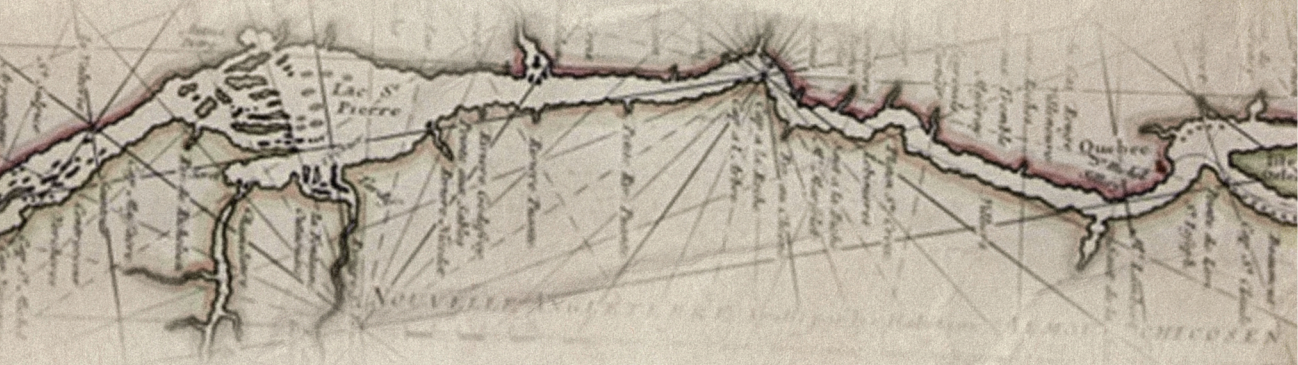


RIVER OF POSSIBILITY

André Robidou *dit* L'Espagnol
& Jeanne Denot



Guy Rabideau

**RIVER
OF
POSSIBILITY**



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# RIVER OF POSSIBILITY

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André Robidou *dit* L'Espagnol

&

Jeanne Denot

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Guy Rabideau



This book is dedicated to my late father, Clyde M. Rabideau, Sr.,  
who was very committed to family genealogy

and to

the future generations of the Robidou family.

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# Preface



Several years ago, one of my brothers proposed that we take our father on a trip to Spain to explore the origins of André Robidou *dit* L'Espagnol - our seventeenth-century paternal ancestor and the only Robidou to immigrate to the New World. Given our father's passion for and dedication to family genealogy, we knew he would truly enjoy the experience.

I took on the task of locating André's place of origin in Spain. It quickly turned into a significant challenge without a straightforward answer. Well-regarded French-Canadian genealogical sources identified André's origin as Sainte-Marie-en-Galice (Santa Maria in Galicia), Diocese of Burgos, Spain. However, research revealed no such parish in the Diocese of Burgos. Eventually, I discovered an old church named Santa Maria de Burgos located in Galicia, which led me to examine the original records for a possible transposition of names.

As I combed through the original documents, my





frustration with much of the existing genealogical research grew. Many sources failed to cite original documents, repeated speculation from other references as fact, or made unwarranted assumptions without providing the basis for such assumptions. With the ongoing information revolution, biographical data should become more thorough and accessible within the next twenty years. For now, though, that remains far from reality.

Unfortunately, while tantalizing clues to André's origin were found, no specific hometown was ever found, and the trip to honor our father never took place.

At some point, though, I committed to compiling and publishing a biography of André and his wife Jeanne Denot. I aimed to correct existing errors, verify or challenge speculative claims including André's place of origin in Spain, and present a clearer picture of what is known and not known. Throughout this work, I have made several speculative claims of my own but have tried each time to provide the underlying evidence. Hopefully, something here will help another family genealogist help locate André's hometown, a task that has so far eluded me.

Simply listing facts without placing André and Jeanne in the context of their society, and without making reasonable assumptions, would strip their story of meaning and reduce rich lives to dry data. Adding background was essential so that a better understanding could be had of these founders of the Robidou family and of its closely related Surprenant family.







This work results from that commitment. It seeks to highlight the impact of André and Jeanne - two seemingly ordinary individuals from centuries past. My hope is that it offers those interested in their ancestry a deeper understanding of how each of us contributes to future generations.

Guy Rabideau





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1. *Le Marinier*

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The cool waters of the Fleuve La Loire flowed westward through Brittany, France, on their way to the Atlantic. As they reached the city of Nantes, the waters branched out and encircled several islands. There the waters were joined by the rivers l'Erdre from the north and Sèvre Nantaise from the south. Small eddies and whirlpools enveloped the stone foundations of a line of bridges extending across La Loire from the main city on the north, a line only broken by the intervening islands.

The bridge stretching across La Loire divided the ships used for ocean trade, primarily galleons, fluyts, and barques, anchored to the west and downriver, from the shallow-draft riverboats, such as gabarres, sapines, chalands, and foutreaus, positioned to the east and upriver for trade along La Loire.

Along the shore, rudiments of a dike were taking shape to control the current's erosion of the river's banks. The restless waters fought their containment and lapped against the hulls of the various boats at the city's quay, each lined up east to west with the river's current.

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Ships and Boats of 17th Century France

Galleons were large, multi-decked ocean-going warships and cargo carriers, built with high fore- and after-castles, used by France mainly for Atlantic and colonial service.

Fluyts (flûtes) were Dutch-designed, narrow-waisted, capacious merchant ships adopted widely in France for cheap, efficient bulk transport and naval supply.

Barques were versatile, three-masted coastal or deep-sea vessels with mixed square and triangular sails, used for fishing, trade, and military auxiliary roles.

Gabarres were robust French transport ships, naval or civilian, built for carrying heavy stores, timber, munitions, or provisions between river and coastal ports.

Sapines were riverine timber-raft boats from central and southwestern France, flat-bottomed and expendable, used to float wood, grain, or wine downstream.

Chalands were wide, flat-bottomed barges for rivers and estuaries, ideal for shallow water, sandbanks, and heavy cargo like stone, salt, or grain.

Foutreaux (foutriaux/futreaux) were Loire-style light river boats - long, narrow, and shallow - often punted or sailed, used for quick transport of goods, fish, and passengers.

On the shore of the river, the smells of Nantes made themselves known. The sea itself, many kilometers distant, gave a hint of salt to the air. Pitch, used to patch the hulls of the boats in the city's quay, though, was the dominant smell, overpowering those of the foodstuffs in the ships' cargos.





1.2 “Nantes en Bretagne” by Pierre Aveline. Nantes in the late 17th century.

The bustling noises of a busy port filled the air: vessel repairs echoed across the docks, cargo thudded as it was loaded and unloaded, ships’ bells rang out, and voices in several languages shouted orders, argued, sang to the rhythm of work, haggled over prices, or hailed returning sailors from long voyages.

In the early 1660s, Nantes was one of the most cosmopolitan cities Europe had to offer. People from all walks of life and many different countries called it home. Among them was a *marinier*, or a riverman, André Robidou dit L’Espagnol,¹ then in his early twenties.²





André was born in the town or parish of Santa Maria, Spain,³ around 1640,⁴ to Manuel Robidou and his wife, Catherine Alue.⁵ With thousands of places in Spain named Santa Maria and the original documents offering few clues, identifying his exact birthplace remains difficult.

The most specific detail about his origin appears in the marriage record of his eldest daughter, Marie Romaine, which claims he came from “*Ste Marie en Galice, diocese de Burgos*” (“Santa Maria in Galicia, diocese of Burgos”).⁶ However, this information creates more confusion than clarity. Galicia and the Diocese of Burgos never overlapped, and no town or parish named Santa Maria of Galicia exists within the Diocese of Burgos.

This document, created more than five years after André’s death,⁷ likely reflects the flawed memory of a fourteen-year-old girl recalling her father’s birthplace, and it warrants serious skepticism.

The only other original document offering clues to André’s origin is his own marriage record.⁸ This document, far more reliable than later sources and likely based on information André provided himself, states that he came from “*Ste Marie proche Caly*” (Santa Maria near *Caly*”).

In the mid-seventeenth century, Spain encompassed more than it does today. Its territory included parts of present-day Belgium and various enclaves within modern-day France. Despite this broader geographic reach, a review of French and Spanish maps from the era reveals no trace of a city or area named *Caly*. Given the non-standardized common phonetic spelling of the day, though, this likely refers to the





French city of Calais located in the north of France on the English Channel. The Spanish Netherlands was then within a few kilometers of Calais, and this more likely reflects André's origin.

A likely place of origin for André would then be Sainte-Marie-Kerque, in the Pas-de-Calais department of France. It bears the right name (“Kerque” is Flemish for “Church”); it is located close to Calais (approximately 13 kilometers by a straight line); it was part of the Spanish Netherlands at the time André was born; and, due to the Treaty of the Pyrenees, much of the surrounding area changed from Spanish control to French control in 1659, with Sainte-Marie-Kerque lying on the immediate Spanish side of the border, immediately before André is known to be a *marinier* in Nantes. Rather than André migrating to France, France migrated to André. Unfortunately, notary records relating to the village for this time period have, for the most part, been destroyed or lost; parish records for the village are not available until 1688, and even these early parish records have not yet been indexed. Note also the Nouvelle-France immigrant André Marcil *dit* L’Espagnol, who was baptized in 1642 in Saint-Omer, located about 18 kilometers from Sainte-Marie-Kerque. Saint-Omer, like Sainte-Marie-Kerque, was part of the Spanish Netherlands when Marcil was baptized there and it subsequently became part of France due to the Treaty of the Pyrenees. Marcil kept the *dit* name of L’Espagnol despite France migrating to him, rather than the other way around.⁹

Supporting the evidence of his Spanish roots is his *dit* name, L’Espagnol (“the Spaniard”). In France, a *dit* name (dit





1.3 A portion of “Description de la Vicomté de Bourbourg” by Jean Boisseau, 1658 (“Cales” is upper left, “Mariekerque” is lower right)

meaning “called”) served as a nickname to distinguish families with similar surnames, often based on occupation, place of origin, or another identifying trait. Sometimes the *dit* name derived from a father’s first name or a mother’s maiden name and could eventually become the family’s new surname. In Nouvelle-France, people often adopted *dit* names even without a need to distinguish among families. Since André was the only Robidou to migrate to Nouvelle-France,¹⁰ his *dit* name didn’t serve to differentiate him from another Robidou, but simply highlighted his Spanish origin.





All records listing his name and those of his parents appear in French or Latin, and the scribes typically used French or Latin versions of the original names which was a practice made easier by André's inability to write his own name.¹¹ His father's first name appears as both Manuel¹² and Emmanuel.¹³ While Emmanuel was the French version, Manuel was a common Spanish name at the time. This detail further supports the conclusion that André was of Spanish descent.

Original Spanish versions of other names don't appear in the records, though André was possibly used in place of Andres, and Catherine, André's mother's name, was possibly substituted for Caterina. The surname Robidou, documented in France since the 12th century, is believed to be a derogatory form of the name Robert.¹⁴ However, there's no evidence linking André to the French Robidou family or to any French ancestry, despite claims made in several secondary sources. Robidou was probably adapted from a similar-sounding Spanish or Flemish surname, but the original name remains unknown.

The challenge of identifying the original Spanish name extends to André's mother's surname, Alue, or possibly Alve. Neither Alue nor Alve is recognized as a common French surname, nor does it resemble any common Spanish surname.

In the early 1660s, a *marinier* on the Fleuve La Loire like André played an active role in trade that was vital to the French economy.¹⁵

La Loire coursed through the heart of France, an artery that carried not only water, but commerce. Stretching from





1.4 A portion of “*Gouvernement General d’Orléans*” by Nicolas Sanson, 1651. Continued on next page.

the Massif Central to the Atlantic Ocean, the river linked inland cities like Orléans to the bustling Atlantic port of Nantes.

Mariniers were not seafarers, nor were they land-bound laborers. Their world was the river itself, and their livelihoods depended on their ability to navigate its ever-changing currents and sandbanks. Their vessels, flat-bottomed boats suited for the shallows of La Loire, hauled cargo up and down the river. La Loire demanded respect; without it, a *marinier* could quickly find himself up the creek without a cargo.

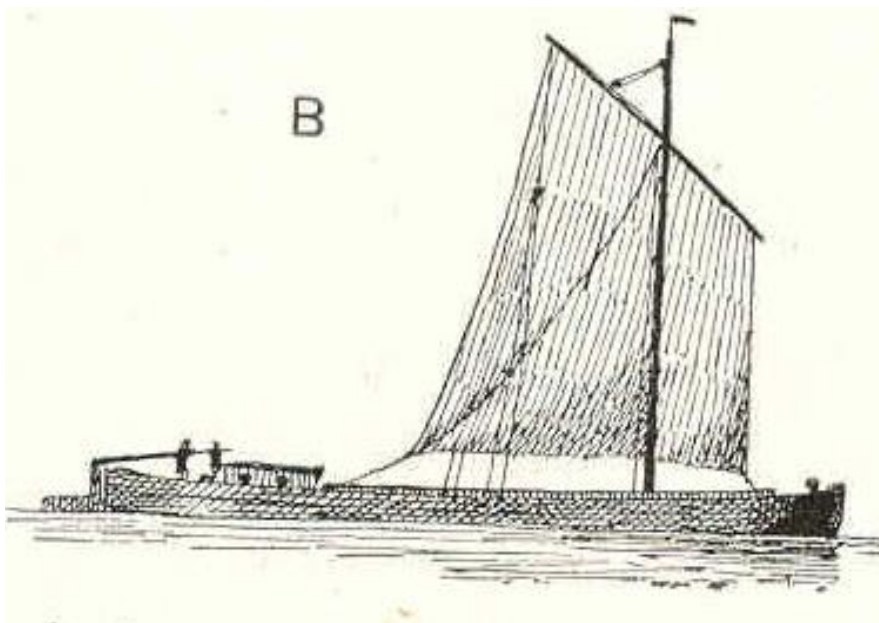




The typical vessel used for Loire trade was the gabarre, which was a long, wide, flat-bottomed boat, often around 20 to 30 meters in length. Designed for La Loire's shallow stretches and shifting beds, gabarres featured a square sail mounted on a single mast, though sails were of limited use when heading upstream. These boats were steered with large rudders and moved using long poles, tow ropes, and occasionally draft animals, especially when the current proved too strong or the wind insufficient.

