

## The Béchet Family

By (Mrs.) Rose Aimée Billeaud Béchet

The Béchet family is an old French family of early New Orleans. The names of Béchet and Claudel are closely connected in the old records of that city. There is a written account of a Jean Nicolas Claudel born September 19, 1818 at Rupt-sur-Moselle in France who married Euphrasie Conrad (German) on June 11, 1842 in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in New Orleans. The issue of that marriage was one daughter, Nina Pauline Claudel, who married Alphonse André Béchet.

Alphonse André Béchet and Nina Pauline Claudel had six children namely: Marie, Mrs. Paul Philippoteaux; Pauline, Mrs. Hippolite Laroussini; Julien, a Fifth Avenue, New York City jeweler; Albin Charles who married Sarah White Brown; Louise Andree who married a New York City coffee broker by the name of Lee Simmonds; and Dr. Paul Esnard Béchet, a dermatologist on Park Avenue, New York City. This last member of the Béchet family, in his early practice of medicine, had married Lucile Ducourneau of Natchitoches, Louisiana.

The building of Alphonse Béchet's import business still stands on the corner of Toulouse and Royal streets in the Vieux Carre of New Orleans. It is the typical shoppe on the ground floor with domicile upstairs surrounded by a heavy wrought-iron railing porch.

Alphonse Béchet probably went back and forth from New Orleans to France on business. It is conclusive that the older members of the Béchet family did travel abroad as the famed beauty, Marie, the eldest married a French artist namely, Paul Philippoteaux, who was employed by the French government to paint murals in Cairo, Egypt. The Béchet and Laroussini descendants have a number of his paintings as Marie Béchet Philippoteaux was childless.

The first of the Béchets to come to Vermillionville or Lafayette was Albin Charles Béchet who had met Sarah White Brown from St. Pierre (now Carencro) when she visited her relatives, Edward Claudel, an oculist on Baronne Street, New Orleans, and also Louis Claudel, a celebrated photographer on Carondelet. Sarah White Brown of Quaker stock is a descendant of Dr. William Elmer Brown who claims his lineage to the Browns of William Penn's colony, "The Holy Experiment."

Sarah White Brown was the daughter of Charles Claudel Brown and Andrea Ynojosa. This Andrea was the daughter of Celeste Arceneaux and Antonio Ynojosa, a ranchman from the town of Gregory, close to Monterrey, Old Mexico. He had purchased land and settled in the



Sarah Brown Bechet  
(Mrs. Albin Charles Bechet)  
Taken at the time of her marriage,  
December 19, 1900 - Papal Medalist  
"Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" 1949

vicinity of Carencro; in fact <sup>(E)</sup> Blue Springs near Sunset, Louisiana. It is an accepted fact that Louisiana was first a ranching territory before it became the agricultural state that it is today. Charles Claudel Brown, planter and merchant, was the son of Dr. William Elmer Brown and Caroline Claudel. The medical doctor was from Pennsylvania; Caroline Claudel was from France.

<sup>(E)</sup> From this Ynojosa-Brown union were three offsprings: Samuel Pemberton Brown who married Mary Mae Scranton; William Elmer; and Sarah White Brown who married Albin Charles Béchet.

<sup>(K)</sup> The graves of--Charles Claudel Brown, August 3, 1850, died August 20, 1908 at the age of 58; and of his mother Caroline Claudel Brown, January 8, 1828, died June 26, 1906 at the age of 78; and also of his wife, Andrea Ynojosa Brown, October 10, 1842, died January 6, 1920 at the age of 77 years--all three tombstones are to be found in the cemetery of the Catholic Church in Carencro, Louisiana.

<sup>(K)</sup> The marriage ceremony of Sarah White Brown and Albin Charles Béchet was administered by the Reverend Father Grimaud at the plantation home in St. Pierre, now Carencro, Louisiana, on December 19, 1900. The reason for a ceremony at home was that the Roman Catholic Church in Carencro had burned down. Albin Bechet and Sarah Brown were obliged to obtain a dispensation to marry in the Catholic faith as they were offsprings of two distinct first cousins; that is, they were third cousins.

<sup>(K)</sup> The occupation of Albin Béchet was that of a salesman representing the firm of Paul Gelpi and Sons, importers of fine wines, liqueurs etc. He traveled from New Orleans to St. Louis. In early married life the young Mr. and Mrs. Béchet lived on Royal and Toulouse in New Orleans where the first child, Mildred Louise, was born. By the time the second child, Paul André, was born, the Béchet's had purchased a home in the town of Carencro where Mrs. Béchet still lives on Church Street.

<sup>(K)</sup> Albin Charles Béchet, born October 14, 1869 died while visiting his sister, Louise Andrée Simmonds on 800 Riverside Drive, New York City, on August 28, 1929 at the age of 59 years. Mrs. Albin Béchet escorted the body from New York to New Orleans where he was buried in the St. Louis Cemetery # 2 on Esplanade Avenue. The Gelpi brothers were his pallbearers.

<sup>(K)</sup> Mrs. Albin C. Béchet has led a full life managing her farms and playing the organ for church services until a few years ago. In 1949 Pope Pius XII had the papal honor, Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal conferred on Mrs. Bechet for outstanding work for the Catholic

Church and for charitable work among the negroes. She was 88 years old, on her last birthday, November 19, 1968.

The children of Albin Charles Béchet and Sarah White Brown are:

1. Mildred Louise married Francis Xavier Mouton
2. Paul Andre married Rose Aimée Billeaud
3. Anita Marie married--Bertram Broad (first)  
Alphe Conques (second)
4. Marie Nina married--Louis E. Pirkle (first)  
George A. Martin of Pennsylvania (second)

A list of known descendents of Albin Charles Béchet and Sarah White Brown follows in the next pages.

Descendents of Children of

Albin Charles Béchet and Sarah White Brown

1. Mildred Louise and Francis Xavier Mouton  
Francis Frederick and Jeanne Pinet  
b. October 3, 1923

Christopher Robert Mouton b. August 6, 1955  
Marc Frederick Mouton b. September 14, 1960  
Andrew Burton Mouton b. December 14, 1961

Very Reverend Monsignor Charles Burton

Auditor in the Nunciature in Buenos Aires, Argentina  
b. June 5, 1926

Sister Marie Sarah Carolyn

Religious of the Sacred Heart now teaching in  
San Juan, Puerto Rico b. July 7, 1928

- Mildred Louise and Richard John Cross  
b. February 28, 1933

John Charles Cross b. June 30, 1960  
Carolyn Louise Cross b. October 9, 1961  
Paul Arthur Cross b. June 29, 1964

2. Paul André Béchet and Rose Aimée Billeaud  
Lucile Billeaud Béchet and Captain James Louis Eason  
U.S. Air Force (deceased)

David Charles Eason b. July 26, 1957  
Paul Lee Eason b. January 20, 1959

Lucile B. Béchet (remarried) and Kevin Joseph Maroney  
b. March 5, 1932

- ① Claudette Andrée and Estorge Charles Sibille  
b. March 24, 1936

Andree Marie b. December 23, 1959

Catherine Rose b. January 25, 1961  
Jeannine Suzanne b. January 17, 1963  
Michelle Elizabeth b. February 8, 1969

3. Anita Marie Béchet and Alphe Conques  
Virginia Anita b. February 15, 1944

4. Marie Nina Béchet and Louis E. Pirkle  
James Kent Pirkle and Linda Burmock  
b. January 25, 1936

Jane Brown Pirkle  
b. December 19, 1937

Marie Nina Béchet (remarried) and George Martin