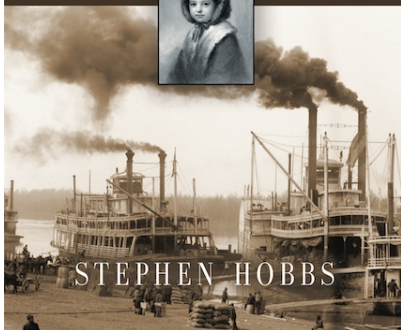


# Rebecca of Caddo Parish Louisiana



*Rebecca, a child lost and given a chance to live a life by an adult who was also lost. From the docks of St. Louis to a life lived in Louisiana and a family shared through decades of times that were troublesome, Rebecca's life's story unfolds. Love found, love lost, children born, Rebecca shares her story through five decades for all to remember.*

## REBECCA OF CADDO PARISH LOUISIANA

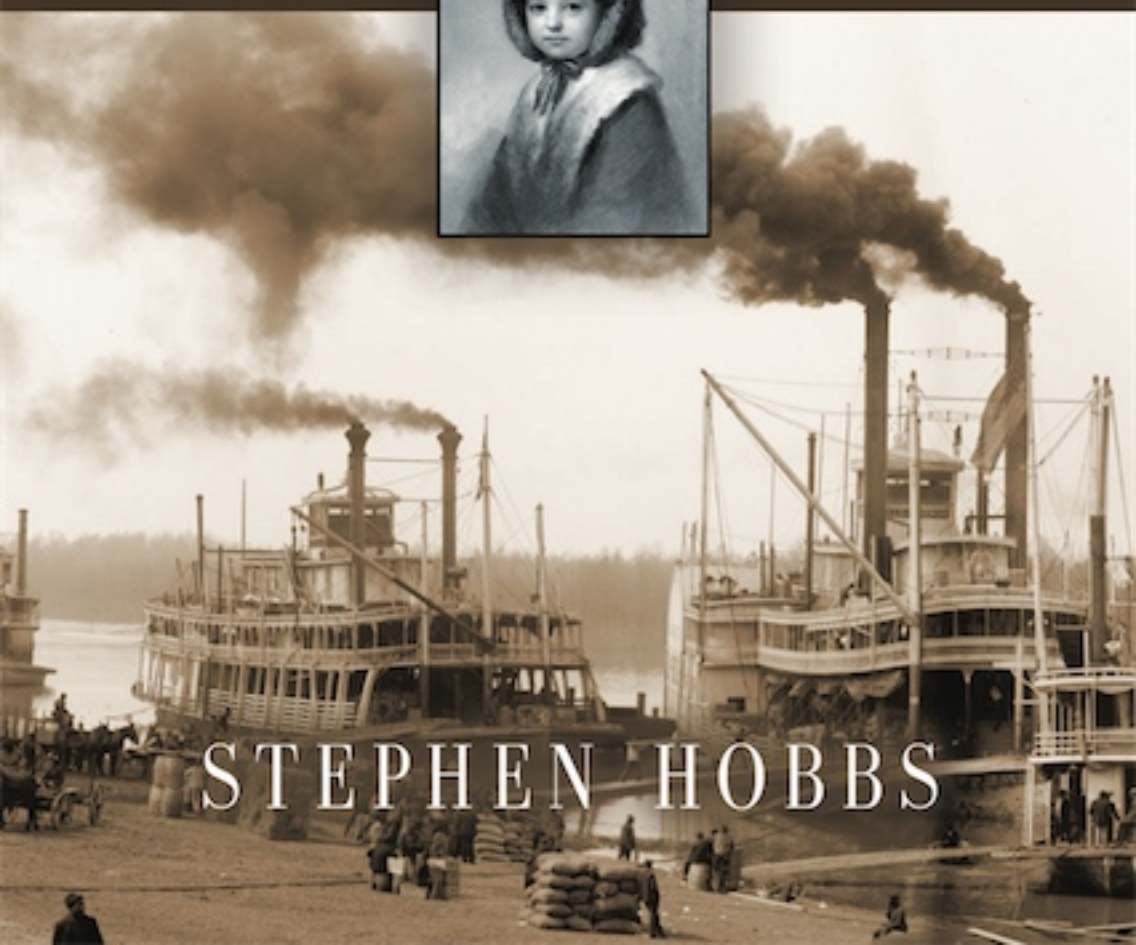
by STEPHEN HOBBS

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# Rebecca of Caddo Parish Louisiana



STEPHEN HOBBS

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First Edition

## CHAPTER 6

**R**outine as the river widens and then New Orleans Louisiana could be seen through the morning mist. It was afternoon before the *Osage* found a slip on the many docks. Janis had viewed Jacob Buell several times as he waited by dockside. When the passenger ramp was lowered, Jacob was there waiting as Janis and Rebecca disembarked.

The carriage was ornate as Rebecca continued to relate the trip in detail to Jacob who was listening very intently. Janis smiled at his demeanor and for the first time noticed he was well dressed and quite the gentleman. Handsomeness seemed natural for Jacob. The trunk was lashed to the back, and Jacob picked Rebecca up and sat her inside. Janis was helped as a lady, and they left the docks at twilight for somewhere, and Janis assumed a home and Jacob's wife.

