

= Simon Favre =

Simon Favre ( May 31 , 1760 ? July 3 , 1813 ) was an interpreter of the Muskogean languages , particularly Choctaw and Chickasaw , for the French , British , Spanish and Americans in the part of West Florida that became part of the states of Mississippi and Alabama . The son of another prominent interpreter , Favre spent the late 18th century in the vicinity of Mobile and the Tombigbee River , which changed hands from French to British , and then Spanish control . He became well versed in the language and culture of the Choctaws , and was involved with several treaties between the Europeans and natives . As a young man he had a Choctaw mistress with whom he had six known children , then at the age of 41 he was legally married in Mobile to a woman of European descent . Within a few years of his marriage , he moved with his new family from the Tombigbee area to a plantation on the Pearl River .

As the power of the Choctaws diminished , Favre became less important as an interpreter , and more important as a facilitator of the political changes occurring along the Gulf Coast . Once the Louisiana Purchase was concluded between France and the United States , American settlers from both inside and outside Spanish West Florida increased pressure on Spain for American control of the territory . While the transfer did not officially take place until 1821 , the Spanish essentially put Florida under the trust of the United States in 1810 , and Favre played a major role in facilitating the transfer , and keeping the Indians informed of the events . Favre was considered the top interpreter in the region by men of prominence , including Governor William C. C. Claiborne of Louisiana who made Favre a justice of the peace , and recommended him for the position of United States agent to the Choctaws . A " talk " that Favre gave to the Choctaws on the eve of the War of 1812 was touted by historian Russell Guerin as a masterpiece of diplomacy , and displayed Favre 's deep understanding of the native language and culture .

Favre died in 1813 , leaving many minor children and a substantial estate of more than 5000 acres of land and 57 slaves . He had 13 known children with three different women , and leaves numerous descendants . A well @-@ known descendant is former National Football League quarterback Brett Favre . Simon Favre 's associations with property owners and prominent officials demonstrate that he was a person of very high social standing .

= = Life = =

= = = Ancestry = = =

Born near Mobile , then a part of French Louisiana , on May 31 , 1760 , Simon Favre was the son of Jean Claude Favre ( 1721 ? 1782 ) and Marguerite Wiltz ( 1740 ? 1805 ) . His grandfather , Jean Baptiste Favre , came from Royan , France , and by tradition was a cabin boy when Pierre D 'Iberville placed him on shore near Biloxi to make contact with the natives . His father was a government interpreter who was commissioned to explain the terms of the Treaty of Paris ( 1763 ) to the natives upon the conclusion of the French and Indian War . Favre 's mother was the daughter of a Swiss soldier .

= = = Early life = = =

Learning from his father , Favre became fluent in the languages of French , English , Spanish , and the Muskogean languages including Choctaw and Chickasaw . The lands along the Gulf coast were held by the British for nearly two decades following the 1763 Treaty of Paris , but their ability to maintain control diminished during that time . On September 3 , 1783 the British ceded their lands in both East and West Florida to Spain under the Treaty of Versailles . Favre 's father had just died the year before this treaty , and Simon Favre followed his father 's career , also inheriting his father 's plantation on the Pearl River , though continuing to reside in Mobile near his mother .

Favre spent his early adult years among the natives along the Tombigbee River , being initially

employed by the French as an interpreter of the Choctaw language , but soon coming into the employ of the British and later the Spanish . Favre also understood the Chickasaw language , but at one point his translation was challenged by James Colbert ( grandfather of Holmes Colbert ) , who had married into the Chickasaw tribe , and was asked by the tribe to replace Favre as interpreter . Favre was said to be a confidante and personal friend of the celebrated Choctaw Indian chief Pushmataha . Genealogist Heitzmann relates that at one point Favre acted as the interpreter between Pushmataha and the military commanders Andrew Jackson and General Thomas Hinds .