Some riverboats, such as sapines, were designed to make a single downstream voyage before being dismantled or sold in Nantes, often used in the timber trade. Others, like the





1.5 “Gabares: ... de Rivière” from Mer: la Mer Dans la Nature, la Mer et l'Homme by Georges Clerc-Rampal, 1913

chaland, served as multi-purpose cargo craft, robust enough for repeated trips between cities.

A *marinier's* day began before sunrise. Preparations included checking the boat's rigging, inspecting the cargo, and reviewing any known hazards ahead. The crew, typically consisting of family members or hired hands, worked in a synchronized fashion to push off and begin the long haul upriver.

Traveling downriver from Orléans to Nantes was relatively swift. It often took 4 to 6 days, depending on river conditions. The return journey, against the current, was much more demanding and could take 10 to 14 days or





longer. Movement upriver often required the boat to be towed from the shore, a process called *balage*, using ropes pulled by men, oxen, or horses walking along the riverbank.

Meals were eaten aboard or ashore during rest stops: black bread, salted pork, cheese, and dried beans were common, washed down with wine or water. The diet was plain, but a *marinier* knew how to stay a-float with such fare. At night, the boat would anchor near a sheltered bank or beside a village quay, where the crew might sleep under tarps or in small huts.

In the 1660s, gabarres heading upriver from Nantes typically carried goods from French colonies: sugar, tobacco, indigo, cocoa, spices, and rum. These items arrived at the Nantes port aboard ocean-going ships, and were then transferred to riverboats for distribution inland.

In return, riverboats carried local produce and manufactured goods westward to Nantes for export or local consumption. These included:

- Wine from the vineyards of Anjou and Touraine.
- Salt harvested from the Guérande salt marshes.
- Grain, flour, and cheese from la Vallée de la Loire.
- Timber, hemp, and ironwork from central France.
- Textiles, including linen and woolens, produced in regional workshops.

Additionally, boats often carried smaller, high-value items like candles, soap, tobacco pipes, notarial documents, or





religious goods, which were carefully packed and protected under canvas.

La Loire was beautiful but fickle. Wide and shallow in many places, it was prone to sudden floods, seasonal droughts, and hidden sandbanks. For *mariniers*, it was sink or sail - a fine line between profit and loss carried on every current. Spring and autumn brought higher water levels, making navigation easier in some respects but increasing the danger of strong currents and submerged hazards. In summer, parts of the river could shrink to trickling channels, forcing crews to unload cargo temporarily or wait for rain.



1.6 “Orléans” by Caspar Merian, 1662

Navigation required deep local knowledge, often passed down through generations. Pilots learned to read the river by its sound and the presence of certain rocks or tree stumps barely visible at the surface.

At various points along the route, natural and man-made obstacles slowed movement:

- Weirs and shallows near Tours and Angers.
- Fords, where carts and animals crossed.





- Stone bridges, like the one at Orléans, whose low arches made passage difficult during high water.
- Floating logs from the timber trade, which could puncture hulls.



1.7 “Tours” by Caspar Merian, 1662

Storms could strike with little warning, churning up waves and pushing riverboats into the banks. During colder months, ice floes sometimes formed, halting traffic altogether.

Though *mariniers* spent most of their time afloat, they would get to visit quays and ports in places like Saumur, Tours, Blois, and Orléans, which bustled with activity.

Mariniers often worked in family units, with fathers, sons, and brothers sharing duties. In larger ports, independent boatmen might hire day laborers or apprentices. There existed a strong sense of camaraderie, and *mariniers* were known to help one another during difficult passages.

They also participated in the religious and festive life of the river towns. Churches often held special masses for *mariniers*, and certain saints were venerated. In towns like Orléans, guilds and fraternities helped organize festivals or provided aid to aging or injured *mariniers*.





1.8 “Nantes” by Caspar Merian, 1663

The port of Nantes was one of the busiest in France in the early 1660s. The docks teemed with activity and multiple languages were heard, like French, Breton, Basque, and even Dutch or Portuguese. It was a place where sailors and merchants didn’t just trade goods - they traded barques and remarks alike.

To the east, Orléans was the key inland port for river traffic. Goods bound for Paris or the Burgundy region were transferred there to wagons or to smaller river boats. The city’s quays featured storehouses, markets, and merchant offices.

Crews generally aimed to complete multiple round-trips per year, adjusting their routes as needed. But boats sometimes remained docked for weeks at a time, waiting for cargo, repairs, or improved river conditions.

In addition to their boats, *mariniers* relied on basic tools:

- Sounding poles to check depth.
- Oars and poles for maneuvering.
- Tow ropes, often up to 100 meters long.
- Sails, rarely used upstream but useful when wind and current aligned.



- Iron tools for hull repair, pitch for sealing leaks, and spares like nails and rigging.

For clothing, most *mariniers* dressed in woolen shirts, coarse trousers, and cloaks when cold. Hats protected from sun or rain, and boots were common for wading in the river during loading or repairs.



1.9 “La Rochelle” by Matthäus Merian, 1638

How long André worked as a *marinier* on La Loire remains unknown, but in 1661 he left that life and traveled to La Rochelle, Aunis (now Charente-Maritime, Poitou-Charentes), France.¹⁶ There, on 20 April 1661, he signed an agreement that would change the course of his life. It was an *engagement* to work in Nouvelle-France for three years.



In La Rochelle, André would have passed through the city gate known as La Grosse-Horloge, with its imposing arch and prominent clock. La Grosse-Horloge would serve as a symbolic threshold for someone leaving France for Nouvelle-France in the 17th century.

As both a gateway between the bustling port of La Rochelle and the city beyond, La Grosse-Horloge marked the final passage from the known world into the unknown, and would represent the transition from the familiar into a life of uncertainty, hardship, and possibility. The clock above the gate might have reminded André of time slipping away, not just his time left in France, but the beginning of a new chapter in a land where fortunes were still being shaped.

Stepping through that gate would be more than a walk to the docks; it would be a crossing point between old routines and new beginnings, between a European past and a colonial future. In this way, the gate symbolized the beginning of a journey not only across the Atlantic but into a different life.

At the time, many settlers in Nouvelle-France arrived as indentured servants and workmen known as *engagés*. These men were recruited in France to work for specific employers in the colony for a fixed term, typically three years. Their employers paid for their round-trip travel, though many *engagés* chose to remain in Nouvelle-France once their contracts ended, foregoing the return journey. Under prevailing law, *engagés* were barred from acquiring land during the term of their contracts.

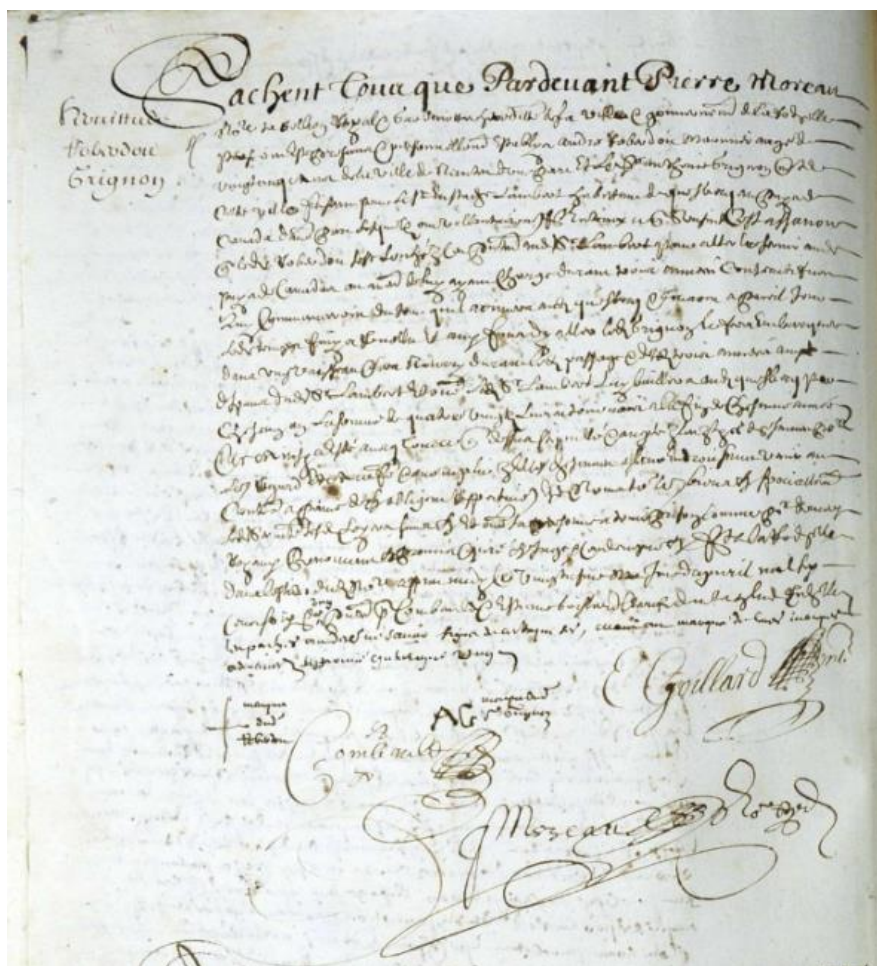
According to the terms of André's engagement, he was to be paid eighty *livres* at the end of each of the three years.¹⁷





1.10 La Grosse-Horloge, 1710





1.11 *Engagement of André Robidou, Griffes de notaire, Pierre Moreau, 1661*

The three years were to begin upon arrival in Québec. While the agreement didn't specifically mention it, food and lodging were included as part of his compensation.¹⁸ Unlike some contracts, his *engagement* did not guarantee return passage to



France. Though ordinary in its terms, this agreement would profoundly shape André's life.

Antoine Grignon, a merchant based in La Rochelle, recruited André on behalf of Eustache Lambert, a merchant in Québec.¹⁹ Well-acquainted with both Nouvelle-France and the process of recruiting *engagés*, Grignon had played a key role in transatlantic trade ventures since the 1650s, often partnering with his son and sons-in-law.²⁰ Partners frequently accompanied shipments between France and the colony, and Grignon himself crossed the Atlantic many times. He even spent the winter of 1658–1659 in Nouvelle-France.²¹

To boost the colony's population, prevailing rules required merchants to recruit one *engagé* for every 16 tons of goods they landed in Nouvelle-France.²² Meeting this requirement proved difficult, but merchants who could recruit *engagés* for themselves and others stood to make significant profits.²³ Grignon became one of the most prolific recruiters, securing over 40 *engagés*.²⁴ Most of his recruitment took place in the 1650s, tapering off in the early 1660s, likely due to the economic downturn that severely affected merchants trading with Nouvelle-France in 1660 and 1661.²⁵

Grignon's son-in-law, Pierre Gaigneur, owned a ship called *La Marguerite*, based in Brouage, Saintonge (now Charente-Maritime), France. Set to sail from La Rochelle to Nouvelle-France, *La Marguerite* was one of only a few ships making the journey in 1661.²⁶ Given the close business and family ties between Grignon and Gaigneur, this was almost certainly the ship André boarded for the New World.





La Marguerite was a 300-ton vessel captained by Guillaume Heurtin,²⁷ making his second of nine known transatlantic voyages, the first of which occurring in 1659. The ship carried a crew of about 45 men.²⁸ While records are not definitive, André likely served as an ordinary crew member rather than a passenger.²⁹ Later documents do not reflect any specialized maritime skills, suggesting he served in a basic role.

Crew members aboard such ships stayed constantly busy.³⁰ Their day began around 7:00 AM with prayers, followed by breakfast - typically red wine and hardtack, a saltless, hard biscuit. Meals and prayers, weather permitting, took place on deck. Each man received about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pint of wine daily, diluted to half strength with water. The noon meal alternated among rice, cod, cheese, cooked vegetables, and salted beef or pork. The evening meal usually again consisted of hardtack and wine, sometimes with a small portion of vegetables. When seas were rough, however, the ship's cook couldn't risk lighting a fire, leaving hardtack and wine as the only available food.

Work on board included every task needed to keep the ship moving: lowering and lifting the anchor, hoisting and adjusting sails, and manning the pumps. Crewmen carried out whatever orders they received from officers or more senior *matelots*. The labor was grueling, and the food barely sustained the energy needed to perform it.