Several twists and turns led to a quiet street and a drive to a modest house with a stable in the rear. Without a word an older black gentleman came and held the traces. Jacob said, "Thanks, Moses." Janis knew not where they were, and she felt uncomfortable.

Rebecca was smelling the roses along the walkway to the entrance as Jacob took Janis' hand and walked to the threshold when he released her hand, and Janis noticed.

The home was furnished with modesty, and the woman who greeted them and introduced too was older than Jacob. Janis waited for the woman of the house and was shocked when it did not happen. Could it be Jacob was a bachelor? Jacob noticed the puzzled look and smiled and said, "Janis, I am not married, and never have been. Martha is my housekeeper." Janis tried to not be surprised, but she was and blushed.

Rebecca was suddenly quiet, and Janis realized how tired this child must be and spoke of accommodations and Jacob called for Martha. Janis spoke of not being a burden but stopped by Jacob who talked of rooms for each as Rebecca took Martha's hand and followed her down a hallway.

Janis found herself in a bedroom with a bath and told that Martha would be by after seeing over Rebecca, as Jacob closed the door, but left it slightly ajar. Janis sat on the bed for the longest time in deep thought of the now. Here she was in Jacob's home, which was not her intentions but rather a hotel. She looked around her at the things in the room and realized it was not masculine or feminine in nature. They were just things and furniture to make a bedroom. Janis took her valise and opened it to remove a gown for sleeping, but with the door ajar she did not change. She needed a bath, and the brass tub seemed inviting, but with the wall mounted spigots, she

thought better. Then a light tapping on the door and it was Martha who closed the door behind her. Martha spoke of Rebecca and that the child was in a bath now and refused to leave the tub. Then Martha laughed and said, "I left Jacob in the parlor close to the room in case Rebecca needed something." But, Martha continued, "I think she will be in the suds when I get back."

Martha had walked behind Janis and was unbuttoning her dress while she talked, and Janis flinched from the gesture, and Martha stopped and apologized. Janis said for her to continue as the water ran from the spigots into the tub in clouds of steam. Nude in front of Martha was awkward for Janis, but as she stepped into the tub all that was forgotten beneath the warmth. Before leaving to check on Rebecca, Martha spilled some lavender salts into the container. With an "I will be back," Martha left Janis to her bath.

Rebecca was still in the tub when Martha returned but willing to leave and dress for bed. A small gown of gingham clothed the child as she walked past Jacob. He smiled as she embraced him before going with Martha to a small bedroom.

Rebecca voiced her concern of being alone and told Martha of being with Janis at night and Martha opened a side door and said, "This is my room child if you need to be with someone." Rebecca relaxed and was asleep before Martha left the room.

Martha entered the bedroom to find Janis standing by the tub drying with a towel. Startled by the sudden

entrance, Janis covered herself, then relaxed as Martha spoke of Rebecca.

Helped into her gown, Janis laid on the bed. Martha brought the covers back up on the mattress, and then Janis was tucked as a child with the sheets. Martha let Janis know that she would come when breakfast was ready. Leaning over the coal oil lamp, cupping her hand, Martha blew the flame out and the darkness was thick. Martha's retreating steps in the familiar room brought some fear to Janis' heart, but sleep interrupted.

It was light when Janis awoke, and it was an opportune time as the door swung open and a child came running and jumped into her arms. Rebecca yelped as she dove and laughed hysterically. Martha entered the room, shaking her head while smiling.

Helping Janis dress, Martha said, "Breakfast was ready." Rebecca was still in her gingham gown, but Janis had changed into a modest dress of length. She was disappointed to learn as she sat that Jacob had to leave early for work.

Martha said he would return as he had not a work schedule. As a lawyer, he came and went as the need of clients. His office was on Beale Street, but seldom was he there, but instead worked from home.

Breakfast finished, Rebecca decided outside was a good idea and found Moses grooming a horse. Martha followed and told Rebecca that she was still in her nightgown and only her nightgown and to come inside to dress for the day. Rebecca obeyed and took Martha's hand in defeat.

Janis attempted to clean the table, but Martha explained to her that was her chore and pointing to the living room if Janis needed somewhere to go to relax after breakfast and her recent trip. Martha took Rebecca to the small bedroom to dress.

Rebecca stood nude in amazement as Martha opened a closet filled with dresses of her size. Along the floor were shoes. Martha gave her some pantaloons and a muslin slip, and after removing the pantaloons and turning them around, they fit Rebecca perfectly. The muslin was a little large, but that was alright. Martha explained that Jacob had purchased the clothing in anticipation of Rebecca's coming with Janis. As Jacob remembered Rebecca from his trip to St Louis.

Martha let Rebecca choose her dress for the day, and she wanted a plain light blue one with a large bow in the back. Rebecca frowned at the shoes, and as nothing was planned for the day, Rebecca remained barefoot.

Janis was stunned as Rebecca entered the living room and swirled in a circle. She clapped her hands in joy as she embraced the child. Rebecca had to explain to Martha, that mom was not her mother, but legally she was Janis' daughter. Martha understood and left to clear the table.

