

# **The Brief Life of Louis G. C. Rachal**

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Much has been written about Darius Ciriaque (D.C.) Rachal (1841-1918) in the years since he was born in Liberty County, Texas, and who then settled in South Texas and raised a family while becoming a well know and prosperous rancher. Books and articles can be found in many libraries and on many web sites.

However, little is written about his father, Louis Gacion Ciriaque Rachal (1816 – 1852) because, well, there is very little data to support any extensive writings about him.

This brief paper will discuss that which is known about him.

We should note that there is a theory that his full name is Louis Gacion Ciriaque Rachal. There is also an alternative spelling of his middle name: Cyriaque. I will use Ciriaque.

## **Early Rachals**

The first Rachal to come to the New World from Europe was Pierre Rachal. He was born on the Isle of d'Oleron off the west coast of La Rochelle, France. He was a soldier and ultimately settled in Natchitoches, Louisiana, with his Parisian born wife Marie Anne Benoist in 1721.

Five generations of Rachals were born and raised in Louisiana and Texas after Pierre. They are, in chronological order:

- Louis Rachal dit Blondin 1723-1785 m. Marie Louise LeRoy
- Antoine Francois Rachal 1763-1787 m. Marie Louise Lemoine
- Sylvester Rachal 1789-1841 m. Marie Rose Michel-Zariche
- Louis Ciriaque Rachal m. Anais P. Compere (1821-1886)
- Darius Ciriaque Rachal 1841-1918 m. Julia A. Bryan

## **Louis Ciriaque Rachal**

Louis C. Rachal was born in Cloutierville, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, on or about 16 March 1816. He was one of an unknown number of children born to Sylvester Rachal (1789-1841) and Marie Rose Michel-Zariche.

Some resources suggest he had at least two siblings:

- 1) Hyppolite Rachal b: 1826
- 2) Appoline Rachal b: 1828

He grew up in Cloutierville and on 23 January 1837, at the age of about 20, he married 16-year old Marie Anais Palmire Compere. Marie Anais was born in Cloutierville on 14 March (or May) 1820 or 1821 to parents Pierre Sebastian Compere and Marie Lolette Rachal. It is interesting that Marie Lolette's maiden name is also Rachal. It can be shown that Louis and Anais are second cousins meaning they both share the same great-grandparents.

Louis and Anais started a family. Their first born was a girl, Ezilla, born on 10 May 1838.

What happened next is somewhat unclear.

Louis and his family decided in the late 1830s to leave Louisiana and migrate west to Texas. It is not known what prompted this move. People often moved to seek better living conditions and opportunities (ie land, jobs, etc) but they migrated sometimes to escape excessive taxation or religious or political issues that they did not like.

It is not clear the exact time of the migration. It is thought to have occurred sometime in the 1838-47 timeframe.

One account says they traveled only with their daughter Ezilla, making the trip between May 1838 and sometime in 1839. Another says the migration happened between 1842 and 1847 with multiple children in tow.

Before or after their migration, they added children to the family as follows:

- Ezilla (as mentioned above)
- Francois, born about 1839 or 1840
- Darius Ciriaque, born 1/23/1841
- Alfonse, born about 1842
- Ernest, born 1847
- Edward, born 1849
- Albert, born 1851

Some of these children were born in Louisiana depending on the time of their migration.

Two children died young:

Alfonse died at the age of 13.

Ernest died at the age of 8

One thing is certain...they left Louisiana and headed for central Texas. But, at Liberty County, TX, they were advised to stop their westward advancement due to unsafe conditions. So, they established a farm homestead somewhere in Liberty County, TX.

Louis and Anais acquired property and began to farm that property and raise their family. The location of their farm has not yet been determined other than to say it was in Liberty County and probably in the vicinity of the towns of Liberty and Ames. There is one story that says that Ames, TX, a short distance east of Liberty, was at one time called Rachal Station meaning it was a stop for the east-west train of the T and N.O. Railroad. But, since the T and N.O. railroad did not actually begin construction until 1857 and was not finished to Liberty until about 1862, any reference to Rachal was probably created by DC or one of his brothers, or the Rachal family since they stayed in Liberty County long after Louis died in 1852. The fact that this stop was named Rachal Station suggests that the family may have lived in or near Ames.

Louis lived a short life. He died on about 14 April 1852 in Liberty County, at age 36, leaving Anais with all 7 children still at home. Anais was 32 years old at his death. The children ranged from 14 years to 1 year in age.

