A Personal and Genealogical Report

Pertaining To:

BENEDICT BOURQUIN

1795 - 1875

A Resident of Savannah and Chatham Co., Georgia

Prepared by:

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Historical Research
300/500
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GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
501 Whitaker Street
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31499
PORTAIT
OF
BENEDICT BOURQUIN
Born 11 June 1795, Died 19 August 1875
Attachment "B"
INTRODUCTION

The assignment for this study was incorporated as a part of a course in historical research conducted by Dr. R. K. Warlick, Armstrong State college, Savannah, Georgia.

The normal assignment was to give each student the name of a prominent person connected with the early development of Savannah, and have the student follow a research pattern in identifying the subject and to attempt to report his activities during his lifetime, his property owned and/or passed on to heirs. Additionally, a genealogical survey was to be made in order to locate and interview any surviving descendants of the subject.

This researcher's assignment was somewhat unique in that permission was requested and granted to research and identify a family portrait that had been in the family for four generations. The painting was fully restored in 1977, and is mounted in the original outer frame. A photograph of this painting is attached. (see attach "E").

RESEARCH PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

The problem of identifying the portrait was that although the last name of the person was known to be Bourquin, the first name could only be guessed at. It was necessary then to trace the family genealogically, both prior to, and after the suspected date of the portrait. Three clues to narrowing down the period during which the painting was done were essential. First, the art expert who restored the painting definitely pinpointed the canvas and inner framing techniques to be that of the mid 19th century period. Secondly, the dress style of the subject has been identified as belonging to that period. Finally, the apparent age of the subject agrees with his life span.
of Benedict Bourquin, born 1795 and died 1875. As the portrait was passed
down directly within the family bloodline to this researcher, it can be
assumed that the portrait is that of Benedict Bourquin.

The steps taken in tracing the Bourquin family tree was complicated
because of the large number of people belonging to this prominent and pro-
lific family. Although this researcher is a direct descendant of the sub-
ject, practically no accurate family history was known pertaining to the
portrait, other than the certainty of the last name.

It was therefore, essential to contact other descendants. My first con-
tact was with Mrs. Robert F. Cosnahan, a first cousin whom I have known all
my life.\(^1\) She provided me with the name of another distant cousin, Mrs.
John Ingram of Springfield, Georgia.\(^2\) Mrs. Ingram, in turn, put me in contact
with another hitherto unknown relative, Mrs. Jean Howard of Atlanta, Georgia.\(^3\)
Mrs. Howard was very helpful in giving me reference to two articles that she
had written and were published in the "National Genealogical Society Quarterly."
These articles were the result of extensive research by her, relative to the
Bourquin family ancestry.\(^7\)

In addition to the articles mentioned above, a book written by Major
Harry A. Davis, USA (Ret) was located at the Georgia Historical Society.\(^5\)
In my interview with Mrs. C. Schuster, of Savannah, I discovered that she not
only had copies of Mrs. Howard's publications, but had a revised supplement
to Major Davis' book which was completed in 1940.\(^4\) This supplement pertains
specifically to the Bourquin family and traces the family back to France and
Switzerland, prior to the immigration of Benedict Bourquin (the elder) to the
American colonies.\(^6\)
The Davis' book lists four of the Bourquins as part of the John Pury group that came to South Carolina with Colonel Pury in 1732, and settled Purysburg, S.C. These facts were based on a careful analysis of the land records of South Carolina and Georgia. Additionally, the study included information based on direct correspondence with French and Swiss officials who had access to the history of the family and the migration of this group.

In order to simplify the identities of individuals discussed in this study, a genealogical chart has been prepared and offered as attachment "A". Please note that there are two Benedictts involved. The subject of the study and the man in the portrait (see atch "E") is located on Chart No. 2, Line 2. From here forward, I will identify persons that I refer to by adding their chart and line number following their names, providing they appear on the charts.

Originally there were five members of the Bourquin family who settled in Purysburg, S.C., in 1732. They were Marie Bourquin, a widow and four of her children. One of the children was Benedict (chart 2, line 8). Benedict resided in South Carolina until 1755-56, when he moved his family to Christ Church Parish (Chatham County), Georgia. He died in 1770, leaving a considerable estate to his widow, Jane (Jeanne) Judith. Her death was announced in the Georgia Gazette, 14 March 1799. Her will is recorded in the Probate Court in Savannah.