Jacob came home just before the noon meal to find Rebecca with Moses as they trimmed the roses and clipped some for a table inside. Rebecca ran and gave a hug to Jacob and then back to Moses. Jacob entered the home to find Martha and Janis going through the trunk



and some trinkets laid on the table. Janis had also seen a closet filled with clothing thanks to Jacob. She expressed her appreciation to the gesture, but that she had funds to clothe her and Rebecca when a permanent home was found. Jacob understood and that this was temporary and could take what was wanted when leaving and if Janis still wished to reimburse for the costs then Janis could. Which brought comfort to Janis, but also a question, when was she moving on to Georgia as was the original plan. She would bring that up later as Jacob had left the room for his small law library. The day was spent in rest.

It was dusk, and everyone was sitting in the parlor after the meal and Janis wondered of traveling to finish their journey before winter. Not so troubling in Southern Louisiana but Georgia would have some cold weather to bear. She voiced her desire to decide, to continue to be settled before winter. Which would include renting or buying a house and furnishing it with the comforts of home? Jacob understood and spoke of the troubles that may bring and then made a bold suggestion. It was November and the thought of traveling half the month and then finding suitable quarters before the chill of winter would be daunting at the least. For that reason, Jacob said, "Stay here in New Orleans, for the winter and come the spring season consider moving on to Georgia."

Janis frowned as she wanted not to be alone here where memories were troublesome, and the thought of a home for the winter here was not on her agenda. She said as much to Jacob, who seemed unconcerned and

then he spoke the words that would change the lives of both Janis and Rebecca. The solution is simple, stay here in my home until spring. “There is nothing,” Jacob said, “That would keep you from doing so. If it is reimbursement, I will accept, but be hurt if you did not stay.”

Rebecca was the one who said it sounded like a good idea. So, it was that Janis and Rebecca would live for a winter in the home of one Jacob Thomas Buell, Attorney at law esquire.

It was the fourth day when Rebecca came running into Jacob’s home and to the first person she could find, and it was Martha. Rebecca was visibly shaken, shaking, and Martha called for Janis. After some soothing Rebecca spoke in a quivering voice that she had been with Moses by the stables and had seen the spire of St Patrick’s Church, and had become frightened.

Janis explained it was old memories and no harm would come from the Church or the Orphanage, Rebecca had walked away from. Rebecca knew and said so, it was an unexpected fright nonetheless. Then as an innocent child with no worries, Rebecca was off to explore again. Moses was by the door, and Martha explained all was well with the child. Moses nodded his head and turned to tend to his tasks.

Janis found it puzzling that Moses had said nothing verbally since the day they arrived, and she inquired of Martha. Martha looked out the window to make sure that Moses was away from her voice.

“Janis,” Martha began. “Moses went north with some men to trap along the Missouri River. Gone for over a year, the men returned minus several of the ones that began, but Moses was with them. He was ill and thin from the ordeal and had been threatening to be thrown overboard. But he was of use, and they allowed his return.” Martha frowned and continued. “Moses was taken captive by some Natives as his color was intriguing to them, but Moses proved to be a troublesome captive. For that reason, they let him go, but not before cutting his tongue to a point where he has trouble speaking or not speaking at all. Miss Arnold, the lady who owned this house before Jacob, found him working the docks, and as such Moses was of advanced age, brought him here to care for the stables.”

Janis was appalled by the truth and then thought of Rebecca and her growing friendship with Moses. If she had worries, they were hers, as Rebecca had wondered, and as an inquisitive child had asked Moses why he smiled so much when they talked and never talked without trouble. Rebecca understood some of the guttering but not much. Moses had nodded, frowned, and pointed north, and holding two fingers up on the back of the head doing a little jig that was meant to illustrate a war dance. After several attempts, Rebecca finally understood and said, “Indian?” Moses clapped his hands and then stuck what was left of his tongue out and made a cutting motion. Rebecca gasped and asked, “Why?” Moses pointed to his skin and Rebecca now knew, and she hugged Moses. It was later when

Rebecca explained to Janis about Moses, and Janis knew.

Jacob would come and go, spending most time alone in the library adjacent to the parlor. His sleeping quarters was through a door at the rear. Jacob was a cordial host and left things to Martha concerning his guests.

The weeks past and Janis spoke of wanting to see the city and the changes made, and Jacob promised a day to do so, and he was true to his word.

The carriage was enclosed, and Moses was on the box above with the reins in his hands. The horse was a dapple grey and smooth in the traces. The trip through the City brought back memories for Janis. Some she erased and others she relished. Rebecca was quiet and seemed cautious as if she was still being sought by those from the asylum for female orphans.

The carriage turned north from the city and along the Mississippi River. Jacob wished to show Janis his hobby of racing horses and the track at Carrollton. A relevant new town compared to New Orleans. The eclipse race track was a new endeavor and stables held horses owned by individuals. Jacob had Moses to stop at a stable and there showed Janis his two horses for racing.

Janis was in awe and troubled. Who was Jacob that he could own such and still be somewhat modest? Janis knew he was a professional man and now she wondered how wealthy he could be. Then she felt terrible at the thought, as she watched Jacob lift

Rebecca above the partition, so she could see well. Rebecca was in awe at the animal and spoke as a child.