Sleep was equally inadequate. Crewmen rarely got more than four hours at a time, and even then, they had to contend with noise from the sea and from others still on duty. They





slept in hammocks hung from beams between decks. Each *matelot* shared his hammock, using it in shifts. Reaching one's hammock required crouching and squeezing through rows of other *matelots*. Dressed in their work clothes, they slept under a single blanket. Their few belongings, often just a spare set of clothes, were stored in a canvas or leather bag nearby. These clothes offered little protection from the cold and damp of the North Atlantic.

The overcrowded quarters, lack of clean clothing, inability to wash, and the ever-present humidity created foul, unhygienic, parasite-infested conditions. Yet for André, this miserable voyage marked a turning point, with each kilometer bringing him closer to the River of Possibility.





Chanson des mariniers de Loire

(a traditional French song of the *marinier*)

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The melody is simple and folk-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The lyrics are in French and describe a traditional French song of the *marinier* (river boatman).

Tout au long de la Loire Ang'-vine Chan - tons la Loire et ses
ma - ri-niers Y a - vait aut' foès ein' ma - rine Chan - tons la Loire et ses
ma - ri-niers Qu'a-vait belle al - lure et bonn' mine D'Nant's à Bri - a - re
Chan - tons la Loire et ses ma - ri-niers Et leurs ga - ba - res

Tout au long de la Loire Ang'vine
Chantons la Loire et ses mariniérs
Y avait aut' foès ein' marine
Chantons la Loire et ses mariniérs
Qu'avait belle allure et bonn' mine

D'Nant's à Briare
Chantons la Loire et ses mariniérs
Et leurs gabares

C'était si biau dans l'paysage
Chantons la Loire et ses mariniérs
D'voère s'avancer les équipages
Chantons la Loire et ses mariniérs
Tout' voil' au vent en grand am'nage

D'Nant's à Briare
Chantons la Loire et ses mariniérs
Et leurs gabares
Tout seul devant boutait l'toutier





Ein gâs qui savait son métier
Afin de baliser l'chantier
Pour que les oût îs puiss' marcher
L'eîn darrièr' l'oût tous attachés
Par les sourpent' et les parchés
Le chaland sa voil' de vingt mètres
Son grand mât le guiroué en tête
A l'arrièr' la caban' du Maître
Lui fesant suite y avait l'tireau
Avec en son mitan l'varneau
Pour leger les gâs des batiaux
Et le troisièm' du bataillon
C'était la soub' qu'î n'avait nom
Le reste avait point d'pavillon
Là-dessur ren qu' des gâs dégourdis
Qu'étaient chalandoux d'père en fi
Vivant sûs l'iau coumm' des courlis
Car c'était ren qu'd'avoèr des bras
Pour manier la bourde ou l'gournâs
Ou ben pour virer au guindâs
I fallait du cœur et d'la tête
Savoèr tout faire et tout counâitre
Et craindr' ni la tempête
Mais c'était quant' meime ein' bell' vie
Y avait du mal mais des frairies
Les p'sans leû portaient envie
Ein jour des monsieurs ben remarquables
Sont v'nus qu'ont dit il n'y a trop d'sable
On va rend' la Loire navigable





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## 2. *L'Engagé*

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Just as André Robidou *dit* L'Espagnol was baptized at birth, he faced baptism again upon entering the New World though this one lacked any trace of sanctity or solemnity. In fact, it was quite the opposite.

For generations, *matelots* marked milestones at sea with crude “baptism” rituals. The most famous took place when someone crossed the equator for the first time, but similar ceremonies awaited those reaching the Grand Banks. It was a rite of passage for novices aboard.¹ Since this marked André’s first known voyage to the Grand Banks, he, along with other first-timers, would be targets for the crew’s rough initiation.

The ritual was simple and humiliating. The initiate sat perched on a pole over a barrel of seawater, expected to offer a small payment to the crew. If he had nothing or if the offering didn’t satisfy the crew, he was dunked without hesitation. The collected coins went toward brandy, blending

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the malicious thrill of dunking shivering newcomers with the reward of strong drink. With no evidence André received any advance on his wages as an *engagé*, he almost certainly faced a cold, wet "baptism" at the hands of his shipmates. In truth, the ceremony had less to do with grace than with disgrace - all splash, no sacrament.

Yet the Grand Banks brought more than hazing. The rich fishing grounds offered the crew their first fresh meal in weeks, a welcome break from a monotonous diet.<sup>2</sup>

After leaving the Grand Banks, *La Marguerite* continued into the French domains of North America. The first stop was Percé, then known as Île-Percé, on the Gaspé Peninsula in what is now the province of Québec. Percé was popular with the European fishing ships that came to the Grand Banks. Its sheltered anchorage and proximity to cod-rich waters made it an important haven for seventeenth-century *matelots*. Upon arrival, the crew took full advantage of dry land to preserve their catch by spreading out cod to dry ensuring it would last the journey home and fetch a fair price.

Percé's popularity meant *La Marguerite* almost certainly encountered other vessels there. Like every French outpost in the New World, Percé attracted Amerindians eager to trade, and this site was no exception. It was likely here that André first met the Mi'kmaq, who visited regularly.

From Percé, *La Marguerite* sailed to Acadia which was a loosely defined region that, at the time, encompassed much of what is now Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The exact location visited remains unknown.





Next, the ship set course for the great river of Nouvelle-France.



## 2.2 “Le Canada ou Nouvelle France” by N. Sanson, 1656

The Fleuve Saint-Laurent, one of the world’s largest, begins as the outflow of Lake Ontario, though its headwaters stretch far beyond the Great Lakes. Flowing northeast into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, the river spans just over 1,100 kilometers, but drains an immense watershed of more than 1,300,000 square kilometers, reaching over 3,200 kilometers inland.

Every second, more than 10,000 cubic meters of water pour through the world’s largest estuary and out its 140-kilometer-wide mouth, carrying over 18% of the world’s fresh surface water.





*La Marguerite* was bound for Québec. Today, large ocean-going ships routinely sail up the Fleuve Saint-Laurent to reach the city. But in 1661, the journey was anything but routine. It was a difficult and time-consuming voyage, typically taking 10 to 12 days in the river under good conditions.<sup>3</sup>

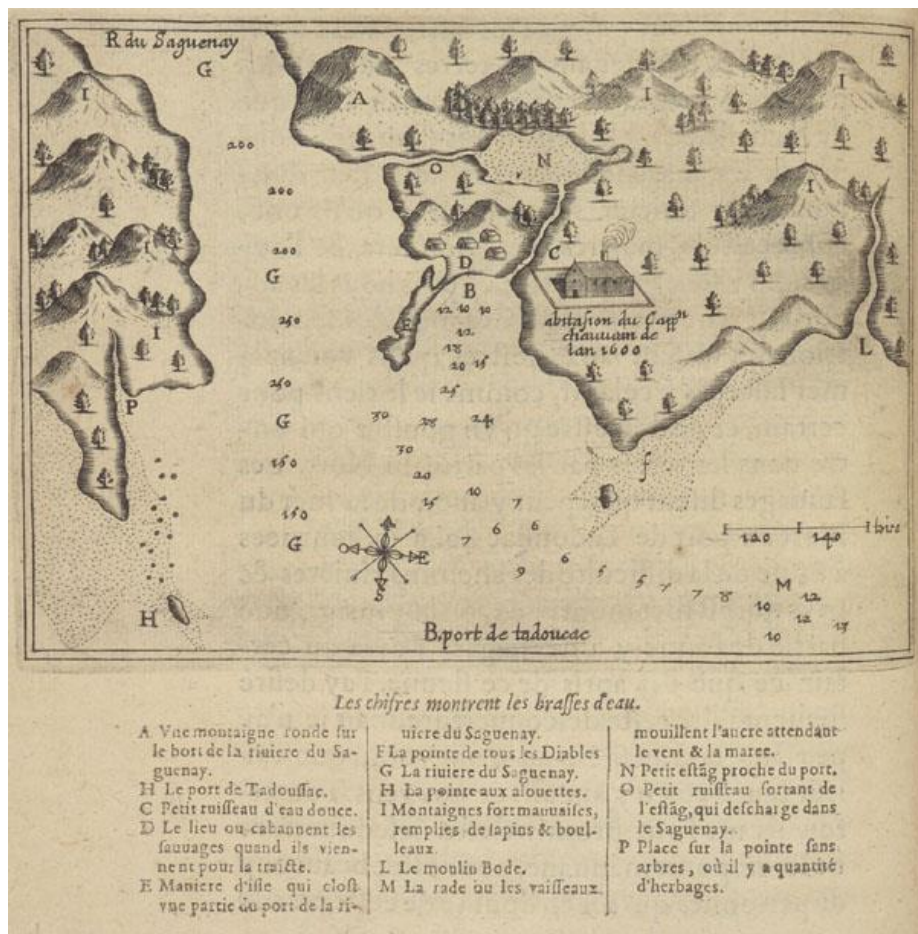
The river challenged even the most experienced captains and crews. Reefs, shifting currents, hidden rocks, extensive shoals, dense fog banks, and sudden squalls turned navigation into a constant struggle. Even the compass could mislead, its readings thrown off by what are now known to be iron ore deposits in Labrador. For 17th-century mariners, the Saint-Laurent was a gauntlet of hazards and a true nightmare.

To begin the ascent, ships entered the river between Anticosti Island and Cap-des-Rosiers, then sailed on to Sept-Îles. From there, they followed the north shore to the Manicouagan sandbars, before crossing to an anchorage near what is now Rimouski on the river's south shore.

From this point on, ships anchored each evening, preferably along the south shore, where the anchorages were more reliable. From Rimouski, vessels followed the south shore to Île-aux-Basques, then shifted course toward Tadoussac, a small but vital French trading post located where the Rivière Saguenay joined the Saint-Laurent. When *La Marguerite* arrived, the crew found Tadoussac abandoned, possibly their first indication that all was not well in the colony.<sup>4</sup>







### 2.3 “Tadoussac” by Samuel de Champlain, 1612

Navigation only grew more treacherous. Shoals multiplied, and the Saguenay’s powerful current could tip a ship onto its side where it met the Saint-Laurent. At Île-aux-Coudres, fierce tides and surging currents sometimes formed a whirlpool, forcing ships to wait for days until the wind was strong enough to drive them through.





The final major obstacle was the “Traverse,” located between Île-d’Orléans, a large island just below Québec, and Pointe-Lévy (now Lévis), directly across from the city. Ships could pass either to the north or south of the island, but had to watch closely for rocks and shoals before finally anchoring at Québec.

*La Marguerite* arrived in Québec on or after 24 August 1661, and possibly not until September.<sup>5</sup>

At the time, Nouvelle-France faced serious challenges. Though nominally a royal colony, it was run with royal permission by the Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France, better known as the Compagnie des Cent-Associés (Company of One Hundred Associates), named for its original shareholders. The Company was charged with settling the colony and preserving French control, especially in the face of expanding English colonies to the south. In return, it held a monopoly over the lucrative fur trade, the economic backbone of the colony.

Despite its charter and royal support, the Company struggled. It failed to attract significant numbers of settlers and rarely turned a profit. Still, the French had forged strong alliances with most Amerindian nations throughout the territory with the notable exception of the Iroquois, who remained hostile and militarily aggressive from their homeland in what is now central New York State.

Only Catholics were allowed to migrate to Nouvelle-France, and Catholic priests, mainly from the Compagnie de Jésus (Jesuits), worked tirelessly to minister to settlers and





convert Amerindians to Christianity. The Jesuits saw their greatest success with the Huron, but years earlier, the Iroquois had destroyed the Huron nation.



#### 2.4 “Le Véritable plan de Québec” by Jean Bourdon, 1663

Colonial administration under the Company of One Hundred Associates remained weak and ineffective, while repeated Iroquois raids crippled the fur trade, plunging the colony into a deep economic slump. War with the Iroquois had become routine, and more often than not, the Iroquois held the advantage.

Their primary invasion route ran north by canoe through Lake Champlain and the Rivière Richelieu, dubbed the River of the Iroquois, into the Fleuve Saint-Laurent between Montréal and Trois-Rivières.

In 1660, a large Iroquois force, apparently intending to wipe out the entire colony, moved toward Montréal. They were intercepted on the Rivière Ottawa by French colonist





and soldier, Adam Dollard des Ormeaux, his small group of men, and a few Amerindian allies of the French. In the brutal Battle of the Long Sault, Dollard des Ormeaux and all his men were killed, but their stand caused the Iroquois to abandon their immediate plan to destroy the colony.

Settlement on the south side of the Saint-Laurent, closer to Iroquois territory, was considered extremely dangerous. At the time, about 2,800 French colonists, mostly male, lived along the north shore, concentrated in three key settlements: Montréal, Trois-Rivières, and Québec. No road connected them. Only the river served as a link. Of the three, Québec, farthest from Iroquois territory, was the safest and most populated, and was home to more than half the colony's residents.

The year leading up to *La Marguerite's* arrival in Nouvelle-France brought a steady stream of bad news. In April, Iroquois warriors captured 14 Frenchmen at Trois-Rivières, and rumors spread of 800 more preparing to attack.<sup>6</sup> By the end of the month, 20 more Frenchmen were seized at Montréal.<sup>7</sup> In June, a force of 60 to 70 Iroquois attacked the French at Tadoussac, killing three and wounding one. That settlement was soon abandoned.<sup>8</sup>

That same month in Trois-Rivières, three more settlers were killed, and two children disappeared - either lost in the woods or also killed.<sup>9</sup> In Beauré, near Québec, and on Île-d'Orléans, an area once considered safe, Iroquois forces captured 15 colonists, who were later executed.<sup>10</sup> Additional captives were taken at Trois-Rivières, while in Montréal, several Frenchmen were hacked apart.<sup>11</sup> In total, the colony





lost more than 100 French colonists, either killed or captured by the Iroquois.<sup>12</sup>

From Montréal to the farthest French outposts beyond Tadoussac, Iroquois raids terrorized colonists and their Amerindian allies.<sup>13</sup> As if that weren't enough, an outbreak of whooping cough swept through the colony, killing many children.<sup>14</sup> By the time *La Marguerite* arrived, Nouvelle-France's situation was desperate.

