

The Legend of John Sherbondy's Ancestry

Compiled by Jeffrey D. Sherbondy

The Background

It was probably the mid 1800's. George Sherbondy, ancestor of Clan J (grandchild of John #1), was the owner of a tavern on the "old turnpike" near Greensburg, PA.^{i ii} George Sherbondy kept a ledger of the "daily goings of the tavern."ⁱⁱ The ledger book was quite large and hard to miss.ⁱⁱ In the back of it was a record of the family.ⁱⁱ It had Sherbondy Family facts.ⁱ George Sherbondy put in it a lot of family history.ⁱⁱ

It was passed down to Joseph Williamson Sherbondy, George's son.ⁱⁱ Joseph Williamson gained some prominence as a farmer and citizen in Freeport, Illinois.ⁱⁱⁱ He had knowledge and family pride of Sherbondy heritage.ⁱⁱⁱ He added to the family record.^{i ii} It was then passed down to Anna Sherbondy Corman, Joseph's daughter, who moved to Nebraska in 1891.ⁱⁱⁱ It was viewed by Bert De Forrest Sherbondy (son of Joseph W. Sherbondy) at Anna Corman's house "the winter I was at Oak" (Neb.).ⁱⁱ It was in an "old leather trunk" and quite old.ⁱⁱ

The outcome of the ledger book after that is less clear. It may have gone to Anna rather than a son (Richard Allen) because of a "lack of interest" by Richard's line.^{iv} The book "went thru a flood in the 1930's and may have been disposed of as beyond redemption!"ⁱ It was possible that Nora Corman Hine (Anna's daughter) came into possession of it.ⁱ Grace Corman asked her about it, but she couldn't seem to recall (She was 88).ⁱ After Nora passed away, Grace and other family members waited for her effects to be taken care of in hopes that it could be found.^{i v} No other information about Nora's estate is known.

The Legend

The original Sherbondy was imprisoned as a political prisoner in a camp bounded on three sides by high walls.^{iv vi} He was in a French garrison.^{vii} He was in a concentration camp.^{vi} On the fourth side was a cliff dropping down to and/or looking upon the Bay of Biscay.^{iv vi vii} One day, he saw a ship from America nearby.^{vi} He saw a ship in the harbor.^{vii} He decided to risk an escape by making the long leap off the cliff and into the Bay.^{iv vi vii} His attempt was successful.^{iv vi} He was taken aboard and brought to America.^{iv vi vii}

He evidently feared for his life.^{vi} He wanted to escape possible pursuit.^{iv vii} He made his way as far west as civilization extended.^{iv vi vii} He went to Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburgh.^{viii}

Additional Information

Uncle Dick mentioned the unusual name "Melchior" during his conversation with Grace Corman and later (1972) Grace found that name as one of John's children per John's will. This gave Grace additional assurance that Uncle Dick's story had credibility.^v

Cheslea T. Sherbondy typed up an outline on 9-1-1972 which included the following and sent it to approximately 9 of his relatives: John Sherbondy #1, French political prisoner

escaped by jumping into Bay of Biscay – picked up by Colonist ship to America. Joined Revolutionary War forces.^{ix} In December, 1977 Ches prepared an update to his “Sherbondy Family Chart” and sent it again to approximately 9 of his relatives. In this version, the following information was added: born in a tiny village of Sherbondyville, France about 1735. He arrived in America in early ‘70’s when he was 40 years old. He married an English girl.^x None of this additional information is supported in any of Grace Corman’s letters or notes. His revised outline does name Lloyd & Ethel Sherbondy as additional sources for the story. In a letter to Jeffrey D. Sherbondy from 1978, Ches indicated that he made some assumptions from his interpretation of Grace’s letters.^{xi} Also, marrying an English girl was proven false in 2006 with the discovery of a deed from John’s mother and father-in-law (Germans).

George and Joseph Williamson Sherbondy apparently had strong family heritage interest. It seems likely that they would have passed important artifacts down to their descendants. An example is the ledger book. Another example is a sword and epaulets (shoulder adornments). They were passed down to Joseph Wallace Sherbondy, another son of Joseph Williamson Sherbondy. It is not known who used them originally.^{vi} Mellie Sherbondy Morey inherited the farm house of her father (Joseph Wallace) where the items were located.^{xiii} She rented the farm house, but after the tenants left, the sword and epaulets had disappeared.^{xii}

The core information in the Legend will continue to be researched to determine if it can be verified as true.

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ⁱ Letter from Grace Corman (Clan J) to Cheslea T. Sherbondy (Clan L) dated 26 July 1972, SFA Correspondence # 5F.

ⁱⁱ Letter from Bert De Forest Sherbondy (Clan J, son of Joseph Williamson Sherbondy) to Nora Corman Hineline (daughter of Anna Sherbondy Corman) dated 1 Feb 1943, SFA Correspondence # 413A.

ⁱⁱⁱ Letter from Cheslea T. Sherbondy to Ralph Sherbondy (Clan L) dated 10 Apr 1977, SFA Correspondence # 54F.

^{iv} Letter from Grace Corman to Cheslea T. Sherbondy dated 17 June 1972, SFA Correspondence # 1F. This letter refers to a “quick” half-hour conversation that Grace Corman had with “Uncle Dick” (Richard Allen Sherbondy) years ago and that is the source of much of her information.

^v Letter from Grace Corman to Cheslea T. Sherbondy dated 17 June 1972, SFA Correspondence # 22F.

^{vi} First set of Grace Corman’s handwritten notes. Begins with “Here is a story concerning members of the S. family on one of our last visits.” Received from Helen Corman Ahrens 3 Apr 1983, SFA Correspondence # 413A.

^{vii} Second set of Grace Corman’s handwritten notes. Begins with “One story Uncle Dick told intrigued me particularly” and labeled “AA2” at the top. Received from Helen Corman Ahrens 3 Apr 1983, SFA Correspondence # 413A.

^{viii} The original letters state that he went to Ft. Dearborn, near Chicago (iv, vi, vii). In Graces’s first set of handwritten notes, she notes, “However, Ft. Dearborn wasn’t established until 1804-1805.” It appears this was confused with Fort Duquesne (pronounced “Dukane”), which was French established in 1754 and only existed until 1758 with that name. Source Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Duquesne.

^{ix} Outline of Sherbondy 9-1-72 in Cheslea T. Sherbondy’s records, received from Ches’ estate executor Pat Mahr Baker on 28 Nov 1981. SFA Correspondence # 76F.

^x Sherbondy Family Chart 9-1-72 Revised Dec 1977 in Ches Sherbondy’s records, received from Pat Mahr Baker on 28 Nov 1981, SFA Correspondence # 77F.

^{xi} Letter from Cheslea T. Sherbondy to Jeffrey D. Sherbondy received 6 March 1978, 3 pages handwritten, SFA Correspondence # 48A.

^{xii} Letter from Willadean Caudle to Jeffrey D. Sherbondy received 30 Oct 2004, SFA Correspondence # 2169A.