The trip back into the city was uneventful, and the conversation was lighthearted. Rebecca slept leaning against Martha and awoken as they stopped on the levee to have a packed lunch at a small park. It was a lovely place, and the river was busy with marine traffic. Rebecca counted the boats and let everyone know as if they could not see or calculate the total. Then Rebecca was waving at the open decks, and several men and women returned the gesture.

Janis had sat on the blanket as Martha said, "She would lay dinner out, and to relax." Jacob was with Rebecca some distance down the embankment, and now there was a game of tag. Martha called that everything was ready, and Rebecca beat Jacob back to the blanket. Jacob sat down also and closer to Janis than anyone else, and Janis noticed.

Rebecca did not understand why Martha and Moses were not eating, and Janis explained. Rebecca as a child thought it was unfair but understood.

Martha came after everyone had finished and gathered everything but the blanket and returned to the carriage. Rebecca noticed that Moses and Martha were eating now. Sitting together on the driver's box. She felt better and said so, leaning against Jacob, and he gave her a hug of understanding.

Dusk was coming, and after Moses lit the carriage lights, they boarded for the home journey. Before Jacob entered he removed a brace of pistols from under Moses' seat and laid them at hand as he sat beside

Rebecca; whose eyes became big as twenty-dollar gold pieces. Jacob explained the possible as New Orleans although somewhat civilized, there was an element of danger. The trip was uneventful though as they turned into the lane at Jacob's house.

It was Jacob who suggested sometime later of some schooling for Rebecca. He had seen her with the books found in St Louis and her intensive reading and writing; only if it was alright with Janis. Jacob suggested a private school or a tutor, and the cost Janis could afford, but again Jacob said, "That is up to you and Rebecca."

Jacob stressed that there was a public school being built and progressive, but that would be several months or more. The property had been bought on Julia Street for that building, but for now, there were a least ten private schools in or close to the city. Most religious based and most taught French Creole as a necessary language. Or Jacob said, "A tutor could come and teach, but again that is up to you Janis and Rebecca."

Rebecca, with the defining decision of a tutor because of the fear that lingered from the parochial school she had fled from so many years ago. Jacob made the arrangements through a friend, and so it was that the educating of Rebecca would begin and end several years later with a degree in the humanities. As of now, Rebecca was still a child, and her youth continued in the house of Jacob as the year 1841 became the New Year 1842.

## CHAPTER 14

Nathan was with his father at Baton Rouge Louisiana. They were there boarding a steamboat bound for New Orleans. They had been to the farm and feedlots at Denham Springs Louisiana for two days, and Nathan was missing Rebecca.

Nathan had been offered a sale of the property, and he would consult with Daniel. Their father was still feeling out of place and thought of returning north, but his age and time spent in captivity had taken a toll on his health. As they boarded, Pierre fell over a rope and needed help in rising. Nathan knew his father should never be left alone, but he also knew his father should not be confined. Pierre wiped some dirt from a hand and apologized to Nathan. Nathan scolded him for doing so.

The trip was uneventful, and they rode a cab to Nathan's home, and of course, Rebecca was at the infirmary. Emily in anticipation of Nathan's arrival had made some sandwiches. Nathan noticed how tired his father was and he waited on him after seating him on a couch.

Rebecca entered later from the kitchen and seemed worried by her work. Doctor O'Connor was fearful that someone would investigate and find Rebecca without a license to practice medicine. Although she was first in her class, she was not recognized as she should have been by the State of Louisiana. Being a woman in the years 1850's and wanting to be a professional unless you worked in a brothel, there was no recognition.

Rebecca voiced her concern to Nathan who was sympathetic but had no answers. Rebecca would find in the years to come, that nothing would change. She would continue until told to cease and desist.

Emily was a help to Nathan with his father. After all, she took care of the infirmed at work. She automatically took over responsibility in the months to come. In those months, Pierre regained his health. Nathan continued to work at the leather shop with Daniel.

It was August when Rebecca became ill. It seemed everything caused her to be nauseous, especially the odors at the infirmary. Mornings seemed worse, and her moods begin to swing. It was Emily who brought up a possibility as she had visited Martha and she, Martha had said, "I heard the voice of a child." Martha was right, and that child would be the firstborn of Nathan and Rebecca. A child is due to be born in the spring of the year 1855.

Nathan was beside himself with joy and coddled Rebecca until Emily told him to leave her alone. Rebecca was working less, and Doctor O'Connor was



notified and said that when the time came, he would be there to assist the birth.

Jacob and Janis were elated at the news. Martha was not surprised, but she was sad. She had never been allowed to bear children and hoped they would let her share in birth. Moses smiled when told and was also sad, as he was weaker and with his health, nine months was a lifetime. But, it did not take away his joy.

Daniel teased his little brother, and their father was happy. He had asked the day they found one another, and both sons had said, "No." to marriage and children. Pierre thought of Sarah, Nathan, and Daniel's sister, wondering, if already a grandfather. Sometime in the future, he would ask Daniel to see if he could find Sarah. Winnipeg City was a lifetime ago and a thousand miles away.

Rebecca accepted her pregnancy with maternal anticipation, but also a dread of birthing a child. Conversations with her adoptive Mother eased some concerns, but not all.