The colony's capital, Québec, stood on two levels. The upper town, Haut-Ville, housed religious and government buildings, while the lower town, Basse-Ville, held the warehouses and homes of merchants and laborers.<sup>15</sup>

Most of Québec's buildings were made of stone. Although the city sat on rocky ground, local stone proved poor for construction since mortar wouldn't bind well to it, so builders brought in quarried stone from upriver.<sup>16</sup> The settlement stretched back from the Fleuve Saint-Laurent, extending several kilometers both upriver and downriver. The nearby land supported good farming, but farther upriver, poor soil limited further expansion.<sup>17</sup>

Once a ship arrived in Québec and unloaded its cargo, the crew typically went ashore, grabbed fresh food, and enjoyed a brief break after the long and punishing Atlantic crossing. But André would likely have no such rest. Upon disembarking, he was to meet his master and begin his indentured servitude in the colony.

Antoine Grignon likely traveled aboard *La Marguerite* with André and probably introduced him to Eustache Lambert,





the man to whom André was bound. Grignon and Lambert were longtime friends; Grignon had even served as godfather to Lambert's second son.<sup>18</sup> Though neither man could read or write beyond signing their names, they successfully conducted transatlantic trade: Grignon from La Rochelle, and Lambert from Québec.

André was now an *engagé* to Lambert and would remain so until 1664. Lambert stood out and is best described by two words: religious and litigious.

Born in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Picardie (now Pas-de-Calais), France,<sup>19</sup> Lambert first arrived in Nouvelle-France around 1640 as a *donné*, a layman who served Jesuit missionaries in whatever role was needed. A *donné* was not a member of the religious order and could be dismissed, though this rarely happened. In return for his service, the Jesuits provided food, clothing, and shelter.

In 1646, Lambert traveled with the Jesuits to Huronia (in what is now southern Ontario), where he learned the Huron language. He continued as a *donné* until at least 1651, when he accompanied a Jesuit priest to Tadoussac. Concerned for his mother and half-sister back in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Lambert donated one-third of his property to the Ursulines in exchange for their care.





### Storytelling in Nouvelle-France<sup>20</sup>

Storytelling was a vital part of family and village life in 17th-century Nouvelle-France, serving as entertainment, education, and cultural transmission in a world without books or formal schooling for many. In long winters and during quiet evenings, families gathered by the hearth, where elders, parents, and voyageurs would recount tales drawn from French folklore, Catholic teachings, Amerindian encounters, and personal experience.

These stories preserved the oral traditions of rural France, including legends of *loups-garous* (werewolves), *revenants* (ghosts), saints, and miracles. Children grew up hearing cautionary tales meant to instill moral lessons, promote obedience, or explain natural phenomena. The Church supported storytelling when it reinforced Catholic values but discouraged superstition. Nevertheless, local beliefs often blended Christianity with older European and Amerindian spiritual ideas.

In villages, especially after Sunday mass or during communal events like weddings or harvests, storytelling became more public. Voyageurs and *coureurs de bois* returning from the wilderness shared thrilling accounts of their travels, encounters with Amerindian nations, and dangers of the forest. These tales often grew in the telling, becoming part of a shared cultural mythology unique to the colony.

Storytelling also had a community-building function. It bonded families across generations and reinforced collective memory, history, and identity. In a young colony where literacy was limited and printing presses rare, oral tradition was the primary means of keeping history alive.







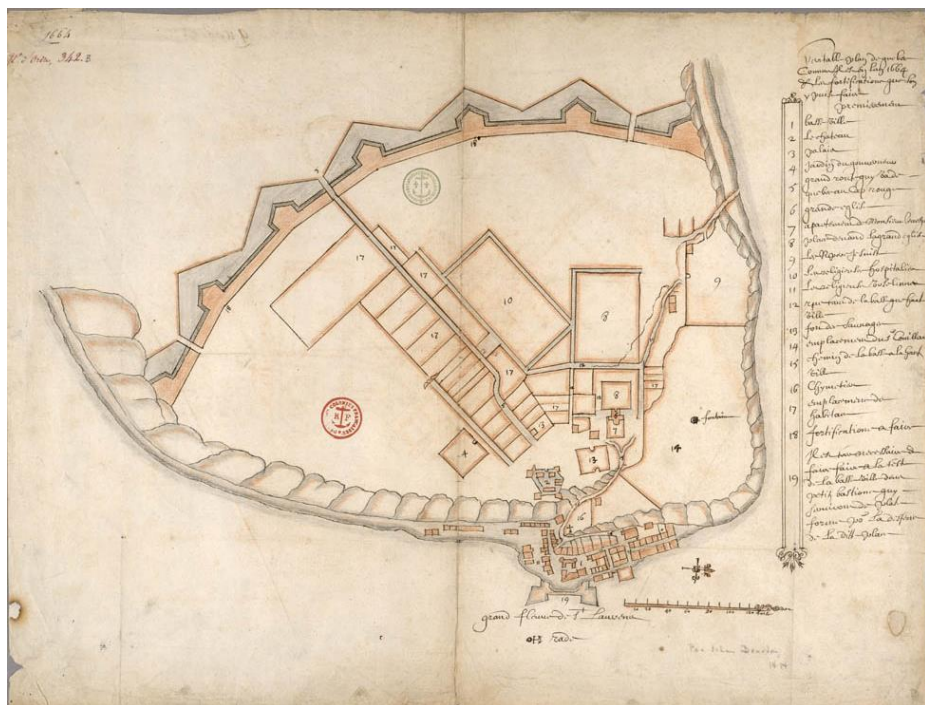
In 1652, Lambert acquired land in Côte de Lauzon, now part of the Saint-Romuald district in Lévis, claiming eight *arpents* (468 meters) of frontage along the Saint-Laurent. A year later, in 1653, he led a militia of 50 men from Québec to Trois-Rivières to defend the settlement from nearly 500 Iroquois attackers.

In 1654, Lambert returned to France and married Marie Laurent. The couple moved back to Nouvelle-France in 1656 and purchased a plot of land measuring 12.8 meters by 6 meters on Rue Sault-au-Matelot in Basse-Ville, Québec. The property, backing directly onto the Saint-Laurent, sat within the merchant quarter. During André's term of service, he would primarily live at this residence with Lambert and his family.

In 1659, when few made the effort, Lambert received his confirmation in the Catholic faith. In 1661, he acquired additional property in Notre-Dame-des-Agnes, an area now completely surrounded by the city of Québec.

In the 1660s, Lambert's litigious nature came to the foreground, with him becoming involved in multiple lawsuits, both as plaintiff and defendant. Many of these lawsuits were on behalf of Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye, his neighbor and frequent business associate, in protecting Aubert de La Chesnaye's *seigneurial* rights in Côte de Lauzon. It is through these lawsuits and Lambert's other business interests that André's probable activities as an *engagé* are assembled.





## 2.5 “Véritable plan de Québec et les fortifications” by Jean Bourdon, 1664

In Nouvelle-France, *matelots* were typically paid well and were in demand,<sup>21</sup> so it would make sense for Lambert to use André in that occupation as much as he could.

The ocean-going ships generally did not sail beyond Québec up the river.<sup>22</sup> After the arrival of goods in Québec, Lambert, as would be expected of a merchant, sent these goods upriver the 250 kilometers to Montréal for further trading.<sup>23</sup> Only small boats traveled between Québec and Montréal.<sup>24</sup> Shallops<sup>25</sup> and flat-bottomed bateaux were commonly used for these trips.<sup>26</sup> Since André arrived at the



same time as the trade goods, one of his first duties would have been to take Lambert's goods up the Saint-Laurent to Montréal.

The goods, in cases, bales, and barrels, were switched from the arriving ships, warehouses on shore, the cellars of merchants, and the smaller boats.<sup>27</sup> The various boats would travel upriver with a single sail or the use of oars.<sup>28</sup> From Trois-Rivières to Montréal, the current was powerful, and the boats would depend upon a strong wind; otherwise, rowing or paddling was necessary.<sup>29</sup> In shallow water, the *matelot* used long setting poles to push the boat against the current.<sup>30</sup> The voyage took days and was difficult, exhausting labor. Even sleep brought little relief as vigilance against attacks by Iroquois was always required. During the journey back, usually carrying furs, *matelots* at least had the current with them.

This would serve as an intense introduction to nearly all of Nouvelle-France for André. In addition to the threats of Iroquois to those traveling on the river, the trip would have brought him to the only other significant settlements of the colony and would introduce him to all of the many Amerindian peoples that frequented those areas.

Lambert also had interests in Tadoussac and Cap Rouge,<sup>31</sup> an area several kilometers upriver from Lambert's house in Québec, but now located within the city's limits. André would also transport goods between these areas and Québec.

An *engagé* was not limited in his work to the occupation held previously. Thus, even though André was a *marinier*,





Lambert could utilize his services in any work. Since the river was open for navigation for only seven months a year, from May to late November, André would have to be engaged in other activities during winter and early spring. Even during the sailing season, commerce on the Saint-Laurent was slow until supplies arrived from France in August.<sup>32</sup>

When not transporting goods, Lambert would have found other work for André. That work likely did not include hunting since game was scarce near Québec due to the extensive settlement, though passenger pigeons were still bountiful during the four months of summer.<sup>33</sup>

Fishing, though, would have been important for a *matelot*. Sturgeon, salmon, catfish, bar, shad, and other fish were plentiful near Québec, but the most important yield from the river was eels.<sup>34</sup> Eels were caught mainly in the autumn and were considered better tasting than those in France.<sup>35</sup> After being caught, the eels were preserved in salt and kept to be eaten year-round.<sup>36</sup>

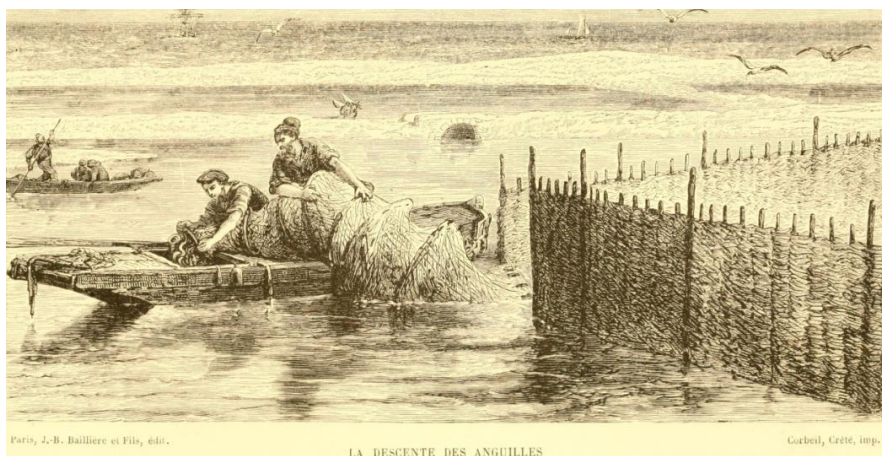
Lambert was engaged in eel fishing near his land on Côte de Lauzon.<sup>37</sup> Between the transport of goods, André's experience on the water would mean that he assisted in catching eels. Fishing for eels usually took place at night. From a boat, a torch would be lit, which would attract the abundant eels. The fisherman would then spear an eel with a trident or harpoon and then bring it on board.<sup>38</sup>

Lambert was also known to use nets to catch eels.<sup>39</sup> When the water was low, a net was placed in the sand and secured so as not to be taken away with the tide (the average tide at





Québec is nearly 4.5 meters). On both sides, stones were laid out in a small wall. After the tide rose, eels swam into the net, and when the tide lowered again, fishermen collected the net. There could be several hundred eels or none at all caught in the net, all determined by wind and weather, with rough water leading to a better catch.<sup>40</sup> September and October were the prime months to catch eels.<sup>41</sup>



**2.6 "La descente des anguilles" from Les poissons des eaux douces de la France by Emile Blanchard, 1880**

Other types of fishing were important too. Just downriver from Québec, the Rivière Saint-Charles flowed into the Saint-Laurent. At high tide, that river was quite broad, but at low tide, the beach was nearly dry, which allowed the locals to easily catch fish, and in the spring, shad was abundant here.<sup>42</sup>

Between the transport of goods, fishing, and any other service required by Lambert, André passed his three years as an *engagé*.





**La Chasse-Galerie (the Flying Canoe)**  
**A 17<sup>th</sup> century folktale from Nouvelle-France**

In the heart of a snowy forest near the village of Trois-Rivières, the tale of La Chasse-Galerie, or the Flying Canoe, was often whispered on winter nights. The story tells of six lonely voyageurs spending the winter deep in the woods, far from their loved ones. On New Year's Eve, longing for home, they recalled the forbidden legend: if they pledged not to mention God's name, not to touch a church steeple, and not to drink, the Devil himself would send them a flying canoe to speed across the skies.

