

History of Amable Charles Bourdeau and Julia Martel

29 October 2011

Their graves are next to Patrick and Mary McCann. Mary was Mary Jane Bourdeau, daughter of Amable and Julia.

Amable Charles Bourdeau and Julia Martel were born at La Baye Settlement (what became Green Bay, WI). They were born to pioneers of La Baye and were themselves pioneers of La Baye. A part of the Wisconsin Creole community they were mixed-blood, as were their parents. Amable Charles Bourdeau's parents were Louis Bourdon (1786 - 1837) and Elizabeth Bonnetterre (1801 - 1837). Elizabeth's parents were Augustin Bonnetterre and a panis (Indian) slave whom Augustin had purchased for a wife at Mackinac. He later moved his family to La Baye. All of the named have been documented in the history of Wisconsin in such writings as the Recollections of Augustin Grignon, The Wisconsin Creoles, by Dr. Lester and Jeanne Rentmeester, The Wisconsin Historical Collections, and other publications.

La Baye, though there were some mixed Algonquin tribes and some British, was predominately French, Menominee native, and metis (mixed-bloods). Consequently Amable and Julia's siblings and their children married into these native families. Some of them appear on the 1848 Treaty Settlement Report for Mixed-blood Menominee. After 1848 the mixed-bloods were forced to choose either a native status and be confined to the reservation or choose white status for-ever-more and be absorbed into the general white population. Amable moved his family to Wausaukee where they were pioneers there. His choice was perhaps motivated by the lumber industry and opportunity to earn a living in Wausaukee. Amable was a camp cook many years.

Amable was also a Civil War veteran. Considering his service and his part in the history of Wisconsin and in the history of Wausaukee it is shameful that there is not an appropriate military marker for his grave. The G.A.R. Grand Army of The Republic, a post Civil War fraternal organization, was mentioned in Amable's obit. Researching the G.A.R. (which is no longer in existence since its last Civil War veteran member died) I found the Sons of Union Veterans of The Civil War (SUVCW). The SUVCW is a fraternal organization as well. It took over functions that were performed by the G.A.R.. The SUVCW has promised to place a Civil War military issue marker on Amable's grave. I would requisition the marker and take delivery of it, and spring or summer of 2012 the SUVCW would place it. They present in full traditional Civil War uniform and conduct the same ceremony that the ancestors of the G.A.R. performed honoring Civil War veterans.

One day we may get a marker on Julia's grave. Since I haven't (to this date) been successful in discovering which granite company did the incorrect stone or the person who ordered that stone, it may be best to leave the incorrect stone where it is, between the graves of Amable and Julia, and place the military issue one on Amable's grave. You may recall that the stone between the graves is engraved "Amos Bourdreau and Mary" with no dates or other information. This is completely incorrect. It is however, without doubt the grave sites of Amable Charles Bourdeau and wife Julia Martel. The fact that they lived and died in Wausaukee, your records and knowledge, and the grave of their daughter Mary next to them is sufficient proof.

It is interesting that whom ever purchased that stone used the name Mary for the wife of Amable. That person must have done some research. Amable first married Marie Madeleine Ducharme. The marriage was short. The reason is not known. It does not seem that there were children of Amable's first marriage.

Sincerely,
Judy Seeley.