By Christmas, all could tell Rebecca was with child. Her health had improved, and she was now homebound. There were much health risks to her and the unborn child to work with the diseased. Emily saw to her every need when she was not with Nathan. Although Emily was Sadie's daughter, she was more like her father in appearance. Fair skinned without the facial features of her mother, Emily looked more of her Father's heritage.

Daniel had never wanted to fall in love so quickly after his brother's fall, but he realized time was adding

years to his life. Not out of desperation, as Daniel's wealth could bring him, anyone, he had waited for the right time and more so the right woman. Emily was never on his mind until the day of Nathan's wedding and the dress she wore caught his attention. Soon forgotten, Daniel was sitting on the sofa at Nathan's house when offered a cup of coffee by Emily. As she handed him the warm cup, Emily slid her hand along his, and his heart also warmed.

Rebecca had noticed the gesture from across the room and almost giggled. Emily had talked about Daniel before and confided in Rebecca that she found him attractive. Rebecca's advice was straightforward. Show some affection and see what happens. Rebecca remembered that moment with the coffee and Daniel's reaction as being struck by a wooden mallet.

Rebecca had watched Daniel and Emily as they slowly fell in love. It was not quick, but rather give and take until Emily and Daniel found compatibilities in life, and some not. Emily still had boundaries she must cross. Being free from never knowing freedom, led her to some awkward moments. Daniel was as his brother, the gentleman and never forced his affection. Rebecca was pleased the day she walked into her living quarters and found Daniel and Emily sitting side beside on the sofa, holding hands and talking of Daniel's father. Meanwhile, Rebecca was getting bigger and more awkward.

Sundays were spent at Jacob's house and this particular Sunday, Jacob was worried. Pierre and his sons were there along with Rebecca and Emily. Of

course, Rebecca was with Nathan and Emily was holding Daniel's hand, and Janis noticed, frowned then smiled.

There was the usual meal and then the parlor to sit and talk. Jacob voiced his concern about the Country and its division concerning States rights. No one understood; Jacob explained and spoke of the riots in other cities and the breakdown of government in States along the East coast. He feared a divided Nation in the decade to follow. Everyone was quiet in ponderance of their future.

Rebecca said, "Ouch, I am sorry, the baby kicked."

Everyone laughed and then Jacob said, "For the preservation of family I would like to move the family from New Orleans to Western Louisiana before the year of 1860. I fear a divided Nation, a war will issue and no one here is of age or want to go to war. Silence, and then Martha said, "I see the dead and dying lying in fields of blood. Jacob, you need to go soon, as the decade to come will be hell on earth." Martha continued, "I will stay here if possible, to see to the house of Jacob."

Rebecca and Nathan's child was born on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1855. They named the child Jacob Pierre.

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Jacob and Nathan had made several trips to Baton Rouge and across the Mississippi River at Port Allen Louisiana to find some property. They saw the place

Nathan had found but feared it was too close to the river and possible conflict if Martha's intuition was correct.

Just on the edge of civilization, they found a small working plantation. It was an estate sale of one Emelie Barre, and the property laid some distance West of Bayou Courtableau some four miles Northeast of Opelousas Louisiana. They found the notice in the Opelousas Courier. The cost was not a factor, in as much as the field workers. There were less than twenty and their families. If purchased Nathan and Jacob would see to those peoples by allowing them to become self-sufficient while supplementing the family in the large house with provisions. It was a decision often made when slavery had a bitter taste when the ones in bondage were not able to be on their own. No education and job skills were just in the fields. For that reason, Nathan and Jacob made a deposit through a local bank, and Jacob helped a local lawyer draw up a bill of sale pending any obligation to others, such as debtors.

It was the summer of the year of 1857 when Jacob purchased passage on a steamboat for his extended family. Daniel and Emily were still an item but no commitment as of yet.

Jacob Pierre and his sister Martha Janis, born January 11th, 1857 were Nathan and Rebecca's family now, and the journey would be hard but acceptable. Their home sold quickly in New Orleans to a bachelor and a man of the cloth. He boarded for a month until funds could be transferred for the purchase. He was of the Methodist persuasion.

Martha was alone now as Moses had crossed the “Jordan River” as Martha so aptly put, during a stormy night in August 1856. Martha had found Moses as Nathan had so long ago, napping, but eternally. She would stay in the house of Jacob.

Pierre was coming without question. Daniel and Emily should come later after he packed the leather shop for travel. Sometimes the fortunes of time are bitter, and Daniel was able to leave in late December 1861 before the City fell to the Union Troops in the year of 1862, but did not follow Jacob’s path. When Daniel left, he was alone as Emily went to live with Martha.

Jacob’s family traveled the Mississippi River to Baton Rouge and then a ferry crossing at Port Allen Louisiana, where they were met by a caravan of wagons and men who loaded their household goods not left behind and personal items such as clothing. Martha Janis was cranky and was taken by a large woman of color, who comforted the child while Rebecca watched the boychild.

