FOREFATHERS OF DAVID BURLOCK LAMOREAUX

PART I. THE MASSE AND MERSEREAU FAMILIES

BY

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INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 1964 I was privileged to visit France in search of information on our Huguenot forefathers, Andre Lamoreaux, Pierre Masse, and Elizabeth Mersereau. In the state archives at La Rochelle I was fortunate to find an old protestant parish register covering the period 1666 to 1682 for Moeze, home of the Masses and Mersereaus. This record authenticated the origins of our Huguenot forefathers and revealed many other relatives living in the same vicinity. I was particularly pleased to find a short account of Moeze during the struggles of the Seventeenth Century which gives us a much better idea of the lives of our progenitors. From these sources and from visiting the little villages concerned I have written this short biography. The following chart explains the relationship of these people to David Burlock Lamoreaux, Utah pioneer.
A few miles south of the famous port of LaRochelle on the west coast of France two rivers meet the sea, the Charente and the Seudre. The area between them for many centuries was the gulf of Saintonge, a shallow bay of marshes, mudflats, channels, and islands. Here lived our forefathers, the Masses and Mersereaus.

In the 12th century the inner boundary of the bay was the promontory of the Tour de Broue. Standing on the site of ancient Roman ruins, a great tower guarded the inner reaches of the Seudre estuary.

Scattered through the shallow bay to the north and west were a number of small islands, Marennes, Hiers, Moeze, and Beaugeay, so named for their prominent villages. Gradually the great bay silted in and shallow marshes were reclaimed. Agriculture began to replace fishing trades.

By 1500 this was a fairly prosperous land. The villages were thriving both through farming and the production of salt. One of the principle salt centers was Brouage, situated on a small arm of the sea and guarded by fine ramparts. A mile of water separated Brouage from the old island of Moeze to the north, now a small peninsula. The village of Moeze was large and thriving, depending on grain crops and other agricultural produce.

In Moeze and the nearby village of St. Froult two miles west lived the Mersereau and Masse families. Unfortunately there are no parish records before 1666 so we know little concerning the earlier origins of the families. But we can presume that our progenitors were well aware of the great stirrings throughout the countryside in the mid fifteen hundreds. By the teachings of Calvin, Protestantism was sweeping across France. By 1540 there were Protestants in LaRochelle where the new movement grew greatly in strength. Many converts from Catholicism were being made from all classes, the nobility, the clergy, the middle class and the masses. Violence soon flared between the rival believes and a century of agony followed.
Soubise, a large village on the Charente just a couple of miles north of Moeze was the first village of this immediate region to receive the new faith. It was 1560. Conversions occurred in large numbers and quickly the villages of the regions such as Moeze and St. Froult became Protestant strongholds.

Persecution raged throughout the countryside. The terrible massacre of St. Barthalomy day 1572 claimed many thousands throughout France. In 1589 peace came to the troubled land as Henry the Fourth, a Protestant Prince of Navarre in southern France came to the throne. Although for the sake of restoring the peace, Henry accepted Catholicism as he was crowned, he remained a friend of the Protestants or Huguenots as they were now called. His famous Edict of Nantes on April 13, 1598, set the pace for toleration and peace. After Henry’s assassination in 1610 the old struggles were renewed at intervals until the infamous 1680’s when the Protestant faith was essentially crushed in France.

It was a dull overcast morning in 1681 as Elizabeth Mersereau was returning from a visit with relatives in St. Froult. A cold moist wind was blowing in from the sea just a few miles away, but Elizabeth was happy. It was April and her marriage to Pierre Masse was fast approaching. In the distance now slightly dimmed by the mists she could see the majestic spire of the Protestant "Temple" of Moeze. It was a fine landmark in this low laying land and used by the ships in navigating the torturous channels through the marshes. Elizabeth was glad to be of Moeze for here at least there was little trouble from the Catholics. True the parish priest Goriben in Soubise was always ranting against them and many families had moved to Moeze to escape his schemings. Soubise was too close to the royal port two miles upstream at Rochfort to be a safe haven for Protestants. Elizabeth recalled as she walked, her father's account of the minor rebellion that had discouraged King Louis the Fourteenth from building the royal fort at Soubise as he had first planned.

Her father, Jean, had been such a firm and God fearing man; although, he was a saddler by trade, he was often in small Protestant armies defending their rights. Elizabeth remembered with pride the time when her father had been attached by two or three friars whom he had called gentlemen rather than fathers. One had been killed and another wounded. It had caused no little stir, but Jean (Page 4) was unmolested. Now he was dead and could not share in the happy occasions of her coming wedding.