Louis' cause of death is unknown. Possible causes of such an early death for males in that time are:

- Farming accident
- Disease such as Typhus or Yellow Fever
- Maybe a Native American attack.
- Natural causes or unknown health issue

Anais and her family continued to live in Liberty. As they matured, children began to marry as shown in this listing:

- Ezilla married Levi (Lee) Bitterman in Liberty County.
- Frank married Anais Blanchette in Jefferson County
- DC married Julia Bryan in 1864 in Liberty County
- Alfonse died at age 13 in Liberty
- Ernest died at age 8 in Liberty
- Edward (Nute) married Lula Perrenot from Unknown
- Albert married Mary Dizinia Peters from Unknown.

In 1857, D.C. left Liberty to take a job with the While family driving their cattle to South Texas.

By 1860, the family was still intact in Liberty. Two children were deceased, and Anais was the head of the household of 5 children ranging in age from 20 to 8 years old. Their property was valued at \$2000 and personal property at \$5000 in 1860 dollars (\$61,000 and \$152,000 in 2018 dollars).

When the Civil War started, D.C. enlisted and fought in that war for 4 years. After the war, he returned to Liberty County and married Julia Bryan and soon after they moved to South Texas.

Anais' daughter Ezilla married in 1862 and by 1870, Anais was living in the household of Ezilla and Ezilla's husband. All other children were on their own. It is believed that Ezilla and family lived on the farm or ranch originally bought by Louis but this is unproven.

Anais was still living with Ezilla in 1880. She died on 20 July 1886 and was buried in Rosita Cemetery on her son D.C.s ranch. Her place of death is unknown, but was either Liberty, TX, or Rosita ranch. It is unknown when she moved to Rosita.

### **The Grave of Louis C. Rachal**

Louis is buried in a cemetery in Liberty County and not in the Rosita cemetery where his wife Anais is buried. The specific cemetery is thought to be the Catholic Cemetery in the town of Liberty, TX, since in fact the family was Catholic.

It is likely that he is buried in this cemetery in a now-unidentifiable grave. He died in 1852, or in other words 166 years ago, but there is compelling evidence that he is buried in an unmarked grave in the Liberty Catholic Cemetery:

- 1) Many unmarked burials have been detected by ground penetrating radar in one corner of the cemetery where it is believed many Louisiana Creoles are buried. But of course, the contents cannot be identified.
- 2) The cemetery is designated a Texas Historical Site and the marker notes the surnames of many people buried there including the Rachal name. However, while the historic marker for this cemetery states that Rachal family members are buried here, the listing of graves does not include his name.
- 3) There is a record (source unknown) that indicates that a Madam Rachal contributed to the construction of a wall or fence around this cemetery sometime before 1886.