It was not an arduous trip, but not unforgettable. Janis and Rebecca were surprised at the house and its mass. It was still sparsely furnished as the previous widow had sold most goods to sustain the soul and body. It was clean as Matilda said, “From top to bottom.” Matilda cared for Martha Janis the whole trip relinquishing only for breastfeeding. Matilda was the midwife for the locals, and she let Rebecca know that she would be willing to help the Doctor in any way possible.

Rebecca had brought some used equipment with her along with several periodicals. One item she prized was a wooden device once placed on the chest, you could hear the sound of the heart beating. Doctor O'Conner had it lathed just for her as a gift.

Jacob's term for judgeship had expired in the City of New Orleans, and he was looking forward to helping William Parrott with his practice in Opelousas. When filing for a deed on the estate, they had become acquainted, and it was William who suggested once moved, Jacob should become part of his Law practice. Jacob agreed to specific terms and restitution.

Jacob and his extended family felt safe in the new surroundings. The field hands were ecstatic that they could be of service and remain on the plantation. They even named their line of homes, into a town.

Rebecca and the children were delighted with the open grounds, and Rebecca never feared as Matilda watched the children, and cared with a constant eye.

Pierre, Nathan and Daniel's father was in the large garden alongside the workers hoeing, and Nathan said, "Let him be. He needs that solitude and work."

Nathan spent his time in the harness room helping Joe with the leather. Joe was the stableman, and he allowed Nathan to help because he noticed Nathan's skills in leathercraft. When Nathan asked, it was just "Joe," and nothing more.

Jacob would travel once again as a journey lawyer for William Parrott, so Janis busied her self with grandchildren and some light housekeeping.

Jacob felt the impending conflict of a divided Nation, and he feared for his family. He had moved to escape the City of New Orleans because he knew it would fall leaving the residents in distress. Here he was uneasy as the first year past with just rumors but as the new year of 1860 dawned he knew the war was on the horizon.

Rebecca had opened a small practice in the carriage shed and was treating the usual bumps and bruises. She left the birthing to Matilda as it usually was the home of the mother to be, where the child would deliver. Rebecca was still without a license to practice medicine, but it did not matter.

Jacob was correct, his sanctuary for his family would not go untouched by the coming war. For that reason, he and several members of the new town went into the marshland north of the property and built enclosures for livestock. Here they would be hidden from marauders. There would be caretakers posted and feed and hay brought from the higher grounds to the west. Root vegetables were buried that fall in burlap sacks and foods were dried. Barrels were buried under the stables, and a cellar hidden by a broken, abandoned wagon contained several vats of flour and meal. Then the wait began.

Jacob Pierre was growing, and his sister Martha Janis was the charmers in this new house of Jacob. There was a rumor of regiments of soldiers to be formed and Nathan being of age was concerned. Then word came late December 1860 that the first state had

seceded from the Union of States and more were to follow.

Rebecca was worried but felt safe for the moment. Jacob had just entered the foyer with the news, and his face was grim. Nathan was with others in the marshland and would be until nightfall. Jacob also had a telegram from the City of New Orleans and that Daniel and Emily had moved to Jacob's house and was with Martha, and would be as the City was not safe close to the ports.

Jacob would spend more time at home with his legal obligations until the time would tell where all this division was going to lead. In late January 1861, Louisiana seceded from the Union of States.

Jacob was concerned as militias were being formed into regiments. Neither Nathan or he were involved, and he feared that the war he wanted to escape from in New Orleans was coming home.

Jacob was still in the practice of law with William Parrott and traveled to Opelousas on occasion for court. His grandson and granddaughter were growing, and the plantation was not doing well with this war looming. He gathered the workers and told them if needed, they could leave to save themselves and their family. Matilda said she would stay to care for Rebecca and the children if acceptable. Jacob appreciated her concern and gave his blessing if Matilda wanted to stay.

The news came that the Capital of Louisiana at Baton Rouge was to be evacuated and the seat of government moved. William and Jacob had heard and



wondered where then the wire came. The new Confederacy Capital of Louisiana was to be Opelousas. William immediately wired the Governor and offered his legal office, and the cable was returned with an affirmative.

Governor Thomas Overton Moore moved his staff and the government to Opelousas during the year of 1862. It was the old Franklin College that became the new capitol building. Jacob was given an office and would be the legal advisor to Governor Moore for the duration of the war, which should be short in length.

January 3rd of the year of 1862, Jacob had shown a telegram to Rebecca. It was from Daniel and dated December 29, 1861. Daniel had left New Orleans for Carrollton. The wire was for Nathan though and gave instructions and a location if Nathan wanted to join him. Jacob knew Daniel had stopped at the stables at the track. Daniel was fleeing his adoptive Country, and the telegram gave Nathan the opportunity to travel Northwest and away from the conflict.

Rebecca was distraught and scared. Jacob explained it like this – Nathan could go to war not by choice but by order of the Governor. Nathan could not be hidden, and if he were to go to war, he would by all odds never return. Yet, the odds were better if he, Nathan joined Daniel and fled from the coming battles and the war's duration.

It was midnight and led by a worker, Nathan was taken northeast and met Daniel at dawn west of Pointe Coupee Louisiana. They hid until dusk and midnight on the second day found them along the border of

Arkansas and Louisiana riding two horses and leading a pack. Nathan was already missing Rebecca and the children, but he knew this was survival, and someday he would return.

