LOT 9, SQUARE 16 – 335-337 PELICAN AVENUE

(Research still in progress)

By Kevin HERRIDGE

When my wife, Wendy, and I decided to purchase a house suitable to use as a Bed & Breakfast establishment (the “House of the Rising Sun”), certain criteria had to be met. Although we looked at several renovations, interior re-designs, room re-configurations and “fixer-uppers”, none really fitted the layout we were looking for. Then we found 335-337, Pelican Ave. It was a shotgun-double that had been half-renovated. By that I mean all the rooms were intact in the original floor-plan design, the only difference being that doors had been added so that each room on the left side could be reached easily from the right. The heart of pine floors had been re-finished but apart from that everything else had to be improved, replaced, fixed, changed, installed, ripped out, repaired, painted, etc. We started the renovations the day we moved in, as part of the contract was to have the exterior painted. The painters had a team of men start sanding the house with electric sanders as we arrived with the removal van. Unloading quickly, we evacuated to the Crown and Anchor English pub until the dust settled….and, man, had it settled! To discover where your house leaks have the exterior electrically sanded! If you have renovated an old house you don’t need any more gory details.

Being a fan of the Home & Garden Channel on TV, I watched how “easy” it was for Norm on “This Old House” and others of his ilk to renovate an old house. One of my favorite programs was “If Walls Could Talk”, where homeowners found fascinating objects between walls, under

floorboards, in closets, in attics, etc. then threw themselves headlong into researching the house and who had lived there. My favorite was the lady that had bought a house in Chicago and discovered a previous owner was named Thomas DORSEY. She thought it to be the bandleader but while searching in a closet in the cellar, found a box of sheet music. It turned out that Thomas DORSEY was not the bandleader but the Thomas DORSEY that had written hundreds of Spirituals and Gospel songs and had previously (before he “got religion”) been a Blues singer/songwriter. She located his widow and niece and they came to visit. The niece, a choir leader and pianist, sat and played the Gospel songs and everyone had tears rolling down their cheeks, including me. Just teasing….honestly!

With my interest in local Jazz musicians, I felt sure I would discover one of them had lived or played in my house and I would find all kinds of interesting things in secret places. Wrong! However, recent research has turned up a Joseph DOUROUX, from a musical family and related to the MANETTAs, married a lady named Rosa DRELL in 1896. The name DRELL turns up later in this story. I have not researched the connection between the two DRELLs but there may be a musical connection (another project!).

As I dug up the back yard I discovered many shards of assorted pottery, broken and whole bottles, bottles that must have melted in the Great Fire of Algiers, pieces of coal, pieces of slate, bricks, indistinguishable pieces of rusty metal, clay pipes, a porcelain doll’s arms, legs and head, marbles, pieces of china and oyster shells. I made more interesting discoveries as I dug out a hole for a fishpond. There was about a foot of topsoil, then about a foot of sandy silt that had obviously been used as fill on top of the fire damage as beneath the silt there was a thin black line of charred material. Below that there was the clay level. More excavation work is needed to locate the privy.

By crawling round under the house and in the attic, I discovered that there was a similarity. The boards in the roof looked like continuous lengths, although they varied in width. The boards

over the two rooms at the rear of the house were different widths. The floorboards in those two rear rooms were a different width to the rest of the house and underneath them the boards were laid diagonally. The brick piers were L-shaped at the junction of the two rear rooms, indicating that was once the end of the house. The roof boards at the rear of the house were charred, indicating there was a fire at some time. I have ruled out the possibility of the rear of the house going up in flames and having to be replaced for the reasons I have given above. If anyone knows different, please let me know.

On applying to the Historic District Landmark Commission for permits to construct a banister and handrail at the front of the house, I was told that my house was a “simple cottage” (bloody cheek!) and did not warrant a handrail, etc. Unfortunately, the City had conflicting rules and regulations that stipulated that, as a Bed & Breakfast, we needed banisters and handrails for insurance purposes (in case our guests fell off the porch or down the stairs). The H.D.L.C’s “Data Form” also showed that the house was “important but altered” and not a National Landmark. So, this is first part of the history of a “simple cottage” that was built in the DUVERJE plantation’s former back yard.

Accounts differ as to the date the DUVERJE Plantation was built but we can put it somewhere around 1812 to 1816. Having just read an account of the Battle of the West Bank on January 8th, 1815 (when the British won), there was no mention of DUVERJE’S plantation home. This is not concrete evidence, however, as an 1815 map by Jacques TANESE shows the DUVERJE property and home.