The days passed quickly for Elizabeth and the 29th of April was here. She was the first of Jean Mersereau's children to marry and what excitement there was. Her brothers, Joshua, Daniel and Paul, as well as little Marie were there with other relatives. She had chosen her widowed mother, Elizabeth of the Dubois family and her brother Jean to present her.

There were many Masses in the Church also. Pierre's family was a large one if all his relatives living in Moeze and the surrounding area were included. Of his three sisters, Suzannae, [sic] Madeline, and Joanne, Pierre had chosen Jeanne and her husband Elie Pasquinot to be his witnesses. Elizabeth particularly liked this couple and their children. There were Maria age six, only five years younger than her own little sister Marie, three
year old Pierre named after his uncle, and the baby Anne just a year old this month.

After the wedding was performed by Pastor Morin, Pierre and his bride settled in Moeze. The summer was hot and sultry, tempered only by occasional mists and storms from the sea. Friction had been building all summer between the Catholics and Huguenots. Rumors of hundreds of refugees fleeing La Rochelle in small boats put the populace on the marsh region on edge.

Now in an early fall evening Elizabeth sat in the doorway of her small plastered cottage. It was peaceful for the first time in several days. The Catholic priests, royal troops, and rabble had all disappeared with their prisoners, men of prominence in the village, and other faithful huguenots who had protested the mobbings too forcibly. As the parish priest Goribon of Soubire had boasted "we grab them by the necks like woodchucks and if they make the least noise, we take them to prison at Rochefort." Goribon had helped initiate the scourge at Soubise and now it had spread to even distant villages such as Marennes to the south and on the off shore islands.

By September 28 things were quieter. Pierre's sister, Suzanne was married that day to Pierre Quillet by Pastor Morin who had escaped imprisonment.

The winter was quiet, damp and cold. In January Pierre and Elizabeth had a new son. He was christened Elie Masse on the 25th of January 1682 after his godfather and uncle Elie Pasquinet.

The year 1682 brought increasingly bad news from Paris. The King and his councilors were continuing their vigorous campaign to forcibly convert the Huguenots and deprive them of all rights and privileges. This was causing such a flood of refugees that special efforts were being made to stem the immigration. Bands of troops were stationed in the marshes of the west coast and patrolled the villages. Those caught were forcibly converted, imprisoned or killed. (Page 6) Brouage and Rochefort near Moeze were royal strongholds well equipped for such activities.

Nearly fifty families had moved to Moeze now from Soubise alone and the village thus had grown by several hundred. But it was a time of anguished waiting and wondering. Would things really get worse or was it just another crisis like those they had endured for the last hundred years?

Great sadness came to the Masse family in July 1682 as Pierre's sister Suzanne gave birth to her son Pierre named after his uncle. She was about forty and this was her first child. There were complications at birth and Suzanne did not survive the day. So after the sorrowful christening of little Pierre, she was presented for burial by her father, Daniel.

Increased persecution put an end to record keeping at Moeze toward the end of the year. The Pastor Morin did much to rally the spirits of his people and remained as long as he could be of use. But when the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 all hope for the Protestants of France was swept away. All churches were to be seized and
demolished, all services stopped, all children to be brought up as Catholics, and all adults forcibly converted. Although immigration was forbidden, it was the only answer. Pastor Morin set the example as he with a small group fled to religious freedom in England.

*Elizabeth and Pierre* could no longer avoid the question. Their burning conviction of faith would never let them tolerate the forced conversion threatening them, so secret preparations were made for escape. Nearly all of the family were of the same inclination so it became a joint project. After dusk perhaps in the early fall the little band slipped out of town to avoid the suspicion of the few Catholics now in the village. The group consisted of *Pierre and Elizabeth*, their son Ellie, a new born child, Pierre's sister Madeline, *Elizabeth's* mother and brothers and sisters. They had prearranged for a small boat to meet them in the marshes and by early morning were on a Huguenot fishing craft on the way to England. Their escape was fortunate. Others of their friends in Moeze were not so. Some waited too long. In 1686 a large group fleeing Moeze were caught two miles away in St. Froult on Christmas day by roving Catholic bands and imprisoned in Brouage. Yet while many were caught even more escaped. On just one day, the first of March 1687, over six hundred escaped by boats through the Seudre River. The great migration left a dying region. Towns once with thousands now had hundreds. The economic slump was terrible. As the parish priest of Royan, an important town south of the Seudre River declared "all our young people have gone away, all we have left are old people and children." Hardest hit of all were the villages between the Seudre and the Charente Rivers. The land fell out of cultivation, the villages stagnated. Moeze (Page 8) today has less than three hundred inhabitants. All that is left of the Protestant era are the church tower now attached to a nondescript Catholic Church with a rusting corrugated roof and algal stained walls, the beautiful Hosanna Cross in the cemetery erected in the 1500's and the old buildings of the village center.