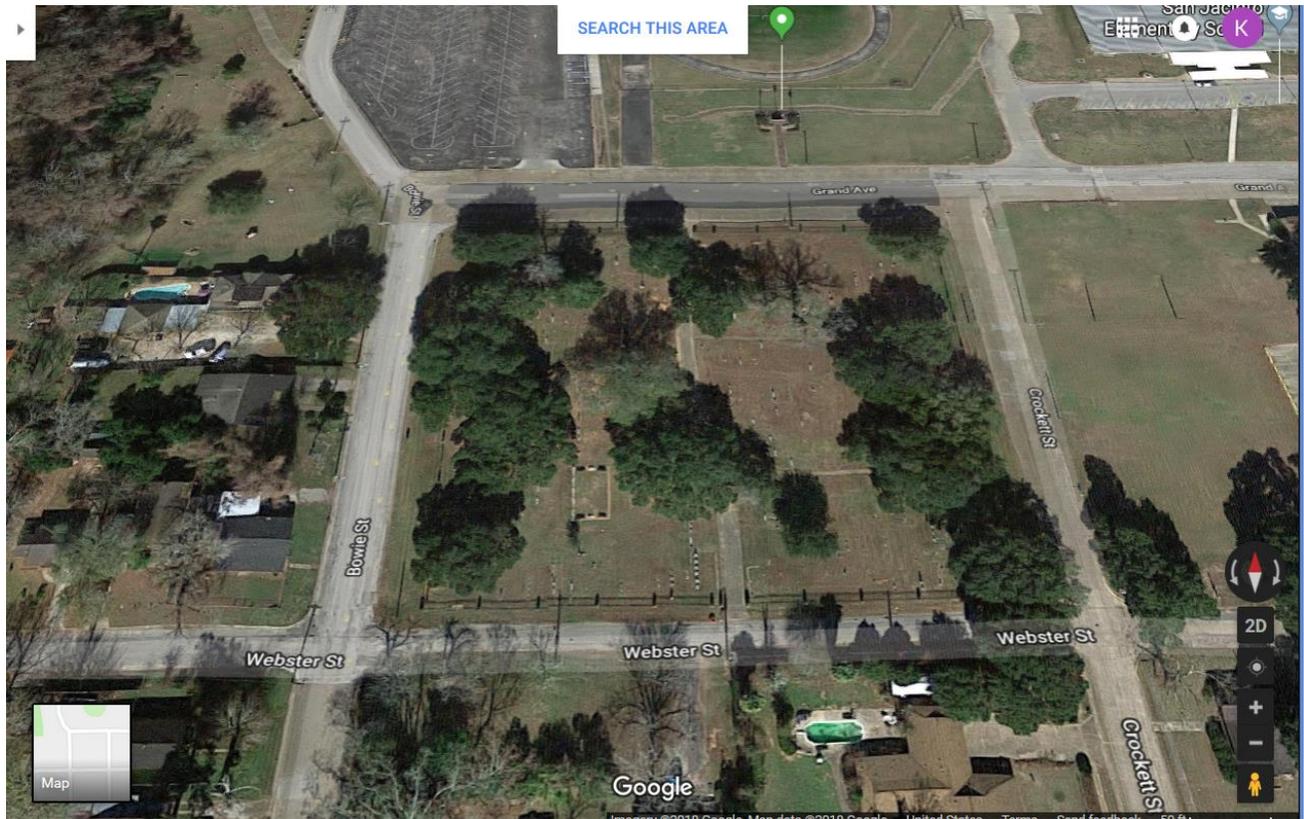
It is likely that Louis' two sons who preceded him in death, Ernest and Alfonse, are also buried in the Catholic Cemetery.

## The Complete Louis Ciriaque Rachal Family

The following table shows the entire Louis Ciriaque Rachal family:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>At</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>On</b>	<b>Died</b>	<b>At</b>
Louis Ciriaque Rachal	3/16/1816	Natchitoches		1/23/1837	4/14/1852	Liberty
Marie Anais Palmire Compere	5/14/1820	Louisiana			7/20/1886	Rosita
Ezilla Claire	5/10/1838	Cloutierville, Louisiana	Levi Alonzo Bitterman	3/6/1862	2/17/1932	Corpus Christi
Francois (Frank)	~1839/40	Louisiana	Anna Blanchette	?	~1870	?
Darius Ciriaque	1/23/1841	Cloutierville, Louisiana	Julia Aurelia Bryan	12/29/1864	8/27/1918	Rosita
Alfonse	1842	Louisiana	NA	—	1855, age 13	Liberty
Ernest	1847	Liberty, TX	NA	—	1855, age 8	Liberty
Edward Rene (“Nute”)	1/24/1849	Liberty, TX	Louise “Lula” Perrenot	~1877	11/15/1929	Falfurrias
Albert Pierre (A.P.)	7/22/1851	Liberty, TX	Mary Dizena Peters	?	7/8/1908 Chicago	Chicago

## Catholic Cemetery in Liberty, TX



### THC Marker #9643 (Liberty Catholic Cemetery) Text

“In 1853, twenty-two years after Francisco Madero founded the Villa de la Santissima Trinidad de la Libertad, now the town of Liberty, the Rev. Petrus Marie LaCour came to this area. A native of France, he served as the first pastor of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. Acting on behalf of the Galveston Diocese, he purchased this site in 1853 from Pickney L. and Therese A. Palmer as a burial ground for Catholic settlers of the county. A few gravesites were located here when the land was designated a Catholic cemetery. Many of the early graves are those of pioneer French Creole settlers, members of related families that migrated to the region from Louisiana in the mid-nineteenth century. Early residents interred here include LaCours, Gillards, Baillios, DeBlancs, Desrayoux, Dugats, Fortiers, Benois, Cannons, Joffrions and **Rachals**. Their influence as early business, civic and professional leaders had a dramatic impact on Liberty and on the area's social and religious customs. Descendants of the pioneers still serve as active members of the community. The oldest Catholic cemetery in Liberty County, this site now serves as a historic reminder of the region's rich heritage.”

## Liberty Catholic Cemetery Historic Marker THC #9643

