Coast*, 23–27.

²³ For the possibility that Anne Marie lived with foster parents on the German coast, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Origins of Anne Marie Philippe: An Hypothesis and a Query to Crestman Researchers," *Louisiana Genealogical Register* 32 (Dec. 1986):305–8.

perished apparently from bubonic plague, as they waited in the port of L'Orient for embarkation. According to one authority, many of Law's Germans "came to France in entire village groups with a mayor at the head."²⁴ Extant Louisiana records make no reference to settlers of phonetically similar origins. However, the mortality rate suggests that whole village groups could have been wiped out, as well.

A consultation with Henry Z Jones Jr., FASG, an American specialist on Palatine emigrants to America, underscored the notorious difficulty of identifying German village names—and also the value of consulting authorities with privately compiled materials. According to Jones:

In the Mainz archbishopric area is a town/village where several Palatines resided who went to Ireland in 1709. It is called "Albig," and it just might be the "Alberque" mentioned in the 1726 notation. But "Dicklingen" and "Etelein" are anybody's guess: it might refer to "Ittlingen" in the Kraichgau, if that first consonant was misread, or a town called "Dietingen." Looking for other possible messed-up spellings, I see that there is a town/village of "Gottingen" next to "Albeck," as well as an "Eichingen" near this same Albeck. I also found a "Möglingen" near an "Asperg." One must be flexible and a "walking soundex" on these possible names!

After a frustrating few hours of map work, I pulled a typescript by my friend, Friedrich R. Wollmershäuser in Germany. A few years back, he compiled a list of emigrants to America he had found over the years, usually from long-buried petitions to emigrate, and sent it on to me as an abbreviated reference. Two entries look extremely promising: "Philips Adam Schuh, destination 'Mississippi?' leaving in 1720," and "Philipp Adam Schuch, America?, 1720."²⁵

Jones's clue led to paydirt. Research by Wollmershäuser (still ongoing) has yielded conclusive links, as well as a poignant account of the family's last days in Germany. The village in question is indeed Ittlingen (near Eppingen, east of Heidelberg), home of the Huber ancestors of Herbert Hoover prior to their 1738 immigration to the United States.²⁶ There, between 1709 and 1718, five children were born to Philipp Adam Schup(pe) and his wife Anna Maria/Martha. According to the baptismal registers of Ittlingen's Lutheran parish, those children were:

- i ANNA MARIA, b. 18 June 1709.
- ii MARIA CATHARINA, b. 17 March 1712.
- iii ELISABETH CATHARINA, b. 1 April 1714.
- iv MARIA CATHARINA, b. 20 Oct. 1716.

²⁴ Marcel Giraud, *Histoire de la Louisiane française, Vol. 3: L'Époque de John Law, 1717–20* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), 277–83, and *Vol. 4: La Louisiane après le système de Law, 1721–1723* (Paris, 1974), 154–67. See also Reinhart Konder, "Les Allemands en Louisiane de 1721 à 1732," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 33(June 1979):51–65. For the evidence that the German decimation in the port of L'Orient was caused by bubonic plague, see Robichaux, *German Coast Families*, chapter 5.

²⁵ Henry Z Jones Jr., FASG (P.O. Box 261388, San Diego CA 92196-1388), to author, 2 March 1997.

²⁶ Friedrich R. Wollmershäuser (Herrengasse 8–10, D-89610, Oberdischingen, Germany) to author, 18 April and 30 May 1997, citing Wollmershäuser's own work on the Huber family.

v JULIANA, b. 23 Dec. 1718.²⁷

While the baptismal registers of this parish begin in 1665, the marriage registers exist only from 1738; thus, they offer no marriage for Philipp Adam and Anna Maria/Martha. Nor do they point to Schup origins.

Civil files of Ittlingen—primarily peasant court records—place Schup in that village from 1710 to 1720. On 26 February 1710, “Philipps Adam Schubb” was a witness, testifying to a quarrel between Andreas Friedtle and Hans Martin Oberackher.²⁸ Other court proceedings of that year, according to Wollmershäuser, “mention . . . the house of the community foreman (Anwalt) in which Philipp Adam Schupp has lived.”²⁹ By a fluke, the first of these peasant court files also contains a “lost” document which is not supposed to appear in these records at all: Ittlingen’s “annual account” for 1710/1 (likely dating between 23 April 1710 and 23 April 1711, Wollmershäuser suggests), which charges “Phillips Adam Schup” the standard fee (1 Florin, 30 Kreuzer) for the grant of citizenship.³⁰