In 1792 Juan De la Villebeuvre , who worked among the Indians on behalf of the Spanish government , was named a special commissioner to the Choctaws and Chickasaws . Favre 's reputation as a competent and valuable interpreter grew quickly , and in an undated letter to Governor Francisco Carondelet , De la Villebeuvre wrote , " ... I am going to reside with Favre , who is employed by the king [ of Spain ] and who will serve me as interpreter . He is the best one of the province , with a great influence over the minds of the Indians , and he knows how to lead them firmly whenever necessary . " Favre built a house for De la Villebeuvre about 12 miles from the village of the Choctaw chief Franchimastabee with whom Favre had become friendly .

Favre was present at Fort Nogales , located in Choctaw territory near the mouth of the Yazoo River , when the Treaty of Nogales was signed on October 28 , 1793 . The treaty was between Spain ( and signed by the king ) and the Alibamon , Cherokee , Chickasaw , Choctaw , Creek and Tallapoosa nations . Representing the Choctaws were chiefs Franchimastabee and Pushmataha , while Favre signed as a witness . In January 1794 Favre wrote a letter to Don Manuel Lanzos , Spanish commander at Natchez , warning of a great rumor among the Choctaws that the Americans were coming to destroy them . The Choctaws were in difficult straits at the time , from both the consumption of alcohol and from a corn crop failure brought on by an earlier drought . They were stealing horses from other tribes as well as from the Europeans , and Favre himself had three horses stolen while staying near the Tombigbee . De la Villebeuvre felt that these actions were being instigated by the Americans , and Favre was sent to the Choctaw villages to assess the feelings of the natives .

Following the Treaty of Boukfouka on May 10 , 1793 , the Spaniards built a fort on the location where the French had earlier built Fort Tombecke , and named it Confederacion in honor of the alliance between the Spanish and Indians . In the late 1700s Favre was living near Fort Confederation , but sometime after 1797 moved to St. Stephens . He moved into a house across the road from Augustin Rochon , his future father @-@ in @-@ law . After spending time there and at various other locations along the Tombigbee , Favre returned to Mobile before 1800 where he occupied a house on Loyal Street . While there , he associated with other interpreters including J. B. Roussere and Simon Andry . Favre also maintained very close ties with New Orleans , and he called himself of that city in the 1800 baptismal record for his son Simon .

= = = Pearl River = = =

After having seven children with two other women , Favre was legally married in Mobile in 1801 to Celeste Rochon . Sometime between 1804 and 1806 , following the birth of two children in Mobile , he moved with his new family to one of his plantations on the Pearl River , near what became Pearlington , Mississippi . This was shortly following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 , when the Americans were showing a great interest in West Florida , still governed by Spain . Favre then became an important interpreter in the service of the Americans , as well as continuing to work for the Spanish who were eventually compelled to give up control of their Florida lands .

While Favre 's importance had initially sprung from his influence with the native tribes , particularly the Choctaws , as the power of these people declined he became much more important as an intermediary during the turbulent times of transition from Spanish to American rule in West Florida . During this period early in the 19th century , the Spanish authorities were losing their hold on West Florida for a variety of reasons . One such reason was piracy , while another was American encroachment following the Louisiana Purchase . Many Americans felt that West Florida should have been included in the purchase . One means used by Spain to attempt to hold on to this region

was to commission several important settlers to work for their government . In this regard , Favre was assigned to confirm land deeds that the Spanish were doling out at an accelerated rate , to attempt to stem the tide of American encroachment . Favre also provided intelligence and military maps to the Spanish concerning the activities of not only the Americans , who were applying pressure from outside the jurisdiction , but also rebels along the Pearl River and nearby coast . The rebels , led by Reuben Kemper and his brothers , were causing difficulties from within , and had been attempting to pull West Florida from Spanish control for several years . Under the Spanish , Favre became known as the commander of the District of Bay St. Louis . Many of the land titles that were awarded by Favre were later reviewed by the United States government and appear in the collection of American state papers .

With Americans in control of New Orleans , mail from Fort Stoddard , near Mobile , had to pass through Spanish territory to get there . In 1808 the United States Postmaster wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury that Favre , who was still a Spanish subject , served as an agent for the post office , forwarding the mail passing through Spanish lands .

