

## Pierre "Alfred" Déchanet, an Historical Profile



Pierre "Alfred" Déchanet<sup>1</sup> was born on 1 Mar 1839 at Marcilly-en-Bassigny, Haute-Marne, Champagne-Ardenne, France. His father was Sébastien Constantin and his mother was Marie Jeanne Tenaille. This family soon moved about 7 km, as Alfred's sister Asulite, was born in Bonnecourt in 1840. We know that Alfred grew up in this town because 'Bonnecourt' is shown as his place of birth on several documents after he arrived in America, including his army discharge certificate and his death certificate.<sup>2,3</sup> At the age of 14 he emigrated from the Le Havre France, on the Samuel M. Fox arriving on 10 Nov 1852 at New York, USA. Nicolas Guyot age 20, who will later show up as the husband of his sister, Asulite, was also on this ship.<sup>4</sup>

Alfred appears on the Federal census of 11 Jul 1860 at Findlay, Hancock, Ohio, USA, as a 20 year old labourer living in a French household along with a Peter (Pierre) Dechanet who is listed as a 60 year old physician. Originally we thought that this Peter must be his father, however we now know this not to be true because we found his birth record in France. Alfred's sister, Asulite, married Nicholas Guyot on 26 May 1859 in this same county of Hancock and likely the town of Findlay, Ohio.<sup>5,6</sup>

Alfred entered the American Civil War on 29 Apr 1861 when he enlisted as a Private in Company "I" of the First Regiment of Minnesota Volunteers, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division at Fort Snelling, Hennepin, Minnesota, USA.<sup>7,8</sup> He was admitted to the 2nd Division of Depot Field Hospital near Potomac Creek, Virginia on 20 April 1863 with a gunshot wound to his hand which was the result of an accident. He ended military service when he was mustered out on 5 May 1864 at Fort Snelling, Hennepin, Minnesota, USA, because the term of his enlistment had expired. A note on these papers says that he would be accepted by the army if he were to reenlist. It also states that he was 22 years old and 5 foot 7.25 inches high with black hair.<sup>9,10,11</sup> In Oct 1880, Alfred started receiving a monthly pension of \$4 (which lasted until his death), because of the wound to his right hand.<sup>12</sup>

He married Isabelle Elizabeth Cratte, daughter of Etienne Olivier "Oliver" Crête (Cratte) Sr. and Sarah Mary Graham, on 23 Mar 1865 at Wabasha, Minnesota, USA.<sup>13</sup> She brought four children to this marriage and with an addition of eight children with Alfred; the house must have been full. The census records show that this family stayed in Wabasha, Minnesota until the death of the parents. The 1880 census shows a total of 10 children in the household. Of the 8 children fathered by Alfred, only 2 girls survived to have families of their own, thus the "Déchanet" name from this line in America ended with Alfred.<sup>14</sup> According to his daughter Lucy's birth record on 11 Jul 1870 he was a rafts man. During this period of time the Mississippi River was the highway of the USA Midwest and Wabasha was a center for this activity. There was a grain rolling mill in town as well as a lumber mill and the steam ships moved cargo and pushed booms of lumber up and down the river. The people who worked in this industry on the river were called rafts men.<sup>15,16</sup> His death record indicated that he was a retired trapper and the 1905 census says that he was a gardener, like most retired folks of the time.<sup>17,18</sup>

Alfred died on 7 Nov 1916 at Wabasha, Minnesota, USA, at age 77<sup>19,20,21</sup> and was buried on 9 Nov 1916 at St Felix Cemetery, Wabasha, Minnesota, USA.<sup>22,23</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>France, Vital Records of Haute Marne District, Champaign Region, France, Vital Records, Archives départementales de Haute-Marne, FR, Archives départementales de Haute-Marne, FR, B.P. 509, 52011 Chaumont Cedex, Rue du Lycée agricole, Chamarandes-Choignes, Haute-Marne, Champagne-Ardenne, France. Hereinafter cited as Vital Records Haute Marne FR.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Alfred Dechanet, Death Certificate E-154-185 (filed January 10, 1917), Wabasha County Records Department - County Court House, 625 Jefferson Ave, Wabasha, Wabasha, Minnesota, USA 55981. Hereinafter cited as Death Certificate Alfred Dechanet.

<sup>4</sup>Alfred Dechanet entry; *Samuel M. Fox* Record - Film of Ship Manifest, Arrived: 10 Nov 1852; in *Series: M237*; List: 1534 (WWW.Ancestry.com: Publisher: Ancestry.com), Roll: M237\_121.

<sup>5</sup>Census Summary, *Alfred Dechanet Family Census Data Summarized by Year* (Canada: Summarized by W Fuller, 2009). Hereinafter cited as *Census data for the Alfred Dechanet Family*.

<sup>6</sup>Ohio Marriages - Azulite Dehanet & Nicholas Goyot, Ancestry.com, online data, Provo, Utah, Utah, USA. Hereinafter cited as Marriage: Azulite Dehanet & Nicholas Goyot.