Only one further record of Schup has surfaced thus far: one that explains the family’s decision to emigrate and speaks to the nature and philosophy of this family’s head. Writing of the conditions that existed under the Elector of the Palatinate in this era, one historian describes the stage on which Schup acted:

To the . . . historical and religious conditions which prepared the way for emigration to America we must add the corruption, the tyranny, the extravagance and heartlessness of the rulers of the Palatinate. While the country was exhausted and on the verge of ruin, costly palaces were built . . . ; while pastors and teachers were starving, hundreds of court officers lived in luxury and idleness. The burden of feudalism still lay heavy upon the peasants. [They and their] children were forced to render body-service, to pay taxes in case of sale or heritage, to suffer the inconveniences of hunting, and, above all, to see themselves deprived of all justice.³¹

²⁷ Wollmershäuser reports that the archives of the Protestant church at Karlsruhe, which holds the Ittlingen parish registers, does not permit photocopying. Following the prevailing custom among German researchers, his abstracts do not cite volume/page numbers for the entries or identify baptismal sponsors. According to Wollmershäuser, the mother of these children is called Anna *Martha* in the 1712 baptism and Anna *Maria* in the others.

²⁸ Wollmershäuser to author, 30 May 1997, citing Ittlingen Peasants Court, 1707–1724, p. 547 (von Gemmingen–Gemmingen files; Record Group 69; Generallandesarchiv [GLA], Karlsruhe). Wollmershäuser also points out that this 1710/1 annual account relating to the community of Ittlingen ought *not* to be part of the GLA archives of the von Gemmingen family, which includes files of the dominion rather than the community (Wollmershäuser to Mills, 29 June 1997).

²⁹ Wollmershäuser to author, 30 May 1997, citing Ittlingen Peasants Court, 1709–1722, p. 545, von Gemmingen–Gemmingen files.

³⁰ A note upon this document states that a Hanns Willhelm Schupp was also to be charged the same citizenship fee in the “subsequent account.” Wollmershäuser also reports that Hanns Willhelm and his wife Catharina appear in the Lutheran registers of Ittlingen only once—at the baptism of a son Johann Georg David, born 30 June 1711 (Wollmershäuser to author, 30 May 1997).

³¹ Oscar Kuhns, *The German and Swiss Settlements of Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: Henry Holt, 1901), 19–20. Ittlingen was not actually in the Palatinate, itself; rather, it lies in a region to the east, in which the Palatinate’s Elector had many villages.

The peasants of Ittlingen rebelled. The result was the prosecution of a suit between the village of Ittlingen and the dominion, which was then controlled by the noble von Gemmingen family. (The very fact that the populace *was* able to sue the local lords before the *Reichskammergericht*—the supreme court of the Holy Roman Empire—also attests the fact that all fundamental rights *were not* denied them.) This 1720 contest appears to be the same one described by Annette Kunselman Burgert, FASG, in her study of the Northern Kraichgau:

From before anyone's memory the peasants [of Ittlingen] had the right to drive their hogs into the forest to find nourishment. In the middle of the sixteenth century the right was reduced to the time of acorn and beechnut harvest . . . 29 September . . . to 21 December. Later, due to harm to the forests, the number of swine per household was restricted. Then a fee for use of the forest was added. By 1720 this was three *Batzen* per hog. In that year suddenly the two landlord families united and demanded a higher fee than the . . . village regulations of 1584 allowed. The villagers, under the leadership of the proprietors of the *Ochsen* and the *Krone*, two of the taverns, filed a protest with the next higher judicial authority, the council of the knights, which sat at Heilbronn, and refused to pay the levy. The nobles then took matters into their own hands in a crafty way. . . .³²

There follows the expected tale of trickery and persecution. A document of late that spring, which Wollmershäuser found in the archives of the von Gemmingen family, relates an effort by several of the peasant households to escape their untenable situation. On 9 May 1720, "Philips Adam Schup" and four other villagers drafted the following "confession":

Whereas we the undersigned have participated in the lawsuit against the dominion in order to secure privileges for the village of Ittlingen, but have now resolved to move away from here and into other countries, and have already obtained a passport, or certificate from the mayor and local court upon the permission of the dominion, and whereas the lawsuit has been delayed and Dr. Davinger has threatened to detain us unless we revoke [our protests] in writing, declare ourselves disobedient peasants, and declare and confess that we have done wrong in all behalfs so far. Thus, searching for our fortune elsewhere and fearing that we might be detained, we have agreed to this offer and follow the proposal. So we have left behind this paper, preventing that the community may suffer prejudice over its lawsuit, and have signed it with our names.