Though West Florida was not officially ceded to the United States until 1819 under the provisions of the Adams @-@ Onis Treaty , in November 1810 Spanish governor Folach , demanding secrecy , essentially delivered both East and West Florida to the United States in trust . This was done in hopes that the " robberies and depredations " upon the citizens would cease , and under the realization that the transfer was inevitable . Soon thereafter American officials began managing the Florida lands , setting up administrative regions within them , and the western part of West Florida ( the part in present @-@ day Louisiana ) was absorbed into the United States under the proclamation of President James Madison . When Louisiana became a state in 1812 , the remainder of West Florida ( the panhandles of Mississippi and Alabama ) was absorbed by the United States . The western part of this newly annexed Mobile District was organized into Hancock and Harrison Counties ( soon a part of the Mississippi Territory ) , and in 1813 American federal troops were stationed there to formalize the transition .

= = = Late career and death = = =

Just as his father had made the transition from French to British rule , Favre likewise had little difficulty changing his allegiance from the Spanish to the Americans , and he continued to hold a prominent position in the region . In January 1811 Favre was chosen by the Orleans territorial governor William C. C. Claiborne as a magistrate of the " Parish of Biloxi " which was within the territory . When Claiborne became the Louisiana governor following statehood in 1812 , he commissioned Favre as a justice of the peace , and clearly admired him , calling him in a letter an educated and very agreeable man who would make an energetic officer .

At the outset of the War of 1812 , the Americans were interested in assessing the alignment of the native tribes in regards to their loyalty to Britain . In August 1812 Claiborne sent Favre to present a talk to the native tribes of West Florida . Favre 's carefully crafted words , presented under Claiborne 's name , provide an example of the diplomatic skill with which Favre was able to address the language and culture of the Muskogean tribes . While the goal of Favre and the governor was to keep the Choctaws and other tribes out of the " white man 's war " , ultimately the Creeks aligned themselves with the British , and the Americans requested assistance from the Choctaws . In a letter to Secretary of War John Armstrong , Claiborne recommended that " Colonel Simon Favre " become a United States agent for the Choctaws . Favre held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Hancock County militia , and early in the War of 1812 he was able to negotiate with the Choctaws to provide assistance against Britain 's Creek allies .

Favre died in the summer of 1813 , and though he was living along the Pearl River , court testimony by Peter Moran in 1845 stated that he died in Mobile , and had not been there long before his death . A letter by Mississippi governor David Holmes , dated August 1 , 1813 , mentions the " absence of Colonel Favre at Mobile " and " his subsequent death " . Favre 's daughter Mary stated that he died on July 21 , but an obituary that appeared in a New Orleans newspaper on July 20 gives his death date as July 3 . Several years after his death , in 1817 or 1818 , his widow married Isaac Graves ,

with whom she had one additional child , and they lived in Pearlinton , Mississippi . Graves had been the operator of Favre 's schooner , Pearl , and had very little estate , but following his marriage to Favre 's widow , he utilized Favre 's estate as his own , much to the disadvantage of Favre 's heirs .

= = Favre 's " wives " = =

While a young man , conducting his business among the Choctaws , Favre consummated a relationship with a native woman named Pistikiokonay , who may have been a daughter of the Choctaw Chief Pushmataha , since there was a documented relationship between Favre and this chief . Over a period of about 15 years Favre sired at least six children with this woman , the first of whom was born in about 1784 . Shortly before 1800 he then had a relationship with a woman whose first name has been given as Rebecca or Rosella , and whose last name has been written as Austin or Ostein , with other spelling variations . In 1800 he had an illegitimate son born of this union , and this son , Simon , Jr . , was later named prominently in his will . In 1801 a number of slave exchanges took place between Favre and Austin , as he prepared to marry another woman . On March 25 , 1801 he was legally married to Celeste Rochon , a daughter of Augustine Rochon and Luisa Fievre of Mobile , with whom he had six more children .