Temptation proved too strong. They made the pact, and the enchanted canoe arrived, gliding silently over moonlit rivers and treetops. The men paddled through the clouds, reaching their village in time to dance, drink, and kiss their sweethearts at midnight. But drunken joy turned to panic. When it came time to return, one man cursed God in a moment of laughter. The canoe spun wildly out of control.

Some say it crashed into the trees. Others claim the Devil claimed their souls, and the canoe now drifts eternally across the night sky, carrying lost voyageurs who broke their sacred promise. On stormy nights, villagers still claim to hear the faint chant of paddles in the wind.

The legend of La Chasse-Galerie blended Old World cautionary tales with New World wilderness, reflecting the isolation, temptation, and moral struggle of colonial life. It reminded all who heard it: in Nouvelle-France, even joy could come at a terrible price.







The colony faced several challenges during this time. Iroquois continued menacing the inhabitants, and the colony suffered accordingly. But 1663 would be a year of intense change.

On 5 February 1663, at 5:30 PM, a powerful earthquake shook the entire eastern half of North America. Now believed to have originated in the Charlevoix region downriver from Québec, the initial quake lasted an astonishing 25 minutes. In Québec, the tremor rang the church bells and sent terrified residents fleeing their homes. Unfamiliar with earthquakes, they believed the end of the world had come and dropped to their knees in the snow to beg for forgiveness. Remarkably, no one was killed or seriously injured.

The Fleuve Saint-Laurent bore the brunt of the earthquake and its aftershocks, which continued for over six months. Ice nearly two meters thick cracked apart, hurling shards into the air along with bursts of smoke, mud, and sand. Landslides fell into the river, reshaping its shores and turning its mighty waters muddy for three full months with the muddiness reaching down to Tadoussac, where the river was 20 kilometers wide. Pilots who once read the river by color now found the story mud-dled.

The quake, paired with other unusual natural events that year, left many colonists convinced that divine forces were at work. A wave of religious revival swept across the colony.

Yet, the earthquake was not the most significant change for Nouvelle-France in 1663. That year, the king of France,





judging the colony too important to remain under ineffective private rule, revoked the charter of the Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France. He declared Nouvelle-France a royal colony under direct control of the crown, sent new more capable administrators, and committed to resolving the colony's chronic population shortage.

When ships arrived that summer carrying news of the royal takeover, the colonists rejoiced. Hopes rose that French troops might soon arrive to face the Iroquois threat. After years of hardship, this shift in governance brought not only relief but also the first glimmer of real hope both for the colony's future and for André's future.





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3. *Le Matelot*

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Hope for a better future likely influenced André Robidou *dit* L’Espagnol’s decision to remain in the colony at the end of his *engagement*, rather than return to France as so many other *engagés* did. In 1664, he acquired two properties: one on Côte de Lauzon across the river from Québec (now part of the city of Lévis),<sup>1</sup> and another on Île-d’Orléans.<sup>2</sup>

In Nouvelle-France, the government granted *seigneuries*, large tracts of land usually situated along the Fleuve Saint-Laurent, to certain privileged individuals or religious groups. Despite these grants, the king of France retained ultimate ownership. The grantee, known as a *seigneur*, bore the responsibility of attracting settlers, called *censitaires* or *habitants*, by subdividing the land into smaller farms. These parcels were large enough for the *habitants* to cultivate. Because of the Saint-Laurent’s importance, nearly every *habitant*’s parcel fronted the river and stretched inland from there. In exchange for the land, each *habitant* paid the *seigneur* a

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specified annual sum. *Habitants* retained the right to sell, transfer, or will their land, provided the yearly payment continued. They were also required to use the *seigneur's* mill for grain, allow public roads through their property, and perform certain services for the *seigneur*. In return, the *seigneur* settled minor disputes among his *habitants* and offered them limited protection from Iroquois attacks. While the *seigneurie* seldom brought significant financial gain to the *seigneur*, it conferred considerable prestige.



3.2 A portion of “Carte du gouvernement de Québec levée en l'année 1709 par les ordres de Monseigneur le Comte de Ponchartrain commandeur des ordres du Roy ministre et secrétaire d'estat” by Gédéon de Catalogne, 1709, showing the relation of André's two properties (marked in green) to each other and to Québec.

Although modeled on France's feudal system, the *seigneurial* system in Nouvelle-France offered *habitants* far more freedom. A *habitant* could and often did abandon his land for new opportunities in another *seigneurie*. With abundant land available, no *seigneur* could demand excessive rents, neglect his





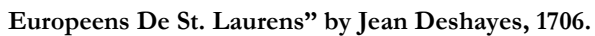
duties, or treat his *habitants* harshly without risking their departure and financial loss. In many ways, a *seigneurie* functioned like a local government, and the annual payment resembled modern property taxes though ultimate ownership always remained with the king, not the *habitant* or even the *seigneur*.

On 15 June 1664, the *seigneur* of Côte de Lauzon, L'Hôtel Dieu de Québec - a hospital in Québec operated by Augustinian nuns - granted André a parcel of land. This small *seigneurie* aimed to generate revenue to support the nuns' hospital work. André's grant measured two *arpents* (117 meters) along the Saint-Laurent and extended 40 *arpents* (2,339 meters) inland.³ The terrain reflected the typical regional landscape: a low-lying area about 100 meters deep bordered the river, followed by a steep incline leading to gently rising land. The property faced north, offering a distant view of Montmorency Falls. Today, the land lies within the Côte Guilmour section of Lévis. A road runs through the lower portion, and houses now cover the upper section. Pointe-Lévy obstructs any view of Québec City from the site. Notably, this acquisition would have been before the term of André's *engagement* was up since his three years did not begin until his arrival in Québec, which was 24 August 1661, so he must have been given permission by his master, Eustache Lambert.

André also acquired land on Île-d'Orléans, though the date of this acquisition remains unknown, as the original grant record no longer exists. His tenancy is confirmed through references found in the records of neighboring properties.⁴









This parcel had either two or three *arpents* of frontage along the Saint-Laurent and extended inland to the center of the island. It faced southeast. The property now lies at 6192, chemin Royal, Saint-Laurent-de-l'Île-d'Orléans. Like his land on Côte de Lauzon, this property features a lower portion along the river, about 150 to 200 meters deep, followed by a steep hill and then gently rising ground beyond.

Today, a road runs along the lower section of the property, with houses near the river. On the inland side of the road a driveway leads up the hill, with a home with farmland behind.

The two properties lie too far apart for André to have farmed both at once. He must have acquired one and later moved to the other, more desirable location. Which came first remains uncertain. While the exact dimensions are unclear, the Île-d'Orléans property is clearly larger, with richer soil⁵ and better protection from Iroquois attacks, as it was not located on the river's more vulnerable south shore.

The Côte de Lauzon grant also prohibited fishing from the property without the seigneur's consent which would be a significant drawback for a man of the water like André. This restriction, along with other factors, suggests that André acquired the Côte de Lauzon land first but later abandoned it in favor of the property on Île-d'Orléans. The *seigneur* of the Île-d'Orléans land was Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye, previously mentioned as both a neighbor and occasional business partner of Lambert. It's possible that when Lambert learned of André's grant in Côte de Lauzon, he helped arrange for him to acquire a more favorable parcel on Île-d'Orléans.





The Value of Money in Nouvelle-France

In 17th-century Nouvelle-France, currency was officially measured in *livres tournois*, a French accounting unit that rarely existed in coin form within the colony. In practice, transactions relied heavily on barter and foreign coinage, with the livre serving mainly as a standard of account. One *livre tournois* was subdivided into 20 *sols* (*sous*) and 240 *deniers*. By modern estimates, one *livre* in the late 1600s had a purchasing power roughly equivalent to \$10 to \$25 USD today, depending on the commodity or labor being measured.

For example, historical records indicate that a laborer in Montréal could earn 300-400 *livres* per year, enough to sustain a modern household. Using modern comparisons to food, clothing, and housing costs, this might translate to an income between \$15,000 and \$20,000 USD today. However, direct conversion is imprecise. The colonial economy was largely pre-industrial and localized, with many goods produced domestically or acquired through barter.

Furthermore, money held a different social meaning. A beaver pelt, worth about 4-5 *livres*, could buy essentials like bread, tobacco, or fabric. In today's terms, that's equivalent to \$50-\$100 per pelt, illustrating how fur functioned as both commodity and currency.

Ultimately, while modern money is standardized and global, 17th-century currency in Nouvelle-France was flexible, informal, and deeply tied to local trade.

At the time, newly acquired land typically required about two years before producing enough grain to sustain a settler.⁶ In such seasons, patience was the first crop - yielding before





yields. André didn't remain on his land long enough to reach that point. For now, André was not to become a *habitant*.

With Nouvelle-France now established as a royal colony governed more vigorously, the era of enduring raids and random killings by the colony's longstanding enemies was drawing to a close. By 1665, the French were preparing to take the offensive. The colony braced for the arrival of enough troops to send into the forests and engage the Iroquois in war.

As part of this military buildup, the colonial government commissioned the construction of a galiotte - a one- or two-mast vessel with a steeply sloped, rounded bow. Louis Fontaine, who had lived in Nouvelle-France since 1651 and then was about 32 years old,⁷ was appointed master of the ship.⁸

On 25 April 1665, André joined the crew of the galiotte as a *matelot* under Fontaine's command. At least five other crewmen served aboard the vessel.⁹ Since the river remained frozen until April each year, André likely began his duties as soon as the ice broke. He earned 27 *livres* through 13 May 1665 and then received an advance of 30 *livres* for future services.¹⁰ His pay was 1½ *livres* per day - more than six times what he had earned as an *engagé* for Lambert.

The high wages drew André away from his land and, at least for a time, postponed his ambition to settle permanently on his own property. Although he stopped working the land, no records indicate that he formally surrendered the grants to





their respective seigneurs though this likely occurred around 1665.

André was now serving as a *matelot* based out of Québec. Since most of his service would be on the Fleuve Saint-Laurent, his duties would somewhat parallel his service as a *marinier* on the Fleuve La Loire, but there were important differences, primarily stemming from the environmental and colonial contexts in which they operated.

The Fleuve La Loire, flowing through the heart of France, was well-charted and heavily trafficked. Its *mariniers* often transported wine, salt, grain, and other goods from the interior to the Atlantic coast, particularly the port of Nantes. While navigation could still be dangerous due to seasonal floods and shifting sandbanks, it took place within a relatively stable and established infrastructure, supported by royal oversight and centuries of local development.

By contrast, the Fleuve Saint-Laurent *matelots* operated in a much more rugged and frontier-like environment. The river was vastly larger than La Loire. It was a critical artery for the French colony and posed greater natural hazards: powerful currents, ice in winter, and vast distances through unsettled wilderness. These *matelots* had to contend with rapids like those at Lachine, and, in some cases, portaging around them. Their boats were often smaller and lighter than those used in France, adapted for these conditions. The influence of Amerindians was also significant; many *matelots* in Nouvelle-France adopted canoeing techniques and navigational knowledge from the Algonquin and Huron.





3.4 “A Galiote” from Dictionnaire de la Marine by Amiral
Willaumez, 1831

Matelots on the Saint-Laurent often sailed through its estuary, the largest in the world, out into the open sea beyond to pick up and transport passengers and goods to Québec. This experience at sea was something that *mariniers* on La Loire would never contend with and marked the sailors on the Saint-Laurent as true *matelots*.

Furthermore, the Saint-Laurent *matelots* often had a more direct role in exploration and military logistics. As France expanded its colonial reach into the interior of North





America, *matelots* not only transported goods, but helped transport missionaries, fur traders, and soldiers. Their work aided in the competition with British and Amerindian powers for control of territory. For André, the transport of soldiers would be almost immediate.

That same year, a large French military force arrived in the colony, and its troops and supplies needed transport from Québec up the Fleuve Saint-Laurent to the mouth of the Richelieu, where a major offensive against the Iroquois was about to begin. Large quantities of flat-bottomed boats were built to help with troop transport. With his experience, André would almost certainly have taken part in troop transport, drawing him into new areas, such as the southern Rivière Richelieu and Lake Champlain, and likely bringing him into what is now the United States for the first time. The French military campaign of 1665–66 brought relative peace to the colony, and with peace came economic prosperity, fueling the colony’s rapid expansion.

By 1666, André was once again living with Lambert at Lambert’s home on Rue Sault-au-Matelot in Québec.¹¹ Coincidentally the name of the road the home was on was named after André’s occupation. The household had grown considerably by that time. Along with Lambert, his wife, and their three children, André and five *engagés* also lived there.¹² Although no longer an *engagé* himself, André resided with Lambert, possibly working as a full- or part-time employee, but still as a *matelot*. Clearly, he had ended his earlier *engagement* with Lambert on good terms.





Around this time, the house that accommodated this large group was described as having two cellars, a bakery, two *chambers à feu* (large rooms with fireplaces), an upper floor, and an attic.¹³ At some point, Lambert had acquired adjoining land, expanding the house to nine *toises* wide (17.5 meters) and eight *toises* deep (15.5 meters). Merchants of the era often stored supplies in their own homes, and the substantial size of Lambert’s house suggests he did the same. The presence of two cellars and two *chambers à feu* indicates the house had undergone additions, likely made after 1661, when André first began living there.



3.6 A portion of “Cartes et plans du secretariat d’Etat à la marine, du Dépôt des Fortifications des Colonies et de l’Atlas Mareau de Saint-Méry”, by Jean-Baptiste Louis Franquelin, 1683, view of the stone houses in the Basse Ville section of Québec during the 17th-century.