[*Note*] Upon request of Philips Adam Schup, Michel Hoffman, and Johans Scheher, who cannot write; signed by Adam Müller of Weiler and Hans Ulerich Fleck of Richen. 9 May 1720.³³

Schup's confession earned his family its exit papers. In the village left behind, the revolt was not settled until Christmas Eve of that year 1720. Not surprisingly, the villagers were the losers. But so were Philip Schup and almost all his family.

³² Annette Kunselman Burgert, *Eighteenth Century Emigrants from German-Speaking Lands to North America; Volume I: The Northern Kraichgau* (Breinigsville, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1983), 26–27. For additional perspectives on the village of Ittlingen, see also Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717–1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

³³ Wollmershäuser to author, 30 May 1997, citing Record Group 229, file 50203, part II, Generallandesarchiv, Karlsruhe.

Ten years later, only one daughter survived to enjoy the freedom for which Schup first fought and then forfeited his pride. His spirit would live on in that daughter's heart. At her death in 1781, Anne Marie left a testament that is one of the most remarkable statements of personal philosophy to be found for the colony of Louisiana.³⁴ The significant portions appear in the appendix to this article.

EVALUATION

Genealogically, the records of Ittlingen suggest two adjustments in the hypotheses formulated from Louisiana's extant resources.

- 1 Anne Marie "Philippe" was wed three times, not two.

In addition to her two known marriages to Natchitoches men (Jacques Dupré, ca. 1729; and Remy Poissot, 1737), the New Orleans registers document three other marriages of "Maries," whom we have theorized to be her sisters. One Marie wed Cronier of Natchitoches in 1726. The other Marie married De Pain, who was killed in 1729, and then wed Bonsergent in 1730.³⁵

However, only two Mariés appear to have lived to adulthood in this family. According to Wollmershäuser, it was not Ittlingen custom to give duplicate names to two living daughters. The Maria Catherina who was born in 1712 should have died before the second Maria Catherina was baptized in 1716.

Thus, a genealogical question: who was the Marie who wed Cronier in 1726, with Jacques Dupré in attendance? Only one answer is possible: Anne Marie. Under Louisiana's civil and ecclesiastical codes, twelve years was the minimum bridal age.³⁶ Maria Catharina, born 20 October 1716, would have been only nine at the time of the Cronier marriage in 1726.

³⁴ Testamente de Anne Marie Philippe, épouse de Remy Poissot, Folder 507, Melrose Collection.

³⁵ A third sister is also possible, although the evidence in Louisiana is extremely tenuous; if she were the same as "Juliana," born 23 Dec. 1718, her marriage would have occurred three months under the legal age limit—a situation that cannot be ruled out, considering that she was orphaned as a toddler and her age may have been a matter of guesswork. On 25 Sept. 1730, one Marie "Choupee" (var. "Choupee") wed Louis Joseph Castel dit Lilois at New Orleans (*Archdiocese of New Orleans*, 1:42, 52). She does not appear to be a widow, because no prior husband was named; parents appear to be unknown. She and Castel are enumerated on the 1731 census of farms along the German coast, but the "after 1731" enumeration of the area shows the Castel farm as "abandoned" (Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana*, 2:51, 57). Castel disappears from the records until 1739, when he surfaces again as a trader among the Choctaw Indians (Castel-Bellair-Desillet contract in "Records of the Superior Council," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 6[April 1923]:203). A wife is mentioned (unnamed) in that record; but subsequent documents identify her as the young gypsy, Cecile Christophe (Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Cecile Christophe," in forthcoming *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography: 10-Year Supplement*, ed. Carl Brasseaux [Lafayette, La.: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1998]). In short, there is no evidence that Castel's second wife, Marie Choupee, lived long after their marriage or left children. Among the circumstantial evidence connecting Castel's second wife, Marie Choupee, to the family under study is the fact that Castel's third wife, Cecile, in 1766 *donated* a portion of her Red River farm to Robert Dupré, son of Anne Marie Philippe Schoup (see doc. 538, French Archives, Office of the Clerk of Court, Natchitoches Parish, La.).

³⁶ Louis Moreau Lislet and Henry Carleton, *The Laws of Las Siete Partidas Which Are Still in Force in the State of Louisiana*, 2 vols. (New Orleans: James M'Karaher, 1820), 1:451. While

- 2 Anne Marie's first child was born ca. 1730, rather than ca. 1729.

The identification of Anne Marie as Cronier's wife until 20 Dec. 1729 demands an adjustment of the presumed date of the Dupré marriage. For the first Dupré child, Marie Catherine, one lone record cites an age: an August 1787 census that alleges her to be fifty-eight; if accurate, she was born before August 1729. However, Marie Catherine Dupré wed three times, and each of her marriages explicitly identifies her as the legitimate daughter of Jacques Dupré, not Cronier.