<sup>7</sup>"To Whom It May Concern - Discharge from Service of the United States", Alfred Dechanet, Private, Co "I" first Regiment of Minnesota; National Archives USA; 700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, Arlington, DC 20408-0001, USA. Hereinafter cited as "Military Discharge Record."

<sup>8</sup>Research Notes and Data from J Ward, "J Ward (Canada), to W Fuller (Canada); Research Notes, W. Fuller, Canada. Hereinafter cited as "Research Notes, J Ward."

<sup>9</sup>"Military Discharge Record", The document in addition says: "That he had signed up for 3 years and the reason for discharge was the "Expiration of term of enlistment". It also says that there is "No objection to his re-enlistment are known to exist." It says: "Said Alfred Dechanet was born in Bonncourt in France, is 22 years of age, is 5 feet 7.25 inches high, Dark completion, Hazel eyes, Black hair and by occupation, when enrolled, a Labour. Given at Fort Snelling, Minnesota this 5th day of May, 1864."

Also note: that Alfred is listed on the Roster of Company I as: Age 22, Mustered in Apr. 29, 1861; Mustered out May 5, 1864; Nothing under 'Remarks.'

<sup>10</sup>W.H. Mitchell and U. Curtis, *Wabasha County, Geographical and Statistical Sketches of the Past and Present Together with a General View of the State of Minnesota* (Rochester, MN, USA: Federal Union Book and Job Printing House, 1870), Page 77: Alfred Dechanet is shown on a list of people who had served in the US Military as of 1870. Hereinafter cited as *Wabasha County Past & Present 1870*.

<sup>11</sup>J Ward, "Research Notes, J Ward."

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., List of Army Pensioners - Minnesota: Name: Dechanet, Alfred; Post Office: Wabasha; Cause for which pensioned: w.r. hand; Monthey Rate: 4.00; Date of Original Allowance: Oct. 1880.

<sup>13</sup>Church Books marriage, Wabasha, St Felix Catholic Church, 117 - 3rd Street West, Wabasha, Wabasha, Minnesota, USA, (651) 565-3931. copy of hand written records, This St. Felix Church Record shows that Elizabeth Lachapelle aged 27 and Alfred Deschanete aged 23 were married 23 March 1865 in Wabasha. Witness, Henry & Emily Buisson. Father Tissot.

<sup>14</sup>*Census data for the Alfred Dechanet Family*.

<sup>15</sup>Lucy Déchanet, Birth Certificate File Number A-17-18 (Date filed: July 31, 1870), Wabasha County Records Department - County Court House, 625 Jefferson Ave, Wabasha, Wabasha, Minnesota, USA 55981.

<sup>16</sup>Walter A. Blair, *A River Pilots Log - A History of the Great Rafting Industry on the Upper Mississippi 1840-1915* (Cleveland, OH, USA: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1930). Hereinafter cited as *Book, A River Pilots Log 1930*.

<sup>17</sup>Alfred Dechanet, Death Certificate Alfred Dechanet.

<sup>18</sup>*Census data for the Alfred Dechanet Family*.

<sup>19</sup>Alfred Dechanet, Death Registration Book E, page 54, Line 185 (filed January 10, 1917), Wabasha County Records Department - County Court House, 625 Jefferson Ave, Wabasha, Wabasha, Minnesota, USA 55981, Shows occupation as retired trapper and that he had died of asthma. Hereinafter cited as Death Registration Alfred Dechanet.

<sup>20</sup>Alfred Dechanet, Death Certificate Alfred Dechanet.

<sup>21</sup>Official Church Books and Official Cemetery Records entry, Death and Burial Records, St Felix Catholic Church, Wabasha, MN, Wabasha, St Felix Catholic Church, 117 - 3rd Street West, Wabasha, Wabasha, Minnesota, USA, (651) 565-3931. Hereinafter cited as Death and Burial Records, St Felix Church.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Déchanet, Alfred, Family Plot, Section J Plot 49

OFFICIAL Interments 'bur.' per St. Felix Church Books

1. Alfred DeChenet, d. 7 Nov, bur. 9 Nov, 1916, b. Paris France, at age 76 years, 8 months, of general debility, Priest: Max Wurst.
2. Elizabeth [Isabel] Dechené, d. 24 July, bur. 26 July, 1885, b. Wabasha, at age 47 yrs, of Consumption, Priest: James Trobec.
3. Sebastian Dechené, d. 22 Aug, bur., 23 Aug, 1881, b. Wabasha, at age 4 1/2 yrs, of Typhoid fever, Priest: James Trobec.
4. Ralph Dechene, d. 2 May, bur., 5 May, 1909, b. Wabasha, at age 29 yrs, of phthisis pulmonary, Priest: Max Wurst.

OTHER INTERMENTS per St. Felix Cemetery Records

1. Infant Dechenet, d. 28 Sept 1882 [assumed to be Charles].

<sup>23</sup>Obituaries, Alfred Dechanet, *Wabasha Herald*, Wabasha, MN, Nov 9, 1916, The Obit says he was buried Nov 10, 1916. Hereinafter cited as Obituary, Wabasha Herald.