André was now sailing the Saint-Laurent, earning good wages, and reaching the age when a strong, energetic young man would naturally begin to think about starting a family. However, the colony faced a serious gender imbalance, with six times as many marriageable men as women. Fortunately for André and many other young men, women were on their way. At last, a favorable tide of brides.





Life Among Saints (Part 1)

François de Laval, born in 1623 in Montigny-sur-Avre, France, came from a noble family deeply rooted in the Catholic Reformation. Educated at the prestigious Collège de La Flèche and the Sorbonne, he was shaped by rigorous scholarship and strong spiritual discipline. Ordained at 24, he soon distinguished himself through his pastoral care and commitment to missionary work. Shifting political circumstances directed him toward Nouvelle-France.

Arriving in Québec in 1659, François de Laval became the first bishop of the Canadian Church, overseeing a vast territory that stretched far beyond the settled colony. He worked tirelessly to shape the ecclesiastical structure, establish parishes, and support missionary activity among Amerindians. Known for his austere lifestyle and unwavering principles, he confronted civil authorities when their policies clashed with Christian teaching.

Determined to ensure proper training for clergy, Laval founded the Séminaire de Québec in 1663, an institution that became the intellectual and spiritual heart of the colony. He also supported education for young settlers and provided assistance to widows, orphans, and the poor, leaving an enduring social legacy. After resigning due to ill health, he lived modestly at the seminary until his death on 6 May 1708.

As a resident of Québec City during Laval's life there, André would likely have met him during parish visits, Sunday liturgies, processions, or charitable rounds. He would have encountered a tall, reserved, and deeply devout bishop whose presence blended gentle charity with firm moral authority. Laval was canonized in 2014.





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## 4. *La Fille du Roi*

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In the bustling streets of 17th-century Paris, life proved harsh, especially for those at the bottom of society. Narrow, winding streets crammed with tenements filled the city, each building sheltering multiple families. Some 400,000 people packed into just 25,000 households. The conditions were cramped, unsanitary, and unforgiving. With no proper sewage system, the streets functioned as open sewers, spreading disease. The divide between the wealthy and the rest was staggering and the rich enjoyed a life of luxury while many barely got by.

Getting enough food posed a constant challenge. Most survived on simple meals of bread and vegetables, with meat appearing only occasionally. Famine and food shortages struck regularly, deepening the daily struggle.

Diseases like cholera and smallpox spread quickly through the overcrowded slums. Primitive medical care offered little relief, and the poor had few options for treatment.

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4.2 “Lutetia Parisiorum vulgo Paris”, by Jan Janssonius, 1657.  
The map depicts Paris as it appeared sometime after 1638 but  
before 1652.

Hardships weren't limited to health and hunger. Exploitation was everywhere. Jobs were scarce and paid poorly, forcing many into hard labor or domestic service with little security. Workers endured long hours and grueling conditions for meager wages. Debt and financial stress hovered constantly.

Even begging was banned, cutting off one of the few remaining lifelines for the desperate. Education and cultural



opportunities remained out of reach, trapping many in an unrelenting cycle of poverty.

Charitable institutions, including churches and private organizations, played a vital role in supporting the poor. Many relied on alms and donations simply to survive.



#### 4.3 “Abbildung de Königlichen Resident Statt Paris in Franchreich”, by Lucas Schnitzer, c. 1650.

Politically, Paris reeled with instability. Since 1635, France had been locked in a prolonged war with Spain. The war brought heavy financial burdens, leading to the imposition of several new taxes. In May 1648, one such tax sparked resistance. Citizens refused to pay and demanded



constitutional reform. The revolt erupted, prompting many, especially nobles, to flee the city as Paris came under siege. By March 1649, a peace agreement was reached, with various concessions granted.

Tensions, however, didn't ease. Many nobles remained angry over taxation, and by the end of 1649, the peace collapsed. More arrests followed in January 1650. In response, many nobles chose to take up arms and turned to France's enemy, Spain, for support. A Spanish army landed in the Spanish Netherlands (modern-day Belgium), but France's rural districts and the king's army fought back. Fighting flared on and off until February 1653, when royal forces finally regained control of Paris, bringing an end to the civil war known as the Fronde. Though unrest lingered, the king's grip on the city remained firm.

Amid this turbulent backdrop, Jeanne Denot was born in the late 1640s to Antoine Denot and Catherine Leduc.<sup>1</sup> At the time, no one could have imagined the dramatic turn her life would take, launching her across the Atlantic to a land filled with promise and possibility.

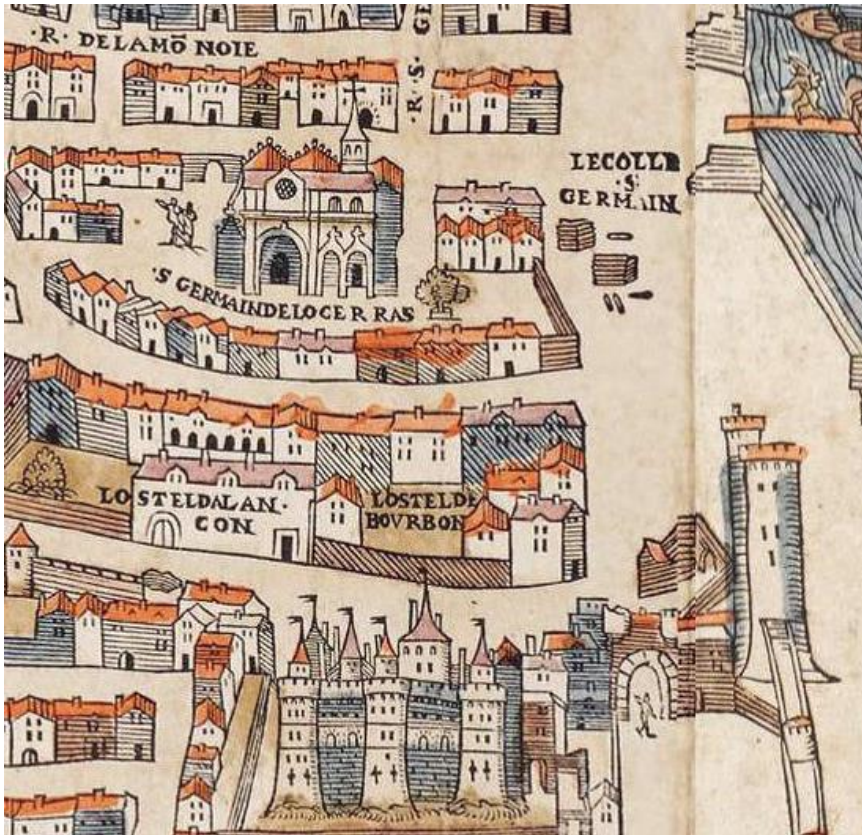
In the heart of Paris, Jeanne's journey began with her baptism at the grandiose church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois.<sup>2</sup> This architectural marvel showcased the defining elements of the Gothic style, standing as a powerful example of the remarkable craftsmanship of medieval and Renaissance France. Soaring spires, pointed arches, and intricate sculptures conveyed a sense of divine grandeur.







The church's front portico featured five arches. Tradition designated the center arch for "God and the king," the left for women, and the right for men. In Paris, even doorways knew their stations. At the time, baptisms took place in an enclosed chapel located at what is now the far left side of the front portico, while funerals were held in a chapel on the far right side.



4.4 A portion of “La ville, cite et Université de Paris” by Olivier Truschet & Germain Hovau, c. 1550, depicting the church of Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois





Inside, the church brimmed with religious art rich in symbolism. Stained glass windows flooded the space with color, while detailed altarpieces and statues brought biblical scenes and saints vividly to life. Every corner reflected the devotion and artistry of the era, from the finely carved choir stalls to the commanding pulpit.

Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois carried deep religious and social importance. More than just a place of worship, it served as a hub for the community, its bells both marking the hours and sounding for significant events. As the parish church of the kings of France, it bore witness to centuries of royal ceremonies and traditions.

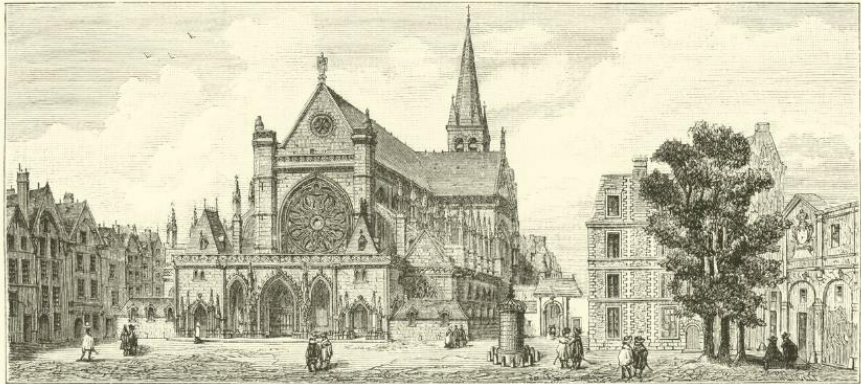


Fig. 4. — Saint-Germain l’Auxerrois (1650).

#### 4.5 “Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois, 1650”, by French School, 19<sup>th</sup> century

Yet even with its royal connections, Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois opened its doors to the marginalized, including Jeanne’s own family. Despite its grandeur, it offered refuge





and comfort to the poor and needy, extending support to those living on the fringes of society.

The family's poverty is largely inferred. In a city teeming with destitution, Jeanne entered a world where hardship was common. Sometime before her journey to Nouvelle-France, perhaps long before, her father, Antoine Denot, died.<sup>3</sup> His death likely pushed the family deeper into financial instability, even if they had previously managed a modest existence.

Jeanne most likely ended up in one of Paris's charitable institutions, where destitute individuals, especially women, often sought shelter.<sup>4</sup> In the mid-17th century, places like the Hôtel-Dieu served both as sanctuaries and infirmaries for the poor. While seen at the time as acts of charity, today these institutions might be viewed as quasi-detention centers due to their restrictive environments. Endowed with legal-like authority, their directors could impose discipline using irons, prison cells, or even dungeons.

Life inside was harsh and unrelenting. These institutions operated as hybrids between hospitals and shelters, cramming many patients and residents into shared spaces. Privacy was rare, and residents faced public exposure of personal matters and a frequent loss of dignity. Poverty and illness often brought not compassion, but stigma and judgment.

Religious orders, primarily led by nuns, managed daily operations. Their care extended beyond physical treatment to spiritual guidance, with religious rituals shaping daily life. Work was compulsory. Residents labored at tasks like







weaving and housekeeping not for pay, but as a form of discipline and skill-building.

Donations, alms, and church support kept these institutions running. Still, despite their charitable intentions, they offered few real opportunities for upward mobility. Poverty, compounded by illness, formed an almost unbreakable cycle.

Yet for women trapped in such circumstances, one glimmer of hope remained; a path Jeanne would ultimately choose. She set her sights on becoming a *Fille du Roi*.

Launched in 1663 by King Louis XIV and his minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the *Filles du Roi* program aimed to correct a stark imbalance: Nouvelle-France had far more men than women. The program marked a bold social and demographic initiative by the French crown to boost the colony's population by sending over young women of marriageable age.

Recruiters sought out women from a variety of backgrounds. Many came from orphanages, impoverished homes, or difficult personal situations. Chosen for their resilience, character, and suitability for marriage, most were in their late teens or early twenties.

In exchange for government support, each *Fille du Roi* pledged to marry and establish a household in Nouvelle-France. She committed to doing so within a reasonable time after arrival, strengthening the colony's fragile demographic fabric. To make the offer more appealing, the French





government added generous incentives: land grants, known as *cens et rentes*, for couples who married and began families.

Women joined the program for a range of economic, social, and personal reasons. For many, like Jeanne, who came from modest means and faced financial hardship, the initiative offered a way out: guaranteed transportation, a dowry, and basic provisions for a new start in the colony. It marked an escape from the charitable institutions of Paris.

The *Filles du Roi* program promised the possibility of companionship and family life in what seemed like an exotic, growing settlement. In France, poor women without dowries struggled to find husbands, while the colony offered a rare advantage of a surplus of eligible bachelors and an unusual degree of choice. There, women held a level of autonomy in marital decisions that contrasted sharply with the arranged marriages often dictated by families back home.

The allure of crossing the Atlantic and building a new life in unfamiliar territory captured the imagination of many. For those yearning for a fresh start, the chance to help shape a new society proved irresistible.

Religious and social convictions also played a role. The Catholic Church and the French Crown saw the *Filles du Roi* program as a way to spread Catholicism and promote stable family life in the colony. The initiative aligned with prevailing values that emphasized marriage and family as cornerstones of society.

For Jeanne, growing up impoverished in Paris, the promise of landownership, unthinkable in her old life, must have been





profoundly appealing. In Nouvelle-France, land ownership represented both independence and the hope of prosperity.

Likely not even 20 years old, in the spring of 1666, Jeanne made her way to La Rochelle, France. How that journey was made is unknown, though it is likely that she had an escort by an agent of the church or the government, which was common among *Filles de Roi*.