All points considered, it seems far more likely that Anne Marie—left a penniless, childless, and parentless twenty-year-old widow during the Christmas season of 1729—wed immediately to Dupré, who had served as “best man” at her first wedding. This conclusion suggests that the first Dupré child was more likely born in late 1730—after which Anne Marie's children were born with the expected regularity. Marie Catherine (ca. 1730) was followed by Jean Baptiste (ca. 1732–33); Joseph (Feb. 1735); and twins, Jacques and Barbe Elisabeth (December 1736). With Dupré's death in 1736 and Anne Marie's new marriage in 1737, another ten children would follow.

Research on colonial Louisiana's early families is hampered by several factors. Not the least of these are the loss of many local government papers for the first three decades, the lack of public access to the critically important vital records (which necessitates dependence upon published abstracts of varying quality), and the intermingling of ethnic groups that complicated the culture. Successful research particularly requires mental agility in tracking names. With nicknames substituted for surnames and Christian names used for family names, with French names spelled lackadaisically and German names not only translated into French but also rendered in phonetic fashions that astound and amuse, many troublesome identities and relationships must be pieced together in the manner this paper demonstrates for Anne Marie Philippe.

As with most genealogical frauds, the search for Anne Marie's parentage proves that ancestral truth is far more interesting than the figments of imagination. The physical stature of Anne Marie's father remains unknown; but when one takes the measure of his spirit, he stands tall indeed.

APPENDIX:

ANNIE MARIE PHILIPPE'S ADVICE TO HER CHILDREN

From the Will of Anne Marie Philippe, 25 April 1771, Post of St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches (Folder 507 [Melrose Collection], Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, La.). 7 pp., French. This translation is made from partially illegible photocopy.

Testament of Anne Marie Philippe, spouse in second nuptials of Remy Poisot:

incidences can be cited in Louisiana of marriages occurring when the bride was just short of twelve (including one Dupré granddaughter of Anne Marie Philippe Schoup), a marriage at age nine may be confidently ruled out.

Before the seven witnesses hereafter named, all residents of the post of Natchitoches . . . appeared Anne Marie Philippe, wife of Remy Poisot, a native of Dijon in Burgundy, being in perfect health, fearful of dying without having put her affairs in order. . . .

[After asserting at inordinate length her Catholic faith, she states:]

Listen my children [*illegible line*] depth of the feelings of my heart [*illegible*]. I have never made any distinction among you. Your hearts, I have seen, are sincere. They have been able to render me clear evidence of that. Gather, all of you, to listen attentively to the last beneficial comments of the most loving and most tender of mothers. I entreat God that he will pour out upon all of you his favors and graces and that he will heap all blessings upon you. As for me, who is your good mother, I give to you the same with all my heart. Love God, my dear children—I repeat this to you—with all your hearts. Serve him faithfully. Never repudiate the sacraments which are the sources from which flow the graces and the favors of the Lord. Bring yourselves to receive them at least once a year—if you do not wish to live and die in the hardness of heart and the disgrace of God. You must always be well-united, each with the other, so that there will never be discord between you, as is proper for brothers and sisters. Shun the frequentation of libertines, whose bad examples spread easily. Flee sin as the only evil you ought to fear. Love virtue, and never tire of the practice of it. Pray to God for me—I shall pray for you [*illegible*]. Open your eyes upon your conduct. God is always present and examines all the actions of men. Pray to God for your mother; it is the only favor I ask of you. Have respect for your father. You owe him all sorts of rights. Never ignore the love and the tenderness that he has for you. Never forget, my children, the instructions that the most tender of mothers has given you. Impress all these words upon your heart. As you know, my dear children, it has pleased the Lord [*illegible*] to unite me with society through marriage with your father Remy Poisot. You know that I do not possess very many things . . . but it has pleased the Lord to [*illegible*] you from whatever good, and since these goods are acquired through our Lord, work and economize together, each with the other. This is just and reasonable and I believe you to be obliged by conscience and by all sorts of rights to hand over and give to my husband, Remy Poisot [now blind], all my goods, movable and immovable for whatever enjoyment possible. . . . [After his death or remarriage the property will be divided equally among all the testator's children by both marriages.] I foresee that several of my children are perhaps displeased, but if they will examine my intentions, they will be forced to confess that I am acting rightly and justly. The total donation that I give to my husband Remy Poisot, of all my goods, movable and immovable, will be to show him respect. My dear children, grieve not any further a father as good as yours and render to him your submissive souls, utmost wishes and intentions—if you do not wish to grieve me also and if you do not wish that I come, after my death, to reproach the blackness of your ingratitude.

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