

Magic World of Yesteryear Unfolds in Family History

BY SYBIL LILLIE

A CHILD sits in wonderment as an elder in his family tells stories of the child's heritage—how his grandfather lived as a young strapping, where his great-grandmother met his great-grandfather, why his great-aunt never married, who was the black sheep of his family.

The magic world of yesteryear spins fairy tales of many a family tree. It's not at all unusual to carry on to the young 'uns the story of two or three generations back.

BUT HOW MANY youngsters today can tell stories of an illustrious ancestor who won fame as a musketeer, or boast a coat of arms with heraldry dating back to the crusades?

Flights of fancy about a swashbuckling musketeer certainly have meaning for such impressionable young bedtime story listeners as 8 year old Owen Thompson, and his young cousin, Toni Bowe, 3. Toni's younger brother, 8 month old Sandy, still is a bit young for bedtime stories.

OWEN AND Toni have not yet reached the stage where a family coat of arms, dating back to the middle ages, has any social significance.

(It's only at an older age that some water their family tree, others prune it, and still others give it artificial roots!)

Young Owen's and Toni's true bedtime story is called "The Generations." It was compiled by their grandmother, Mrs. Augustine Bowe, who takes the role of grandmother and spinner of tales to heart.

IT TOOK Julia Bowe five years to write this five generation history of her family. She checked the old records in her home town of Kankakee, the genealogical room in Newberry library, and the Chicago Historical society.



[CHICAGO'S AMERICAN Photo by Charles Keller]

MRS. AUGUSTINE BOWE, spins a bedtime tale for her grandchildren. They are Sandy Bowe, 8 months (in playpen); his brother Toni, 3 (right), and Owen Thompson, 8.

visited her ancestors' stomping ground in l'Isle en Dodon in southwestern France.

CHECKING some of the early ancestors was not too difficult, says Julia, because the "tombstones and records all were intact."

This long, diligent chore was one Julia Bowe had to sandwich in between duties at the tiny community house called Lower North center [her pet charity], her work for Modern Poetry association, and her assistance to her civic minded and Republican oriented husband, Gus Bowe.

thing to the family's black sheep.

JEAN WAS a 17th century musketeer under Louis XIV. He was renowned for his "battles, sword thrusts, duels, card games, and the caprices of the ladies." However, his gay youth was short-lived. Jean took a wife at the same time he took the dignified judge's robes.

French revolution? Julia's forbear, Jean Pierre Roger, was a delegate of the third estate and helped formulate the French constitution at the time of the French revolution.

of his guns are exhibited in the Kankakee Historical society museum.]

JULIA BOWE notes that often, by the fourth generation, ability to speak the language of the mother country and an appreciation of the history of civilization are lost or diluted.

She says in the preface of her book: "It is only by looking back that I see how hard some of my relatives worked to keep the love of French culture alive. And I, in turn, have talked French to my children and grandchildren,

correspondence with a Parisian historian, Jean de Carlat, and was in close communication with her third cousin, Joseph Pallissard of Broadview. She calls herself an "armchair historian."

A NOTABLE help in this effort of love was the family's self-appointed historian, "Aunt Louise," 82 year old Mrs. Rudolph Drolet of Kankakee, whose memories include many amusing anecdotes about the characters in this genealogy.

Idea for this family history is one which has been fermenting in Julia Bowe's mind ever since the day, some 20 years ago, she first met Jean de Carlat, and

Julia also happens to be a business woman in her own right. She's part owner of a specialty shop, a family business, in Kankakee.

ADD TO the above the job of mother-in-law and grandmother [the Bowes' son, John, is married to the former Kathy Pargellis, and the Bowes' daughter, Julia Ann, is Mrs. Willard Owen Thompson Jr.], and you know how little time is left to poke around the roots of a family tree!

Many of the ancestors Julia discovered in her searching could have been stories in themselves. There was, for instance, Jean de Pallissard, closest

ADVENTURE? Mrs. Bowe tells of 8 year old Cecile Gregoriette de Grenon de Pinsault in St. Dominique, the French colony. During an uprising in 1791, the little girl was rescued from death by a faithful slave who hid her under matting in a row-boat, bringing her to safety on a French warship.

Pioneers of the family are embodied in Paulin Pallissard, who came to the New World from France in 1855. He hit the midwest [St. Anne Kankakee, Ill., area] where many of Julia's relatives still live.

[Incidentally, Paulin's son, Edward Jean, fought a duel to win a bride. Two

with them, took them to France, bought French records and books, and have built up a French library which perhaps they never will read."

UNFORTUNATELY, Julia says, already several corrections and additions must be made in "The Generations" to bring it up to date.

"It's hard to keep track of the young these days," she says. It is doubtful that she will do any more work on the book.

Cost of compiling and publishing it is estimated at \$2,000—in case any homemakers might be thinking of pursuing their own genealogy.

To Julia, it was worth it.