The last will and testament of widow Alix DUVERJE was dated March 29th, 1847 and in it she divided “Duverjeville” between her family. One of her daughters was Octavie, the wife of lawyer Franklin WHARTON. Amongst Octavie’s share of the estate was square 20, lot 9. This was the beginning of the partitioning and layout of Algiers Point.

Franklin died on October 17th, 1847 and his obituary in the 'Daily Picayune' of October 21st read:

DIED

In this Parish at his residence on the opposite side of the river, on Sunday afternoon, about half past 4 o'clock the 17 th inst., Franklin WHARTON, Esq., member of the New Orleans Bar, aged 44 years.

The deceased was a native of Philadelphia and for the last fifteen (?) years a resident of the State of Louisiana. He was well respected in life for his integrity and social virtues, and died lamented by a large circle of friends.

There followed a succession – 2nd District Court Succession Records – Will No.1119 – mf VSB 290 1846-1880 Roll 9. This 1848 document mentions that Octavie's first marriage was to August COYCAULT. She was appointed administratrix of the Estate. Minor children Olivier Duverje WHARTON and Franklin WHARTON are mentioned, as is Edward Clifton WHARTON (21). The document was written in French but two lots of land are mentioned and there is also an Inventory, which lists slaves and their values:

Randale 800 piastres

Boardman 700

Grace and Peter 500

Bolsey and Monroe 1000

Michael 800

Harriett 650

Although the obituary showed Franklin residing on the West Bank, the City Directory of 1846 gave him two addresses - 42, Royal Street and 58, Canal Street – the first was usually the business address. Also at the Royal Street address was an E. WHARTON. Franklin's occupation was given as attorney-at-law and he was also listed in the section entitled "Commission Merchants, Agents and Traders". He appeared earlier in the 1838 Directory at 44, Canal and in the 1843 edition at 48, Canal. Some wealthier citizens would have two homes, one in town for the winter for the social season and another in the country for the crop-growing season, usually a plantation.

At this point new names entered the story. German born Henry LORENZ applied for a marriage license and married eighteen year old Adolphine DRELL, on January 7th, 1865, with George W. REBENTISCH's consent. Adolphine was also German and had been in the U.S. since 1855. It is not clear when Henry came to the U.S or if he served in the Civil War.

(Film VEH 678 pages 444, 445 & 445A).

The ‘Algiers Weekly News’ of October 19th, 1865, reported on a Police Jury meeting:

“Plank sidewalks to be constructed in front of the lots at the corner of Peter (Pelican) and Bartholomew (Bermuda).”

The Police Jury meeting of December 8th, 1865 “a petition from property owners on Peter St. praying that the Police Jury order a plank sidewalk constructed on the south side of said street from Seguin to Lavergne Sts., was received and the Syndic authorized to have the sidewalks constructed according to law.” The law was “three planks, one foot wide.” Further improvements were approved at the meeting of October 1st, 1866, when it was agreed that “side walks were to be laid on Peter St. from the Railroad to the levee.”

With the development of property construction, streets and sidewalks, the Duverje Plantation was being sold off in lots and Algiers was becoming a built up area of homes and small, corner store businesses:

In the Tax Assessment Book of 1869 for Duverjeville, square 20, lot 9, Mrs. WHARTON’s name was crossed out but the value of the property was given as $300. Also noted in the book was “Henry LORENZ Aug. 22, 1870 $400 cash”. Mrs. WHARTON sold the lot on that date as the following Sale of Property shows:

1870 (June) Census:

Nobody living on the property.

22nd August, 1870 – Sale of Property

Widow F. WHARTON (Octavie DUVERJE) to Henry LORENZ

Mortgage Office Book 42, folio 477

By act passed before E. BOUNY, Notary, dated 22nd August 1870.

Mistress Octavie DUVERJE (widow by second marriage of Franklin WHARTON) sold to Henry LORENZ of this City a certain lot of ground with the rights, ways, in the Bourg Duverje, 5th District of this City, (right bank) No.9 of square No.20, bound by Pierre, Barthelemy, Alix and Seguin streets; measuring French measure 31' front on Pierre street by 120' deep, between equal & par. lines: the whole as per plan by A. d'HEMECOURT 18th March 1842, in office of
Louis T. CAIRE, late N.P. as plan No.22, B of plans No.4.

Book 42, folio 477. (Sale recorded).

This sale was made for $400 cash.

New Orleans August 22nd 1870.