#### 4.6 “La Ville de la Rochelle, Capitale du Pays d’Aunis” by unknown artist, c. early 18<sup>th</sup> century

She departed from that busy French port in May 1666,<sup>5</sup> just as André Robidou *dit* L’Espagnol had done five years earlier. And, just like André, Jeanne would have gone through La Grosse-Horloge, the city’s main gate, signifying the crossing from the Old World to the New, and opening of the River of Possibility. La Grosse-Horloge stood as a final landmark,





solid and immoveable, contrasting sharply with the turbulent sea that lay ahead.

Jeanne boarded the ship *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* to begin her journey. Crossing the Atlantic in the 17th century was dangerous, slow, and uncertain, but *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* was an experienced vessel on the France to Nouvelle-France route.

It was captained by Pierre Fillye and crewed by 37 men.<sup>6</sup> It had space for 295 to 300 barrels and measured roughly 23 meters long, 8 meters wide, and 3 meters deep. While the full passenger list is unknown, one prominent traveler was Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye - a major figure in colonial trade and newly appointed general agent of the Compagnie Française des Indes Occidentales, the colony's main trading company. Official records note only 35 passengers that year, but in 1665 the same ship carried 212 people, including 82 *Filles du Roi* like Jeanne.<sup>7</sup> Heavily armed with 18 cannons, 20 rifles, 12 pistols, and 20 cutlasses, the ship made the treacherous ocean crossing.

Jeanne endured the cramped, unsanitary conditions on board, facing the physical and mental strain of the three-month voyage. It was a severe test of endurance.

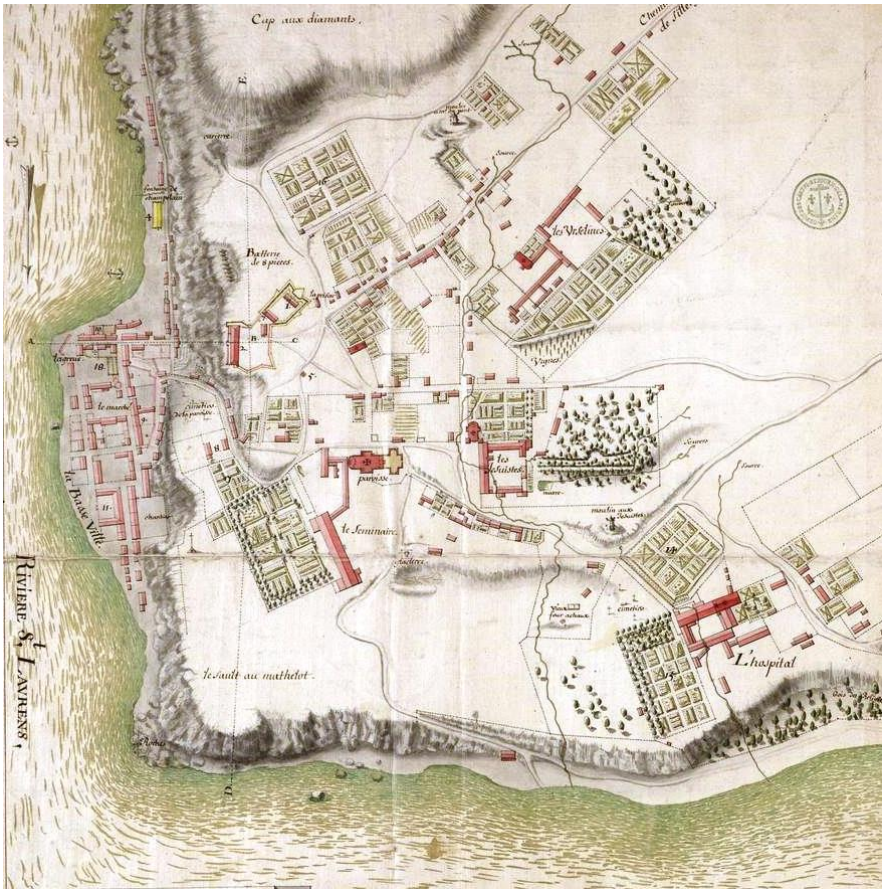
As *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* neared its destination, it likely stopped at Gaspé to drop off men bound for mining work, and perhaps at Tadoussac, before finally arriving in Québec around 11 August 1666.<sup>8</sup> The route to Québec for nearly all new arrivals in Nouvelle-France included a voyage up the Fleuve Saint-Laurent, and Jeanne had now travelled the main





river that unified the colony. *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* was one of only nine ships to reach the colony that year.

Once ashore, the *Filles du Roi* were likely greeted by colonial officials and representatives of the Catholic Church. After the difficult crossing, the women may have undergone a brief inspection to confirm their health and strength.



4.7 A portion of “Plan de la Ville et Chateau de Québec” by Robert de Villeneuve, 1685





Those who remained in Québec, rather than continuing to Trois-Rivières or Montréal, found temporary refuge at the Ursuline monastery in Haute-Ville de Québec directed by the nun Marie de l'Incarnation. Here, Jeanne would have spent the rest of 1666 and the winter that followed, adjusting to her new surroundings and beginning the next chapter of her life.



4.8 Saint Marie de l'Incarnation







The monastery community was sizable compared to the settlement at large. According to the 1667 census, 19 nuns and other religious women lived there, along with 21 young girls under 14 in their care, and 7 male *engagés* assigned to maintain the monastery. The census did not list the number of *Filles du Roi* then in residence.<sup>9</sup>

Life inside the monastery was marked by daily Mass, prayers, and religious ceremonies led by the Ursuline nuns. Alongside spiritual guidance, the nuns offered practical instruction in household management, cooking, sewing, and other domestic skills essential for marriage and establishing a home.

Though Jeanne's new surroundings echoed aspects of her likely previous institutional life in Paris, the atmosphere in Québec was entirely different. Here, she could see a future full of promise, shaped by mentors committed to nurturing her growth.

Social interaction played a vital role during the *Filles du Roi*'s stay. While many women formed friendships with fellow passengers during the Atlantic crossing, organized events and gatherings provided opportunities to meet prospective husbands drawn from the colony's tradesmen, soldiers, and farmers. The goal was clear: to spark connections and build strong family foundations. Most *Filles du Roi* in Québec chose their husbands soon after their arrival as evidenced in the letters of Marie de l'Incarnation who governed the Ursuline monastery.<sup>10</sup>





During the courtship process, the *Filles du Roi* retained real agency in choosing their partners. While colonial authorities might have offered guidance, the women remained free to accept or reject marriage proposals based on their own preferences which was an unusual freedom compared to what they had known in France. In fact, since many women born in Nouvelle-France were married by their mid-teens, this degree of choice may not have been afforded even to local women.

At this pivotal point, Jeanne's path crossed with André's. Amid the many possibilities, she chose him despite his profession as a *matelot* and the absence of an established homestead. Something about him drew her in. Given the scarcity of women in the colony, her decision likely filled André with deep gratitude and joy.

Once a match was made, the formalities moved quickly. Marriage contracts were drafted, and the French government bolstered each union by providing the *Filles du Roi* with dowries, making them even more appealing as spouses.

Jeanne's and André's contract was signed on 16 May 1667 at the home of Noël Jérémie *dit* Lamontagne in Basse-Ville de Québec.<sup>11</sup> The house had been gifted to Lamontagne by Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye,<sup>12</sup> the same influential person who had traveled with Jeanne aboard *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste*. Notary Pierre Duquet oversaw the legal proceedings.





### Life Among Saints (Part 2)

Marie de l'Incarnation, born Marie Guyart in 1599 in Tours, France, grew up in a devout artisan family and experienced mystical visions from childhood. At age seventeen she married a silk merchant, Claude Martin, but was widowed two years later with an infant son. Torn between maternal duty and her growing desire for religious life, she supported herself through skilled business work while deepening her spiritual discipline. After years of discernment, she entered the Ursuline Order in 1631, convinced that God was calling her to missionary service.

In 1639, responding to a call to evangelize Nouvelle-France, she sailed across the Atlantic with two companions. They founded the Ursuline Monastery of Québec, the first school for girls in North America. Marie learned Algonquin, Montagnais, and Wendat (Huron), composing catechisms, dictionaries, and grammars to teach and understand the peoples she served. Known for her discipline, warmth, and diplomatic insight, she created a refuge where French and Amerindian girls learned reading, writing, sewing, and the principles of the Christian faith.

Life in early Québec was harsh, but Marie remained steadfast, guiding her sisters and students with a calm authority rooted in mystical prayer.

Marie died on 30 April 1672, widely revered as the spiritual mother of the colony. A *Fille du Roi* at the Ursuline Monastery like Jeanne would have met her during lessons, daily prayers, and household work, encountering a woman both gentle and formidable - one who listened closely, encouraged quietly, and carried herself with the serene confidence of a founding matriarch. Beatified in 1980 and canonized in 2014, she is honored today as a pivotal figure in Canadian history.





Jeanne brought a supportive group with her: Lamontagne, his wife Jeanne Pelletier, Catherine Houart, Sieur Guillaume Fenjou, and his wife Anne Gauthier. André was backed by Gefin Voisin (another *matelot*),<sup>13</sup> François Blanché *dit* Langiven, and Joachim Bournicq. Two neutral witnesses, Claude Chaillé and Martin Gueudon, also signed. Neither Jeanne nor André could write, so both marked the document with simple “X”s.

The witnesses reflected the diverse social fabric of Québec: merchants, women from both France and Nouvelle-France, at least one soldier (Blanché),<sup>14</sup> and others of uncertain status. Among them, Catherine Houart stood out as particularly significant for Jeanne.

Houart, born in Normandy around 1638, had experienced much by her then late twenties.<sup>15</sup> She married in France, was widowed, then remarried in Québec in 1663 to Pierre Nolan, a trader who later became an innkeeper. The couple lived in Basse-Ville de Québec. After marrying, Houart returned briefly to France with Nolan and came back to the colony in 1666. During the return voyage, she gave birth to a child. It’s possible that Houart and Jeanne were both aboard *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* for that journey, and that Jeanne may have witnessed the birth of Houart’s son, notably named Jean-Baptiste.

Nolan, who came from Jeanne’s home parish of Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois in Paris, could have provided a sense of familiarity. But it was Houart who likely offered Jeanne the most valuable support: sharing hard-won insights into building a life in Nouvelle-France.





As tradition dictated, the marriage contract outlined the legal terms of the union. It cleared each party of past debts and established a shared property arrangement based on Parisian customs. While the specifics of Jeanne's dowry weren't recorded, it likely included 50 *livres* and essential household goods such as sewing supplies, common among the dowries of the *Filles du Roi*.

On 17 June 1667, Jeanne and André stood before the altar of Notre-Dame-de-Québec, then known as Notre-Dame-de-l'Immaculée-Conception, the first Catholic parish church in North America.<sup>16</sup> There, priest Henri de Bernières solemnized their vows.

Located in Haute-Ville de Québec, the church had been consecrated in 1647 and built in stone.<sup>17</sup> It followed a simple, practical design characteristic of early colonial structures. Shaped like a Latin cross, the building featured a semicircular apse facing east, lateral chapels on the transept, and a central pinnacle. It measured 24 meters by 11.5 meters. Not counting its steeple, it stood one story and had heavy walls with small windows.<sup>18</sup>

The recorded witnesses to the wedding were François Blanché *dit* Langiven and Pierre Lamperier. Blanché was the only person known to have witnessed both the marriage contract and the ceremony. Lamperier, listed in the 1666 census as a 17-year-old *engagé* to François de Laval,<sup>19</sup> Nouvelle-France's first bishop, likely was working at the church at the time.





With their vows exchanged and their futures bound together, Jeanne and André set off to build a new life in the colony, ready to write their chapter in the story of the New World.







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5. *Les Habitants*

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Jeanne Denot and André Robidou *dit* L'Espagnol first established their home in Québec. Although the precise location remains unknown, they almost certainly settled in Basse-Ville, the area where working-class residents lived and labored. Lower town, higher hopes. André likely continued working as a *matelot* on the Fleuve Saint-Laurent.

Shortly after her own marriage, on 5 July 1667 Jeanne witnessed the marriage contract of another *Fille du Roi*, Marguerite Foy.<sup>1</sup> Foy had just arrived in Nouvelle-France on 10 June 1667 aboard the ship *La Constance de Cadix*, accompanied by 12 other *Filles du Roi*,<sup>2</sup> so it was unlikely that Jeanne and Foy had any long friendship. About 29 years old, Foy was significantly older than most in her position and brought a dowry of 200 *livres*, indicating a higher social standing than the majority of *Filles du Roi*. While the *Filles du Roi* program enjoyed broad colonial support, class distinctions remained deeply entrenched in French society.

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Reflecting Foy's elevated status, Jeanne found herself at the signing of the marriage contract in the company of the three most prominent officials in the colony: Gouverneur Général of Nouvelle-France Daniel de Rémy de Courcelle, Lieutenant Général of the Americas Marquis Alexandre de Prouville de Tracy, and Intendant of Nouvelle-France Jean Talon Du Quesnoy.

Jeanne became pregnant with her first child by André in late 1668. Their daughter, Marie Romaine, was born on 11 July 1669.³ Her baptism that same day, the first for any Robidou in North America, was steeped in sanctity, shadowed by a hidden crime, and marked by gruesome imagery.

The ceremony took place in the same church where Jeanne and André had wed, Notre-Dame-de-Québec, officiated by the priest Jean Dudouyt. At the time, Dudouyt led the Séminaire de Québec, which had been founded in 1663 to train priests, evangelize Amerindians, and administer parishes across Nouvelle-France.⁴ His stature commanded such reverence that, upon his death in 1688, his heart, encased in lead, was returned from France and interred in the cathedral of Notre-Dame-de-Québec.

