

Early Rudel Family History

1125 AD to 1440 AD

This section of the Rudel Family history took place in an area of western France called Aquitaine. The capital of the area was a seaport fortress city called Blaye, France. This city is located on the Dordogne River, which was a main trading route into central France. This is a wonderful wine region to visit approximately 60 miles northwest of Bordeaux. It is famous for its Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. The wine districts are The Premieres Cotes de Blaye and Cotes de Blaye and can be purchased in the US.

The Chateau de Rudel (Chateau means Castle in French) was constructed between 1126 and 1137AD by Vulgria Rudel a descendant of the Count of Angouleme. The Rudels were feudal lords, who ruled the district of Aquitaine for three centuries. They were placed in power by the Queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine. At the end of her reign she controlled all of France, England and most of Spain through marriages and conquests.

It was the Rudels who built the Chateau de Rudel, a Hospital in 1257 and an important trading market along with the Saint-Romain Abbey on the Saint-Jacques de Compostelle road. But their claim to fame comes from Jaufre Rudel, who was a French national hero and troubadour. He wrote and performed many ballads and poems. He also fought in the Crusades representing Eleanor of Aquitaine. It was during this time that he met and fell in love with a latin Princess named Melissinde. According to the legend, he embarked for Tripoli in 1147 and died, on the shore, at the end of his voyage, in the arms of the one who had enchanted him. There is a University and many public buildings and streets named after him that remain today. The existing Citadelle (build in later years) and the ruins of the Chateau have been designated as an UNESCO World Heritage Site. There is a Museum in the Citadelle which is very interesting and has many relics and models of the original Castle.

There is no trace of the Rudel name in the area in recent times. You will find several references to the Rudel name in a bestselling book written by Alison Weir in 1999, titled Eleanor of Aquitaine, published by Ballantine Books – New York. You will also find a wealth of information on the internet. It is presumed that the Rudel's left this area in the late 1400's and relocated to southeast France prior to immigrating to Germany. There are other Castles located in Germany with the Rudel name.

There are several restaurants and a Hotel-Restaurant la Citadelle located within the Citadelle de Blaye. We have tried all and the food is good with excellent wine and they are very friendly especially when you give them the Rudel name.

The attachments that I am including were taken during several trips to the region and are somewhat self-explanatory. Please call us if you have any questions about them or the other information provided. Cell # 602-301-3949.

I think that it is important that we pass this information on to our siblings and children so that they might appreciate the rich history of our family.