C.B. FISH

The Field Book of 1870-71 showed the value jumping from $300 to $600 so it appeared Henry built a house on the property. He probably built it himself as Census returns gave his occupation as “carpenter”. In the 1872-73 book, the street name was given for the first time – “Peter” and the square number changed from 20 to 16. The value remained the same until 1879. Henry did not appear in the City Directory from his marriage in 1865 until 1873, when his residence was given as Peter Street and his occupation was given as “ship carpenter.” Mrs. WHARTON, however, was residing at 109 Esplanade Avenue during the same period.

There was a sizeable German presence in Algiers around this time and the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Congregation was organized in the Hughes Hotel (at the corner of Belleville and Pelican) on September 19th, 1875, and a board of directors was elected. Two lots were purchased on Olivier and Eliza Streets on December 16, 1875, and the cornerstone of the church was laid on October 24th. The church was dedicated on January 2nd, 1876, and a church school was opened on September 28th, 1878. It is possible that Henry’s children went to the school a few years later.

Among the church board members were A. LAHUSEN, G. BUSING, Carl HEINZ, Carl PORZLER, G. HANTEL and a George LORENZ. Was George related to Henry? There was also an L. LORENZ listed in the 1867/68 City Directory as the proprietor of a “coffee house” on the corner of Patterson and Seguin Sts. The same property was also shown as a “beer garden” and “Brooklyn House,” formerly the WILSON House Hotel. It was destroyed by fire in 1868.

1880 Census:

The 1880 Census gave Henry as 54, a carpenter, born in Germany. His wife was given as Adolphine, 32, keeping house, also born in Germany. Their daughter, Concordia was aged 5, at home, and born in Louisiana.

In 1880, for some reason, the property value dropped to $500 and remained so until 1884. In the 1884 Tax Assessor’s book, two lot numbers were given – 8 and 9 - and the value given as $650 and $500 and there was also an entry “smaller house”. The 1883 ROBINSON map showed there was a smaller house on lot 8 but did Henry own it or build it, or both? In 1885 the value of lot 9 rose to $600 and then went down to $500 from 1886 to 1895.

At approximately 12:30 a.m., on October 20th, 1895, a fire broke out in the rear of a two-story tenement known locally as the “Old Rookery”, at the corner Morgan (formerly Villere) and Bermuda (formerly Barthelemy or Bartholomew). The fire is said to have started in the lower part of 313 Morgan, where Paul BOUFFIA kept a small fruit stand. Because of poor fire-fighting equipment, strong winds and a shortage of water, the fire soon became out of control and although no lives were lost, approximately 200 homes were destroyed, including the

Courthouse (the former DUVERJE plantation house).

Henry's whereabouts during this time of turmoil can be plotted by using the City Directories. The 1894 City Directory gave Henry as living at 59 Peter Street and the 1895 gave him at the "old" number 295 Ursuline. Henry was still there in 1896 but the number had changed to 1835. The Tax Assessment Book of 1895 showed the street name had changed from Peter to Pelican, with Henry living there. The value was given as $500 but also in the same entry it said "double cottage – money loaned on interest $1000" and remained at that value up to 1898. It would seem that Henry borrowed a $1000 to build what is now 335-337 Pelican Avenue and lived on Ursuline until it was completed as the City Directory of 1897 gave Henry at 337 Pelican Ave. and Joseph ZATARAIN, renter, a machinist, at 335. Henry built a double cottage and rented out half to offset mortgage payments. A wise move, as the next entry shows.

The 1899 Tax Assessment Book entry gave "Estate of Henry LORENZ". So Henry had died and his property was now valued at $800. It remains listed as "Estate of Henry LORENZ" until 1902.

The 1900 Census gave Adolphine as "head" of the family, "white" and "widowed". She was born in Germany in August, 1841, and had four children, two of whom were still living. She immigrated to the U.S. in 1855, and could read, write and spoke English. She was listed as a homeowner, her house being mortgaged. Also living with her were her daughter, Concordia C., born in November, 1875, and her son, Henry G., born December, 1881, his occupation given as day laborer. At 335, Joseph ZATARAIN, also born in Germany, lived with his wife and four children. That would account for the Schnapps bottles found in the back yard!

1900 Census (Roll 575, sheets 7 & 8)

335 Pelican Ave.

ZATARAIN, Joseph, head w m Apr., 1867 33 mar.9 LA, GER, GER day laborer

“ , Mamie, wife w f Feb., 1871 mar.9 4-4 LA, LA, LA

“ , Joseph A., son w m Mar., 1872 8 “ “ “

“ , John, son w m Nov., 1894 5 “ “ “

“ , Amile, son w m Sep., 1896 3 “ “ “

“ , Edna R., dau. w f Dec., 1898 1 “ “ “

337 Pelican Ave.

LORENZ, Adolphine, head w f Aug., 1841 wid. 2-2 GER, GER, GER Imm. in 1855

“ , Concordia, dau. w f Nov., 1875 24 s. LA, “ “

“ , Henry G., son w m Dec., 1881 s. 19 “ “ “ day laborer

The 1903 entry in the Tax Assessment book had the “Estate of Henry LORENZ” crossed out and the entry “To Concordia C. LORENZE. Wd. Henry G. LORENZE July 31/03. Judgement putting in possession” and the 1904 gives the owner as “Concordia C. LORENZE et als”.

