

Michel A. Becnel

Michel A. Becnel, a prominent planter and merchant of Wallace, St. John Baptist Parish, La., was born July 23, 1838, in St. John Baptist Parish. He is a son of Peter and Josephine (Lennen) Becnel, natives of Louisiana. The parents of our subject were married about 1834 in St. John Baptist Parish, and soon located on the plantation where he now lives. He followed planting all of his life. The mother of Michel Becnel died in 1844. She was a devout member of the Catholic Church.

In 1846 the father of the subject married Miss Fannie De Baconnais, a native of France, who came to Louisiana about 1840. She died about 1848, her husband died in 1856. Both were members of the Catholic Church. To the last union no children were born; by the first there were two children born; Peter L., born in 1836, April 3, and was killed in the Campaign of Atlanta, Ga.; the subject of this notice is the younger of the two children. He was sent to Paris, France, in 1850, and remained there until 1857, graduating from Rollin College with the degree of A. B. He then returned to his old home and enlisted in the Confederate army in 1861, in the Washington Artillery, Company E, under the command of Buck Miller of New Orleans, as a private. He soon changed and was elected Captain of Company J, of the Tenth Louisiana Regiment, then at Yorktown. He was in the Battle of Yorktown, the Seven Days Fight around Richmond, Chickahominy and others of more or less importance. He was discharged at the last named place and came to Louisiana and there raised another company. In 1862 he went to Port Hudson, and was there during the siege. In the early part of 1863 he was taken sick, and went to the house of a friend, Dr. J. H. Weindhal, then in Point Coupee Parish, and there remained about four months, very near to the point of death. While there he became acquainted with Miss Leonie Provosty, who afterward became his wife. She was a native of Louisiana, born in 1843, and a daughter of Judge August and Eliska (Labry) Provosty, both natives of Louisiana. Mr. Becnel was married November 18, 1863. To our subject and his wife were born fifteen children--two daughters and thirteen sons--and only five of them are now living: Lionel, Henry, Mary, Gaston and Otto. Lionel married, January 5, 1891, Miss Leonie Dayries who was born November, 1866. She is a daughter of Leon Dayries and wife, natives of Louisiana.

Politically, Mr. Becnel is a Democrat, and cast his first vote for Breckinridge. He has been a member of the police jury since 1876. With his family, he is a member of the Catholic Church. He owns about 600 acres of fine land, upon which he raises sugar and rice. He has a sugar mill and does a very lucrative business. He also runs a general merchandise store, which pays him well. He has lived on his present place since 1844, which is the same plantation which his father owned. He is a liberal supporter of schools, churches, and all other public enterprises of worth.

Biographical and Historical Memories of Louisiana, Volume 2, Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co. 1892, pp. 278-279.

Transcribed by Jim Cox