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**J**acob was correct with the law signed by the Governor during the fall of the year of 1862. All able body men between the ages of 17 and 50 were to join the ranks of the Confederate Army. Jacob is in a position to not obey, as he was exempt for the moment due to his office being just down the hall from the Governor of the state.

Rebecca was lost once again. As much as she was the day, Janis saw her on the docks of St Louis, but that was a lifetime ago. She was sitting on the veranda with Janis when she heard the soldiers coming. They wore butternut gray led by an officer on a large bay horse. The children were hustled into the house by Matilda as Janis rose as the officer rode to the porch. He asked her of her husband as he was searching for men to fill his ranks. Janis said her husband was not home but in Opelousas.

Rebecca simply said, "I am a widow."

This man asked if his Sergeant could search the house, and Janis said, "No Captain, but you may come in to see what you need."

The officer was surprised and smiled, while he dismounted.

Jacob with his wisdom and forethought had a death certificate made concerning one Nathan Pierre Thibodeaux. Cause of death, thrown from a horse. Not only that all evidence of a man beside Jacob had been removed from the house. The Captain asked of the clothing, and when Janis mentioned they belonged to her husband Jacob Buell, the Captain immediately left the parlor. After he mounted, he said he had seen Jacob at the Capitol and promised that she would not be bothered by other regiments. As he rode through the gate, he tipped his hat. As the troops marched away, one soldier stopped and painted a mark on the stone gate post. From that date forward no one in uniform inquired of menfolk.

Pierre, Daniel and Nathan's father was told of his sons fleeing North and was relieved. Pierre was living somewhere in the marsh, and only came forth when he needed supplies. He was not alone as a Native American was with him, he told, but she was never seen.

Daniel and Nathan were in Arkansas now and had turned Northeast toward Missouri. From there, Iowa, Minnesota, and then the home of their youth in Winnipeg Canada.

Rebecca missed Nathan, and so did the children. There would be no communication of any kind coming from anywhere. What news did come was when Jacob would return from Opelousas Louisiana. It was not good, and Jacob was afraid the war would find them. Baton Rouge had fallen as well as New Orleans.

Rebecca voiced her worry over Martha and Emily, but anxiety was all that could be felt.

Jacob Pierre was seven now and could be found almost anyplace. He and Matilda were the best of friends. Martha Janis was five and was on the porch with Nathan's father and Rebecca when they heard the rumbling. It would come and go as thunder.

Pierre just said, "Cannon fire."

Pierre walked to the east of the veranda and listened.

He said, "Seems to be coming from Pointe Coupee on the Atchafalaya River."

Janis said, "That is eight miles away, could that be possible?"

Pierre said, "Yes," as the sound of a trotting horse heard, and Jacob turned the buggy into the yard. His face frowned, and he asked if they had heard.

Matilda served the meal on the veranda, and the rumbling sound had lessened. Jacob told the family that he had spoken to the Governor and it was possible the Capital would be moved to Shreve port Louisiana in the days to come if the war continued.

Janis asked if he, Jacob would continue to serve as the Governor's legal adviser.

Jacob said, "Yes if we all agree to leave here and follow the government to Shreve port."

Jacob said, "The move to Shreve port would secure their safety from marauders and the Union Army which would eventually capture Opelousas."

Most of the male field workers had joined a black regiment and were gone to war in the south. There was

nothing that stood between Jacob's family and a coming disaster.

The fourth morning after, as promised by the Governor a caravan of wagons appeared in Jacob's yard. Rebecca, Janis, and Matilda had spent most of the night packing the necessities and hiding the rest in marshes and thick woods for the worker's families. Once again they were fleeing the war.

As they left, Pierre Thibodeaux was standing on the porch with a woman, as he was not going. Rebecca and Nathan's children were somewhere with Matilda on a lead wagon. The center wagon and two behind, surrounded by soldiers were filled with provisions not hidden and taken from the plantation. Rebecca sat with Jacob in his buggy alongside Janis and scared beyond belief.

Jacob mentioned the distance as being two hundred miles, or more so, so there would be several overnight camps. Then he reassured them that they were safer now than yesterday.

The caravan joined another at the Bayou Courtableau and traveled Northwest toward Nuba Louisiana from the sounds of war. Janis noticed the regiment as the one being at the house days ago, and she mentioned to Jacob of the Captain's chivalry.

Jacob looked at the front of the regiment and saw the Captain and said, "Yes, he is quite the gentleman and very intelligent. He was born in Belgium and came to New Orleans several years ago. I knew him there, and he left, and we found each other in Opelousas. He is a lawyer, but for the duration of the war, he is

Captain Arthur Simon assigned to Co K 18<sup>th</sup> regiment of the Yellow Jacket Battalion.”

Jacob said, “He told me of meeting you Janis and his condolences to the widow Rebecca and the children.” Rebecca smiled at the deception and thought, “Where are you now Nathan?”

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Nathan and Daniel had camped for the night at Buffalo Licking Missouri and had joined a ragtag group of others fleeing war, they had wished to not involve life or limb. Some would come, and some would go as each man seemed to have a destination. A month later found Nathan and Daniel in the deep snows of February somewhere in Minnesota, and Daniel was thinking of Emily and Nathan of Rebecca. Unknown to Daniel, Emily was troubled in health.