The son of Benedict; David Francis (chart 2, line 4), was probably the most interesting and politically active member of the entire American ancestry. Born in Chatham Co., Georgia, he served in the American Revolution in the famous "Pulaski's Legion." He along with Sheftall Sheftall and Peter Tondee were captured and taken aboard a British ship. He was insulted by a British
officer and promptly picked up a chair and knocked him down. He was in turn struck down by a sabre blow which cut his cheek bone in two. He is listed in the Georgia Roster as a "Major" and probably did not reach this rank until the early 1780's.

He was appointed Justice of the Peace for the Little Ogeechee District: "D", by executive council on 28 March 1783, and was politically active throughout his life. David F. married three times. His third wife, Margret Thornton (chart 2, line 5) was believed to be only 16 years of age when they married in July 1794. She outlived him many years indicating that this is probably true.

Margret is the mother of the subject of this study and although born in San Domingo, is of English heritage. In my interview with Mrs. Schuster, she explained that family history indicates that Margret's family were English plantation owners. During a native/slave uprising in circa 1788, her family was murdered. She, a child of about 10, escaped with the help of a servant and was put aboard a ship. She landed in either Charleston or Savannah. Her family had evidently spoken of the Bourquin family. She somehow located them and was taken into the household of David Francis, who eventually married her after the deaths of his first two wives. Her will was probated on 20 March 1848.

Benedict Bourquin (see atch "B" and chart 2, line 2) was born in Savannah in 1795 and lived to be 80 years of age. He served in the war of 1812 in Georgia at an early age. He also served in the Florida war. He is continually listed in the Savannah City Index as a planter and this was probably his major source of income. His will indicates that he owned a large plantation on the Little Ogeechee River, part of which is indicated as the Carruther's Tract. His will shows that he still held considerable land at the
time of his death, including a town house located on the S.E. corner of Liberty and Montgomery streets. The first listing of him at this address was in 1860, however due to the incomplete records of the city indexes prior to this time, he could have lived there prior to 1860.

By cross checking listings for Benedict and Luke Canon (chart 1, line 6), I discovered that Luke Canon, who married Mary Lavinder (chart 1, line 7), Benedict's daughter, also listed the Bourquin house as his residence in 1866 and 1867. Luke Canon's address had changed, however, in 1870 to 172 Bryan Street. It was apparent in my research that most of Bourquin maintained both a town house and a home on one of their large farms and lived periodically at both. An example of this, a Martha Bourquin, widow (not his wife), listed her address in the 1860 City Index as a house on W. Broad St. and farm.

Benedict and Martha Sarah Bourquin (chart 1, line 3) had nine children, being: Mary Lavinder; Sarah Courvoisie; William Benedict; James Courvoisie; David Gugle; Martha; Emily Florence; a son not named, died at birth and Alice Vernon.

CONCLUSIONS FROM RESEARCH

I am satisfied that the evidence produced through this research satisfactorily identifies the man in the portrait as Benedict Bourquin (chart 2, line 2). Mary Thornton, Benedict's mother had only one other son, who died in 1845, much too early for the portrait period. The fact that Luke Canon was a close friend of Benedict and that he, Luke, married his oldest daughter, leads one to believe that the portrait would be treasured by the daughter and as a result passed to her.

The portrait was passed in a direct line through the next three generations from Mary Lavinder Bourquin (chart 1, line 7), to this researcher, Gustave Anthony Canon (chart 1, line 1).
ATTACHMENTS:

"A" - Pedigree Chart (Genealogical) of a branch of the Bourquin family consisting of 2 pages.

"B" - Photograph of a portrait identified as that of Benedict Bourquin, Born 1795, Died 1875.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:


8. Wills, B-53, Savannah, Ga., Probate Court.


10. Wills, B-266, Savannah, Probate Court.

11. Wills, Micro Film, Roll B-6, Frame 495, 1811-1884, Benedict Bourquin.

12. Savannah City Index, 1860 Micro Film, Public Library.
