

Rev. Louis Napoléon Beaudry (Boudrye) Papers (SC-161)

Biographical Sketch

Louis Napoléon Beaudry (or Boudrye) was born on August 11, 1833 in the town of Highgate in Franklin County, Vermont, near the border with French Canada. He was the thirteenth of fifteen children born to John and Marie (nee Bail de Printemps) Beaudry and survived a childhood plague of black fever that took the life of a sister. When Louis was five his family moved back to Henryville, near the north end Lake Champlain in Quebec, Canada, where they ran a bakery and small restaurant. While in Canada the family traveled some distance to St. Mary, Quebec where Louis was baptized a Roman Catholic; in later years Beaudry recounted that his mother was a devoted Catholic. After six years in Canada the family moved back to Vermont, where the family stayed for two years and then moved to Ticonderoga, New York, where they remained for several years. As a child Louis attended Keeseville Academy near Lake Champlain.

Louis experienced a religious conversion on March 19, 1854 through the efforts of his childhood friends Joseph Cook and Benjamin Pomeroy and after years of internal struggle resulting from his personal reading of the Bible that followed the death of his father six years earlier. After his conversion he worked as a school teacher and was ordained to the Methodist ministry, eventually working in the Troy Conference (NY). In his later years Beaudry wrote a quasi-autobiography, *Spiritual struggles of a Roman Catholic: an autobiographical sketch* that sought to bring “Catholic and Protestant friends and fellow-citizens face to face....to discuss in a friendly and Christian spirit the matters which have kept them so long and so widely at variance.” The book was described by one reviewer as a “hand grenade” in the “war of evangelical Christianity with papal corruptions” (p. i). This was republished in French in Montreal in 1882 as *Face à face, ou, Lutttes mentales d'un catholique romain?*

Throughout his life he was involved with volunteer organizations such as the Band of Hope Temperance Union and the Cabal—the latter being an impromptu speaking club of which he was a founder. Beaudry was a great writer of verse and has penned a select number of hymns. These can be found throughout his journals, both written and snipped from periodicals in which they were published; his motto was “Nulla die sine linea” (No day without a line) and his journal keeping expresses this well.

Beaudry married Celeste G. Gallyianx in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 1858. A year and a half later Celeste died (September 1859?) and by October, 1860, Louis had been married to Pearlie Schermerhorn in North Chatham, New York. Together the Beaudry s had four children; Minnie Luella (b. 1862), John Schermerhorn (b. 1864), Mary Angelina (b. 1866), and Louis Charles (b. 1871).

Beaudry served as a Civil War chaplain in the Union Army, from January 31, 1863 to July 18, 1865, and served with the Fifth New York Cavalry in the Ira Harris Guard. This unit served at Gettysburg, which Beaudry recounts daily life in detail in his book, *Historic records of the Fifth New York Cavalry, First Ira Harris guard: its organization, marches, raids, scouts engagements and general services, during the rebellion of 1861-1865* (finished within months of his discharge). His years of service are also recounted in a published version of his journals from

those years, not included in this collection of journals, that is titled *The war journal of Louis N. Beaudry, Fifth New York Cavalry*, edited and published by his great-great grandson. This work went into a fourth and enlarged edition (1874). Furthering his writing on his Civil War experiences, in 1889 he published *The Libby Chronicle*, which was a copy of a newspaper written by the prisoners of Libby in 1863. Though captured at Gettysburg and marched for nearly two weeks to Libby Prison in Richmond, Beaudry escaped any great harm during the war, though he did contract malaria. This would cause him difficulty in his later years and qualified him for a military pension.

After his military service, Beaudry returned to his family in New York, who were living near Albany at the time, and continued his ministry and teaching. He and his wife and any children that remained at home moved to Chicago in 1890, where a year previous Libby Prison had been moved and rebuilt as a tourist attraction. Beaudry died in Chicago two years later on 3 January. Pearlle would die many years later 14 October 1917.