*Pierre and Elizabeth* and their relatives settled in England for a short time but the opportunities to begin a new life in the colonies of the New World were more enticing. Elizabeth's brother, according to tradition, decided to remain in England but the rest of the group decided to immigrate. William Penn had just recently opened up a colony for Quakers and other minority groups seeking refuge. Many Germans, Dutch and even some French Huguenots had settled in Philadelphia by 1690. Apparently as tradition recalls, Philadelphia was the destination of the Masse and Mersereau families but storms drove the ship into the New York harbor. Weary with the long voyage and attracted by the small but rapidly growing Huguenot colony in New York, the families decided to remain here. New York was a relatively recent English acquisition for less than thirty years before it had been a Dutch colony. Now it was a sizable community for the New World with its approximately 5,000 inhabitants.

*Pierre and Elizabeth* settled with a number of other Huguenots on Staten Island where they probably remained the rest of their (Page 9) lives. The rapid growth of the French speaking communities in the vicinity stimulated the formation of the French Church of New York City. In the early parish registers we find many references to *Pierre, Elizabeth* and their relatives. On the 15th of May 1689, *Elizabeth and Pierre's* new son was christened Daniel in honor of his grandfather who had remained in France because of his old age and health. Four years later *Elizabeth* had her third son,
Pierre. He too was christened in the old French Church on the 25th of June 1693. This was a year of marriages for Elizabeth's family. On the 16th of July there was a double wedding for her brother and sister. Marie Mersereau married Jean La Tourette, a recent refugee from Bearn, France. Joshua married Marie Chadaigne. A month later in August Elizabeth's last unwedded brother, Daniel, married Susanne Marie Doucinet of La Rochelle. One of the witnesses was Daniel's mother, Elizabeth Dubois Mersereau. Now she disappears from the records but tradition records that she was buried on the Seaman farm, Westfield, Staten Island. Pierre and Elizabeth completed their family with Jeanne born on the 22nd of May 1696.

As the French population increased rapidly from the flood of Huguenot refugees, a new Church was needed. A fine stone structure was erected on King Street (now Pine Street). Here about 1719 Jeanne Masse, youngest child of Pierre and Elizabeth, married Daniel Lamoreaux, son of Andre Lamoreaux and Suzanne Latour, Huguenot refugees from Meche, France. From this couple eventually came thousands of descendants now scattered all over the United States and Canada. Among their posterity was a grandson, John McCord Lamoreaux who while living in Scarborough, Canada heard the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. He and his family were baptized in 1836 and suffered with the saints in the persecutions of Ohio, Missouri and Illinois. His sons joined the great exodus to the Rocky Mountains and aided in the building of Zion. Eventually, they and their numerous descendants, grateful to their Huguenot forefathers for their courage and sacrifice, extended the blessings of the gospel to them through the vicarious Temple ordinances.

[Maps, Sources & Genealogy Data to follow]
[Kimball Erdman included this map of France in his “Forefathers of David Burlock Lamoreaux.”
The next map is of the enlarged area.]
[Kimball S Erdman’s map of the area between the Charente and the Seudre Rivers including the area around Moeze, France, where the Masse and Mercereau families lived before 1685.]
Kimball S. Erdman Sources – for his “Forefathers of David Burlock Lamoreaux”

Sources

Parish registers of Moeze (Moise), Charente Maritime. Searched by Kimball S. Erdman in the state Archives at LaRochelle, France with the assistance of the archivist, M. Delafosse. The Protestant records cover the period 1666-1682. The Catholic register continues on past the critical period but contains little information for it appears that all members of the Mersereau and Masse families were Protestant.

Collections of the Huguenot Society of America Vol. 1: Records of the French Church of New York. This is the parish register of the French Congregation of Protestants in New York City. There are many entries pertaining to the Masse and Mersereau families in the early years of the record.

Histoire des Souffrances du Sieur Elie Neau. This important document in the Archives at LaRochelle contains not only important historical data relative to Moeze, the home of Elie Neau, and the environ, but also lists of refugees from the vicinity. Here we find references to Elizabeth Dubois, widow of Jean Mersereau and Pierre Masse. This is the only source for the second child of the latter however unfortunately, its sex is not stated. [Note from akrc, we found the child Marie listed in Leiden, South Holland records.]