= = Land holdings and slaves = =

In 1806 Favre began cultivation of land on the Pearl River in what became Hancock County , Mississippi . Favre 's land holdings were extensive , and his will mentions eight different plantations totalling over 5000 acres in area . He also acquired 57 slaves shortly before his death , as they were not mentioned in his will , but later became prominently mentioned during the settlement of his estate . The October 1814 inventory of his personal property includes a list of the 57 slaves , giving the name , age , and value of each . The oldest was 80 and valued at \$ 5 @. @ 00 , while the most valuable was a 30 @- @ year @- @ old " cow hunter " valued at \$ 900 . Collectively , the slaves were valued at just under \$ 15 @, @ 000 . The inventory also mentioned 6200 arpents ( 5247 acres ) of land valued at \$ 2410 , a schooner named Pearl , and 450 head of cattle .

One of Favre 's properties on the Pearl River was originally settled by his father in 1767 , and was inherited by Favre upon his father 's death in 1782 . This plantation later became known as the town of Napoleon , and Favre kept a store there that later became a part of the community 's church . In 1961 all the residents of the town were moved when the property was declared within the buffer zone of the John C. Stennis Space Center . Another one of his Pearl River properties became the town of Pearlinton , Mississippi , where many of his children , including those of his Choctaw mistress , lived .

Though Favre lived in Hancock County in West Florida , and died in Mobile , Mississippi Territory , documents concerning his estate were also filed in New Orleans , Louisiana , probably by his Hancock County attorney , Rutillius Pray of Pearlinton . By 1826 the estate had been partially settled , and during the October court term Pray submitted a final settlement showing total sales from the estate of just under \$ 27 @, @ 000 ( including nearly \$ 22 @, @ 000 for slaves ) , while total debts amounted to nearly \$ 33 @, @ 000 . However , taking into account unsold assets , the estate appears to have been solvent .

= = Family = =

Favre 's earliest known children were with his Choctaw mistress named Pistikiokonay . This woman lived in what later became Lauderdale County , Mississippi , though most of her children moved to Hancock County where Favre had two large plantations along the Pearl River . Favre had six known or suspected children with her , the earliest born about 1784 , and the last possibly born about 1805 , though without birth records there is uncertainty among most of the birth years . The oldest child was likely Alexis ( male ) , born about 1784 ( based on a deposition he made in 1844 , calling

himself aged 60 ) ; he married a Choctaw named Cuna and had several children . A second child , Katherine , died after 1830 without issue . Louis , possibly the third child , had a wife named " Milisew " and four children ; he died between 1830 and 1835 . Charles , born about 1798 ( deposed in 1856 that he was 58 years old ) , married Carmelite LaFontaine , had several children , and died by 1868 . Mary , born about 1800 ( aged 70 in the 1870 census ) , never married , but was highly respected in the family and became the administratrix of her father 's estate . Favre 's youngest child with his Choctaw mistress appears to be Jean Baptiste , usually just called Baptiste , who was born about 1805 ( aged about 40 in 1845 ) , married a woman named Tshowahoke , and had two children .

In 1800 Favre had an illegitimate son with Rebecca Austin ( also called Rosella Ostein ) , a native of Tombigbee in the District of Mobile . The child , named Simon , was born February 5 , 1800 . Favre left a bequest to the child in 1812 so that he could " be taught to read and write and to learn a trade or profession . "

Favre had six children with his legal wife , Celeste Rochon , the oldest of whom was Jean ( John ) , born August 2 , 1802 , died January 7 , 1888 , and married Dianna Edwards . Augustine ( Gus ) was born July 17 , 1804 and had two wives , Eleanor and Mary Jane , whose maiden names are uncertain . The third child of this marriage , Onezan ( Nezan ) , was born December 23 , 1806 , died May 10 , 1875 , and married Mary Moody . Next was Louisa Eucharist , born May 15 , 1809 , who married first James Conerly , and then John L. Armstrong . The fifth child was Marguerite , born January 17 , 1812 , died February 6 , 1908 , and married James Murphy . The last child of this marriage was Carlota , who was confirmed in New Orleans in February 1813 , and thus does not appear in her father 's 1812 will . She is not mentioned as an heir of Simon , so may have died young .

Probably the best known of Favre 's descendants is former National Football League quarterback Brett Favre , who descends from Simon 's Choctaw mistress , through their son Louis .