All was explained in the ‘Daily Picayune’ of July 10th, 1903:

DIED

“LORENZ – On Thursday July 9, 1903, at 3pm, Adolphine DRELL, beloved wife of the late Henry LORENZ, aged 56 years, a native of Germany and a resident of Algiers for forty-seven years.

The friends and acquaintances of the family, and also of the DRELL and REBENTICH families, and also the Red Cross Benevolent Association, are respectfully invited to attend the funeral, which will take place Friday, at 4 pm, from her late residence, No. 337 Pelican Ave., Algiers”.

So, as we enter the 20th century, Henry and Adolphine have passed away, leaving the property in Succession – Docket No.71,171, dated 24th July, 1903, John St. PAUL, Judge, acting for Fred KING. The Petition was by Miss Concordia C. LORENZ and Henry G. LORENZ and also gives the date of Henry, Sr.’s death – 8

th

August, 1897.

Several articles appeared in the ‘Algiers Herald’ in the early 1900’s relating to the improvements and other conditions that were happening on Pelican Avenue. The first was an advertisement in the June 16th, 1904, edition:

“As the work of paving Pelican Avenue has begun, property holders along the street will be able to save a great deal of money by having their water connections made before the asphalt is laid. For full particulars apply to Jules BODENGER, 157 Delaronde Street.”

Drain covers with BODENGER printed on them can still be seen on Pelican Avenue. The following article appears in the same issue:

“We take great pleasure in stating that work has already begun towards the paving of Pelican Avenue, a force of men being put to work in removing the wooden curb along the gutters Monday morning. Just as soon as this is completed, the grading of the street will be started, and the work of paving actually begins. Now is the time for property owners along that thoroughfare to get in their good work and have their sidewalks taken up, and when the grading begins, they can be filled to the proper grade free of charge, as the contractors will only be too glad to save the expense of hauling the surplus earth away.”

The paving of the street was popular with the children of Algiers as the latest craze for skating proved. The July 5th, 1906, edition of the 'Algiers Herald' sated there were complaints about the young people skating on Pelican Avenue.

Concordia LORENZ gets a mention in the "personal" column of the 'Algiers Herald' edition of July 26th, 1906:

"Miss C. LORENZ returned Sunday from a visit to Miss M. COGENVICH."

The December 13th edition of the 'Algiers Herald' gave notice that Pelican Avenue was to get a new banquet as the sidewalks throughout Algiers were in such bad condition.

An advertisement in the 'Algiers Herald' of May 28th, 1908, gives some idea of the property boom going on in Algiers at the time:

"15 years ago a lot on Pelican Avenue could be purchased for $250. Today they are worth a thousand or more. If you purchase a lot now in the HOTARD Addition for $250, at the small sum of $10 per month, and put it in your baby's name, it will be worth $1500 before it is 18 years old. See the West Side Realty Co."

Another article in the same newspaper of September 10th, 1908, discusses flooding problems on our block. Luckily, since the problem occurred back then, the Sewerage and Water Board eliminated have it. It would appear that all the recent improvements to the road paving, banquets and drainage system were not working out too well:

"During the shower Saturday about noon, Pelican Avenue from the residence of Mayor BEHRMAN to a point beyond Bermuda Street, and extending for about a square on either side of Pelican Avenue on Seguin Street, was a vast lake upon which the boys in the neighborhood were out boating on every conceivable kind of raft which could have been constructed on short notice. While the shower was not of long duration, it was sufficiently heavy to cause this flooded condition at the point above named. This is the only point of our district that suffers during rains. This condition has existed for about two years and not withstanding the fact that sewerage and water board made some alterations at LAFITTE's Corner, there is still a defect, which does not stand as a monument to the work of the sewerage and water board. LAFITTE's grocery has had on hand for some time a portable bridge, which they use on these occasions, and it was the only point where pedestrians were able to pass for some three quarters of an hour last Saturday. It stands to reason that there must be some defect at this point because it is the only place in our district where flooded conditions prevail in any kind of a rain.

We trust that Captain HOTARD will take this matter up before the board and see that our citizens get the relief they are entitled to."

