

## **Mazurie de Keroualin**

Hello, I am Madame Theresa Mazurie de Keroualin. I am the sister of Guillaume Mazurié (or as you Americans would say--William Mazurie) and I will tell our family's story. You have probably noticed that my brother's headstone is very different from all others in this cemetery. It was designed to reflect his French heritage. My brother's story is that of an immigrant who came here to rebuild a family's fortune that was lost in France.

My brother was born in 1774 to Joseph Rene Mazurie and Therese Jacquette in Landerneau, France, a town situated between the Elorn River and the Bay of Brest in Brittany. However, our family did not originate from Brittany, but rather from a nearby region. Our grandfather Jean Baptiste Mazurie was born on October 23, 1684 in Normandy, France, but was orphaned at a young age and sent to live with his uncle's family in Brittany. Jean Baptiste was expected to become a merchant just like his uncle; however, but he developed into a restless soul, who turned to the sea for a more adventurous life.

Jean Baptiste first embarked on the ship "Vermandois," which was commanded by the Count of Bethune and participated in the battle of Velez Malaga. His maritime career brought him to many places, including the Canary Islands, Gibraltar, and later the South Seas. Before departing from there, he was bestowed with the Cross of St. James and the title of captain by the Count of Montelos, but for reasons known only to him he refused it. He went to Peru, where he became a commander of Spanish and French ships for three years and then spent eight years as a trader in Lima. That proved to be very lucrative, although probably not all his business was legitimate. At that time in South America, pirating and exploitation was commonplace. However, he earned respect and was given the title Jean Baptiste Mazurie the Navigator.

He returned to Landerneau a very wealthy man, and he purchased estates and mansions in Brittany which carried titles of nobility, which our grandfather passed on to his children, including our father Joseph Rene, who inherited the de Keroualin title. I and my siblings, including William, inherited the title of de Keroualin. Jean-Baptiste was also the mayor of Landerneau, leading the family into the world of politics.

When our grandfather died in 1773 at the age of 88, he left a large estate which provided well for his many children. Because of his inheritance and successful merchant business, our father Joseph Rene was among the wealthy bourgeoisie and he too ventured into local politics, also becoming the mayor of Landerneau. He was able to provide well for us — all thirteen children.

Life was very good for us until about 1789, when the Revolution began sweeping across France. People who were part of the Revolution and its ideals were gaining power even in Landerneau. Our father, Joseph Rene, was skeptical of them and choose not to associate or get involved with them. He would pay a heavy price for his decision. Jealous people, seeking control and money, brought lawsuits against him. He was also charged with not paying his appropriate share of taxes. These lawsuits and charges led to him losing his political and social status, and later to bankruptcy. One of my brothers took in our father and loaned him money.

In the 1790s, during the difficult times our family was facing, three of my brothers emigrated to the United States. Our father, Joseph Rene, died in 1813, a broken man with much debt. My brothers who went to the United States would all establish themselves as successful merchants: Jacques John in Philadelphia, Theodore in Pittsburgh, and William in Athens, New York. Benjamin Franklin, who we

French jokingly say was your best president, wrote a letter of recommendation for Jacques Jean to help him established a business in Philadelphia.

My brother Jacques was very successful, and when he died in 1822, he bequeathed to brother William money which he stated he knew his brother would invest wisely in stock or real estate, and the interest from the investments would provide him with some enjoyment. William, at the time of our brother Jacques' death, was living in Athens, New York with his wife Ann. Ann died in 1834, and William never remarried, although he didn't live alone. He adopted Cornelius Van Loan, who would later be known as Cornelius Van Loan Mazurie. In August 1852, my brother William bought property and settled in Islip, New York, but not long after he began having health issues. He wrote a will leaving his estate to a young woman who lived with him named Ann Maria Wilson, his adopted son Cornelius Van Loan, Matthias Van Loan, and many of his nephews and nieces in the United States and France. For decades, from 1859 until 1902 my brother William's estate provided for our Mazurie family both in France and in the United States. He rests here in St. John's Episcopal Cemetery alone and far from his French relatives, but he will forever be connected in spirit to our Mazurie family.