Correspondance between Don L. Prillaman, Rossville, Ill, and M. Delafosse, State archivist, LaRochelle France. This series of letters dating from the 1950’s pertains to researches carried on by the persons on the ancestry of the, Mersereau and Masse families. A complete copy of the correspondence is in the possession of Kimball S. Erdman (Weber State College, Ogden, Utah)

(The following three sources are American accounts of the Mersereau family. They are filled with errors and omissions but are the only sources for certain family "traditions").

Mersereau, Henry Lawrence, 1893. Mersereau Family Genealogy. New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, 26:185-197. This is probably the best American account. Some of the information is taken from the following source.

Clute,. J. J. 1877. Annals of Staten Island. Press of Chas. Vogt. New York, pp- 408-412. (There are two significant errors Joshua married Mary Chadayne, and his sister was Elizabeth, not Martha.)

Smith, H. P. 1885 (Editor). History of Broome County, New York. D. Mason & Co., Syracuse, N. Y. pp. 425-428. This is the least reliable account’ of the family. On page 425 two whole, generations are omitted. The Joshua discussed here is the grandson of the French refugee Joshua, whose father, Jean, died in France. Also the story on page 428 concerning Mary Mersereau and “Martha” (actually Elizabeth) is a very garbled account and should not be accepted until further research is carried out.
Genealogical Data

(The following account pertains to only those families and persons for which a definite relationship can be established. Due to the brief period of record keeping in Moeze, there are a number of entries to "unidentifiable" Masses and Mersereaus. Temple Work will be done for those on the “relative” basis but their names are not included here.)

Children:
1. Suzanne Masse, b.1642 of Moeze, md. 28 Sept. 1681 to Pierre Quillet, d. 22 July 1682 age 40
   Children: Pierre Quillet chr. 22 July 1682 Moeze.
2. Jeanne Masse, b. abt 1652 of Moeze, md. Ellie Pasquinet
   Children: Marie Pasquinet b. 24 June 1675 Moeze, d. 26 Feb. 1682
   Pierre Pasquinet, b. 3 May 1678 Moeze
   Anne Pasquinet b. 22 Apr. 1680.
3. Pierre Masse' (see below)
   Children: Madeline Roy b. 19, July 1699 New York, N. Y.

Jean Mersereau, b. abt 1632 of Moeze, md. Elizabeth Dubois, b. abt. 1636 of Moeze.
Children:
   Children: Marie Mersereau, b. 16 May 1695 New York, N. Y.
   Joshua Mersereau, 18 May 1696 New York. N. Y.
   (There are possibly two others: Paul, and David but further research is needed).
2. Elizabeth Mersereau (see below)
3. Jean Mersereau, b. abt 1662 of Moeze.
   Children: Daniel Mersereau b. 10 Aug. 1695 New York, N. Y.
   Susanne Marie Mersereau b. 8 July 1697 New York, N Y.
   Marianne Mersereau, b. 31 Oct. 1699 New York, N. Y.
5. Paul Mersereau, b. 1 Jan. 1668 Moeze.
6. Marie Mersereau b. 6 Nov. 1670 Moeze, md. 16 July 1693 in New York, N.Y. to Jean La Tourette.
   Children: Marie Latourette b. 23 Sept. 1693 New York, N.Y.
   Jean Latourette chr. 20 Oct. 1695 New York, N.Y.
   Pierre Latourette b. 22 Nov. 1697 New York, N.Y.
   David Latourette b. 28 Dec. 1699 New York, N.Y.

Pierre Masse b. abt. 1656 of Moeze, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Masse, md. 29 April 1681 in Moeze to Elizabeth Mersereau b. abt. 1660 of Moeze, daughter of Jean Mersereau and Elizabeth Dubois.
Children:
1. Elie Masse chr. 25 Jan. 1682 Moeze,

2. (Child Masse, sex unknown b. abt. 1634 Moeze)
   [See records found in Lieden, S. Holland.]

3. Daniel Masse b. 29 Apr. 1689 New York, N.Y. md. in New York, N.Y. to Ester Fourret

4. Ester Masse chr. 26 June 1690 New York, N.Y.

5. Pierre Masse b. 17 May 1693 New York, N.Y.

6. Jeanne Masse b. 22 May 1696 New York. N. Y. md. 28 June 1719 to Daniel Lamoureaux. This couple had nine children the youngest of which was Joshua Lamoreaux, b. 1730 grandfather of David Burlock Lamoreaux, Utah Pioneer.