1910 Census (Roll 525, sheet no.2):

335 Pelican Ave.

TALBOT, George W., head m. w. 26 mar. 4 LA, LA, LA, machinist car shops

“ , Lillian, wife f. w. 24 mar.4 3 – 3 “ “ “

“ , Robert, son m. w. 4 “ “ “

“ , Hariet, dau. f. w. 2 “ “ “

“ , Roma, dau. f. w. 3 months “ “ “

337 Pelican Ave.

ROONEY, Mary, head f. w. 63 wid. 10 – 8 LA Ireland Ireland no occ. rents

“ , Maggie, dau. f. w. 25 s. “ “ “ sten.

“ , Elizabeth, dau. f. w. 22 s. “ “ “ cashier Hotel

“ , BIRTMANN(?), Mary, dau. f. w. 39 mar.14 3 – 3 La. Ire. Ire.

Out of the blue on Nov.28th, 2008, I received the following email from Kathryn MERENESS. The power of the Internet!

“Hello,

I found your article about the house at 337 Pelican. I thought you might like to know something about Mary ROONEY. Mary Havey ROONEY was my husband's Great-Grandmother. Mary was the widow of Michael ROONEY, born Ireland. The ROONEYs lived at 901 Pelican until Michael's death in June, 1900. At that time Mary moved with some of her daughters to 337 Pelican. Mary died in July, 1928.

My husband's mother, Gladys ROONEY lived at 521 Pelican with her parents and siblings. 521 Pelican was owned by the family until the late 1950's when they moved to Pass Christian, MS. My husband was born in New Orleans and has fond memories of all the people who lived on Pelican where he visited during holidays and summers after his parents moved to Ohio.

I'm so glad you are living in a house you love. New Orleans is a fabulous city.

Kathryn MERENESS, wife of Michael MERENESS,

Cincinnati, OH."

MMer2000@aol.com

Among the Algiers' First World War Draftees of 1917, I found a # 2462 Fenwick Stanley LeCAIN, living at 337 Pelican.

1920 Census:

335 Pelican Ave.

BABIN, George L., head rents m. w. 85 mar. LA, LA, LA, ship's carpenter, dry dock

" , Mary, wife f. w. 81 mar. LA, LA, LA

" , Miriam E., dau. f. w. 11 " " "

" , Christie G., son m. w. 10 " " "

337 Pelican Ave.

CORCORAN, Dennis J., head rents m. w. 72 mar. emigrated in 1850, Naturalized in

1868 IR, IR, IR, boiler maker, railroad

“ , Isabella, wife f. w. 58 mar. LA, ENG, IR

“ , Margaret, dau. f. w. 42 s. LA, IR, LA

On April 5th, 2008, we held the “Annual Algiers’ Porch Sale of the Century.” A couple from Virginia, Jerry and Earl HERSHEY, approached me while I was trying to sell my “treasures.” They asked if I lived at what was 335-337 Pelican Ave. I said I did and Jerry told me her mother, Geraldine CLARK, lived at 337 in 1928, with her parents, Douglas and Rose (STOSSI), only for a year. It was a rental property back then and her mother was seven years old at the time. I started asking questions and she said, “Let me get mother on the phone.” Her mother confirmed that this was the correct house and that “Mrs. RUPP lived in the big house next door (339).” She also said her mother, Rose, was “laid out in the front parlor when she died in the house.” Now I’m looking for ghosts! Wendy gave the HERSHEYs a conducted tour of our home (both sides) and we got their contact information as Jerry has some old photos she is willing to share. No matter how much research one does it would be almost impossible to discover that kind of information other than through people’s recollections. As can be seen in the 1930 Census, the CLARK family had moved on.

1930 Census (ED 254):

335 Pelican Avenue

ROONEY, Annie C. head 0 $2,500 f w 40 wid. LA, LA, LA None

WALSH, Martha B. mother f w 68 wid. LA OH England

337 Pelican Avenue

DOMEC, Seturnia(?) J. head rents 20 m w 33 mar. 23 LA France LA Fireman R.R.

“ , Viola M. wife f w 31 mar. 21 LA, LA, LA

1938 City directory:

335 Pelican - SHEEKS (or SHECKS?), Walter C. - owner

337 Pelican - GOULD, John W.

1998, June 10th

William T. BOSTICK to Wendy Sue PORTIER & Kevin Albert HERRIDGE for $125,000. The House of the Rising Sun Bed & Breakfast opened its doors in May 1999.

1998 - to date: We are still getting junk mail for a Tony HAWK, who must have been a renter here some time ago.