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Rebecca started weeping, and her mother knew partially but asked if she was alright. Rebecca sniffled and said, “Yes, just tired of looking over my shoulder at what was and afraid to look forward, for fear that it is an illusion.” Janis took her daughter’s hand as the dust thickened around the wagons.

The Government of Louisiana rolled northwest past Alexandria, Natchitoches, and into Shreve port Louisiana on a ninth day after leaving Opelousas.

Word had come that Opelousas had fallen into Union Control.

Jacob tried to secure a home for his family, but people fleeing had filled all the available rooms. For that reason, on the banks of the Red River, Janis made a home under the canvas of a large tent. Temporary of course, until lodging could be found or the war ended. Rebecca made do.

Matilda brought everyone into focus as she said, "Better than some homes back on the plantation."

Jacob spent time with the Governor's staff and the year went, and the new would bring a new Governor. Henry Watkins Allen took the oath of office, and Jacob's employment continued into the year of 1864.

Rebecca had resigned herself to the fact that Nathan was not coming back. She wished Martha was close as she would know spiritually, as she had that gift, but Martha was in all probability a spirit herself by now. Rebecca thought of Emily and could not even remember her facial features. She stood outside her tent and watched as Jacob Pierre would imitate the march of the soldiers. He would be nine this year and quite the lad. Martha Janis was wherever Matilda was, and that was okay. Rebecca's mother was in the large camp kitchen along with several people of color as an overseer of the mess.

Jacob had become apprehensive, August of the year 1864 as he was privy to the Southern cause was not winnable. The dispatches given to the Governor were critical in nature concerning the outcome. Jacob had a decision to make, and it meant uprooting his

family again. New Orleans Louisiana was out of the question. The City was in ruins and under martial law, and Jacob knew it would not change after the war was won or lost, for decades. The plantation along Courtableau Bayou may still be there, but likely unliveable. He would contact William as he had stayed behind in Opelousas concerning the real estate. Jacob knew North would be the logical choice, but where? Then he thought, why not Shreve port Louisiana?

The home in New Orleans was a gift, so if it was a loss, it was not a concern. He had money in several investments which he had liquefied before the war. His cash assets were secured in several wooden boxes, marked law books.

Rebecca became uncomfortable in her quarters, and there was no privacy. The children were happy wherever they were. Matilda was a big help as well as Grandmother. She had not approached Jacob of her troubles, but she would not have to, as time passed.

With the war now at a distance and coming to an end, Jacob started to search for a home in Caddo Parish. Janis was pleased and requested that there be room for Rebecca, Matilda, and the children. Jacob assured her that would be his priority. For that reason, August of 1864 found Jacob seeking a home for his extended family.

The small farm was outside Shreve port Louisiana. Just Northwest some five miles. It was not a plantation, but it was remote, and Texas was just miles away. It had belonged to a couple who had abandoned the property and returned to the east before the war, Now



it was being sold for back taxes and liens. Jacob had taken Janis to see the place and grounds, and she was pleased. The house needed work but could be saved. Several outbuildings including stables were on the property. The home sits in the lower quarter of the acreage and reached by a long curved driveway some 400 feet from the gate. There was room on the forty acres for improvement and Jacob thought of Nathan and Daniel and their past expertise with cattle. There was pasture for a feedlot and some ten acres for hay.

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Nathan and Daniel, at the moment, were in the house of their sister Sarah. They heard the war was almost finished and had plans to leave within days. Sarah was married and had a child, Noel. They had told her of their father, but she could not recall as she was six when the father left. Neither Nathan or Daniel had heard from family in the deep south since they fled. Wires were down, and mail was nonexistent. They had no idea where Jacob and Janis may be or if Rebecca was still with them. Daniel thought of Emily but knew that dream was no longer alive. It was the next morning that they left for the border and journeyed south towards the unknown.

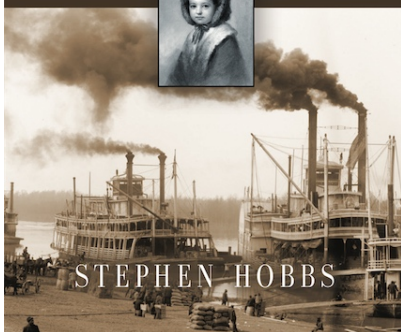
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Jacob had filed the necessary papers and paid back taxes and several liens on the property. One for a

merchant who had several items that Jacob purchased and asked to hold until the house was ready for occupancy.

Jacob argued with the stableman but came away with a wagon, buggy and two teams of horses. The mare for the carriage had a foal at her side. Jacob had almost exhausted all cash he had saved, but not that hidden, they were enough savings to survive a brutal start. It was late fall of 1864.

# Rebecca of Caddo Parish Louisiana



*Rebecca, a child lost and given a chance to live a life by an adult who was also lost. From the docks of St. Louis to a life lived in Louisiana and a family shared through decades of times that were troublesome, Rebecca's life's story unfolds. Love found, love lost, children born, Rebecca shares her story through five decades for all to remember.*

## REBECCA OF CADDO PARISH LOUISIANA

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