With prayers and blessings and following the invocation of the Holy Spirit, Marie Romaine received the sacrament and joined the Christian community.

Beginning a tradition she upheld with all her children, Jeanne named Marie Romaine after her godparent.⁵ In this instance, the godmother was Romaine Boudet, wife of notary





Romain Becquet. Boudet had married Becquet around the same time Jeanne married André.⁶ The godfather, Philippe Gauthier de Comporté, proved to be a notable figure.⁷ A member of the nobility, Gauthier had arrived in Québec in June 1665 as a soldier in the Carignan-Salières Regiment. Unknown to anyone in Nouvelle-France, including Gauthier himself, he had been sentenced to death in absentia in May 1665 for his role in a deadly brawl in Poitou, France, which left two men dead. The fight had erupted after an insult to his regiment. The truth of his conviction surfaced only in 1680, but with the aid of influential supporters, Gauthier secured a pardon and went on to hold significant posts in the colony.

The baptism of Jeanne and André's first child unfolded against a possibly chilling backdrop. The sole known witness to both their marriage contract and wedding, soldier François Blanché *dit* Langiven, likely forged a close friendship with André during the 1665 military campaign against the Iroquois, when André helped transport troops and supplies. By April 1669, Blanché had been posted to the Trois-Rivières garrison. That month, he fought by sword a duel with fellow soldier Daniel Lemaire *dit* Desrocher, killing him.⁸ This became only the third recorded duel in Nouvelle-France and the first to result in a death. Determined to end the practice, French authorities imposed severe punishment. Blanché was sentenced to death and hanged in Trois-Rivières on 8 July 1669, just three days before Marie Romaine's baptism. As part of his sentence, officials severed his right hand after the execution, sent it to Québec, and nailed it to a post at Cap-





aux-Diamants as a grisly warning against dueling. Cap-aux-Diamants, perched at the summit of Haute-Ville de Québec, stood near the church of Notre-Dame-de-Québec. So when Jeanne and André left the church and descended the hill to their home in Basse-Ville with their newly baptized daughter, they may have passed the public display of their friend's severed hand. At least the new parents received from their friend a final wave good-bye.



5.2 The severed hand of François Blanché *dit* Langiven





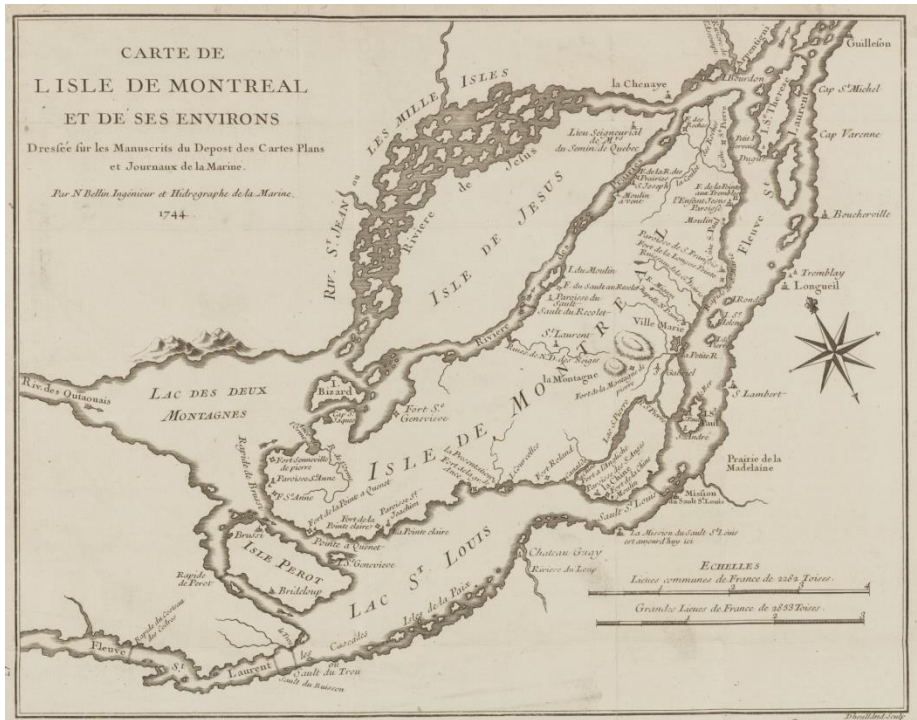
Blanché's death sentence and the subsequent severing of a body part to be put on display was not unique at this time in Nouvelle-France. Just a month after Blanché's execution, another man, Jacques Nourry, after his conviction in Québec for raping a young girl, was sentenced "to be hanged and strangled on the gallows and then his body dragged to the road after the head had been separated to be placed on a post."⁹

By mid-1671, the young Robidou family had relocated from Québec to the small village of La-Prairie-de-la-Magdelaine, now known simply as LaPrairie, located just across the Fleuve Saint-Laurent from Montréal, slightly to the south.¹⁰ Granted to the Jesuits in 1647 as a *seigneurie*, the land became home to a mission for Amerindian converts in 1667, established by Jesuit Father Pierre Raffeix. He brought primarily Oneidas from what is now central New York State. By 1671, the village remained small, with only about 100 residents.¹¹ French settlers and Amerindian converts lived in separate areas and, under Jesuit supervision, the converts were expected to deepen their Christian faith and adopt French customs, especially farming practices, as traditional Amerindian methods often depleted the soil quickly. When an Amerindian said, "I am off to LaPrairie," he was saying, "I give up drink and polygamy."¹² LaPrairie was thus a social experiment by the Jesuits on forming Amerindians into good Christians and causing them to adopt what the Jesuits deemed worthwhile French practices.

LaPrairie's non-Jesuit French residents generally held favorable views of the local Amerindians. Known as



formidable warriors, they could assist in repelling Iroquois attacks and also served as valuable sources of fur for trade. The Jesuits, however, worked to restrict any unsanctioned interactions between the French and the Amerindians. They were particularly alarmed by the exchange of alcohol for furs, as Amerindians had little exposure to liquor and were especially vulnerable to its effects.



5.3 “L’Isle de Montréal et ses Environs” by Nicolas Bellin, 1744, showing the relationship of Montréal to LaPrairie

With no known work for a *matelot* in LaPrairie, why did André and Jeanne choose to move there instead of settling elsewhere in Nouvelle-France? Since they initially moved



into the village without acquiring farmland,¹³ André likely aimed to enter the fur trade, hoping to turn pelts into profits. The local Amerindian presence provided immediate trading opportunities, while the nearby Saint-Laurent and Rivière Ottawas offered access to trapping and trading territories deeper inland. LaPrairie also sat a relatively short overland journey from the Rivière Richelieu, which connected to Lake Champlain and key fur-trading zones in present-day northern New York and Vermont. For someone resourceful and industrious, the region presented a strong opportunity to participate in Nouvelle-France's primary economic pursuit.

Life in LaPrairie revolved around the mission grounds, with the parish church of Saint-François-Xavier-des-Prés at its heart, serving as the center of religious and community activity. On 10 November 1671, in this church, Jeanne and André baptized their second child, another daughter, this time named Marguerite, on the same day she was born,¹⁴ just as they had done with Marie Romaine. The ceremony likely drew many villagers, as was common in such a close-knit settlement. Marguerite Ténard, Jeanne's neighbor and fellow *Fille du Roi* from outside Paris, stood as godmother and gave the child her name. Ténard had married Charles Boyer in Montréal in 1666, had three young children, and had lived in LaPrairie since around 1670.¹⁵ The godfather, Pierre Lefebvre, originally from Rouen, Seine-Maritime, France, also resided in LaPrairie.¹⁶ A later record listed him as a fur trader, suggesting he may have worked alongside André. Father Jacques Frémin, a Jesuit missionary who had earlier founded the first Catholic settlement in what is now Vermont



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on Isle La Motte,<sup>17</sup> presided over the baptism. Stationed in LaPrairie at the time, Frémin concentrated his efforts on supporting the Amerindian community and curbing the liquor trade.<sup>18</sup> He preferred spirits raised, not spirits sold. Frémin's "intelligence was not great, and his manners lacked refinement, but his courage and good sense were particularly outstanding. It is estimated that during his apostolate he baptized some 10,000 natives."<sup>19</sup>



5.4 Amerindians arriving in LaPrairie (circa 1668), by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686

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Faced with a potential tavern opening in LaPrairie which would have tempted the Amerindians into being corrupted by liquor, in 1672, an ordinance was passed prohibiting the trade of liquor in LaPrairie.²⁰ Nevertheless, a tavern was eventually opened in LaPrairie just a year later.²¹ This demonstrated some of the Jesuits' efforts to stifle the trade in liquor.

Infant death was an all-too-common reality at the time, and



5.5 Preaching against the evils of drinking in LaPrairie (circa 1671), by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686





the Robidou family faced this harsh truth firsthand. Marguerite died just two months after her birth, and her funeral took place on 15 January 1672 in the same church where she had been baptized.²²

Around this time, André began to focus more seriously on landholding. No longer a young man, he likely viewed landownership as a way to secure his family's future.



5.6 Location of Robidou Properties in LaPrairie

Although the Jesuits' secretary didn't officially record it until 22 January 1673,²³ André had already acquired a





property before 2 June 1672 along the Côte de la Rivière Saint-Jacques, a fertile stretch just outside the village, well suited for small-scale farming and raising livestock.²⁴ The land held promise, but André soon identified an even better opportunity. On 4 December 1672, he and Jeanne traded their property with a neighbor, Jean Caillault, for land on the Côte de la Tortue, an area along the Fleuve Saint-Laurent still within the Jesuits' *seigneurie* of LaPrairie, but farther south.²⁵ The new land lay closer to key routes linking LaPrairie to the colony's broader trade and travel networks.

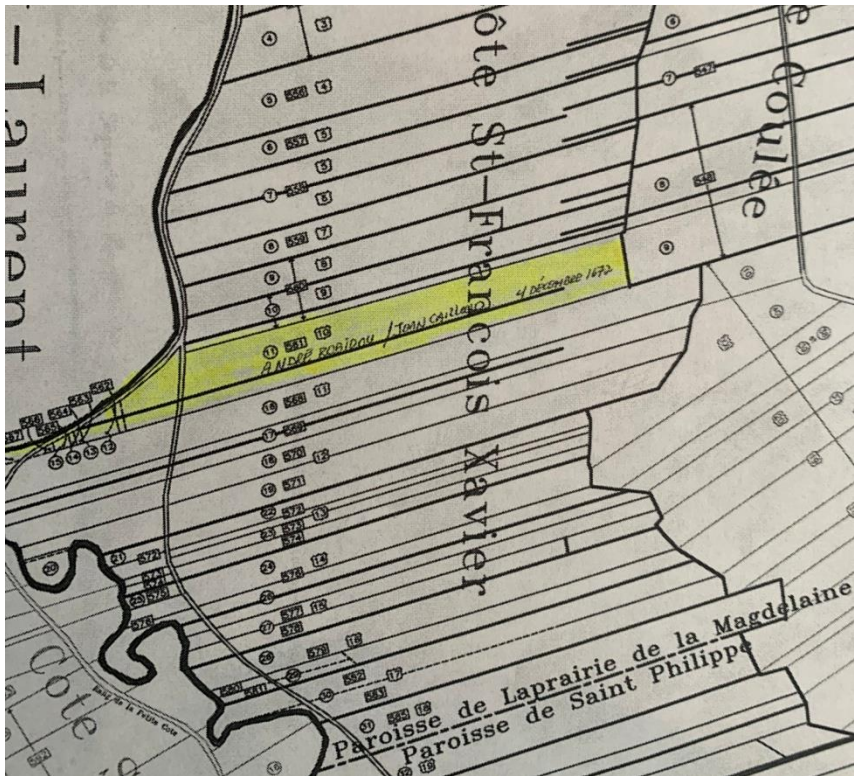


5.7 Robidou Property on Côte de la Rivière Saint-Jacques





Although both properties measured 50 *arpents* (about 42 acres), André received a generous bonus: 150 *francs* (8 of which he had to pay to one of Caillault's creditors), a one-year-old mare, and a quantity of wheat. The *francs* and the mare were due in August 1673, while the wheat was to be delivered at Christmas. Caillault also agreed to help plow André's new land. Clearly, by the time of the exchange, André and Jeanne had already invested effort in improving the property they gave up.



5.8 Robidou Property on Côte de la Tortue





Alongside the land trade, André and Jeanne sold their village property, which currently is located at 97, rue Saint-Jacques, to Pierre Lefebvre²⁶, the same man who had served as godfather to their daughter Marguerite. As part of the agreement, Lefebvre had to build a house of the same dimensions on André's newly acquired land in Côte de la Tortue, with a completion deadline set for Saint Martin's Day in November 1673.

Soon after these transactions, Jeanne became pregnant again. On 20 September 1673, the newest Robidou child, also named Jeanne, was baptized at LaPrairie.²⁷ Although she shared her mother's name, the baby was named after her godmother, Jeanne Roinay, the 10-year-old daughter of neighbors François Roinay and Perrine Mousnier.²⁸ The godfather was Thomas Hébert, a 22-year-old resident of LaPrairie originally from Normandy, France.²⁹

Once again, André and Jeanne relocated within the Jesuits' *seigneurie*, this time to the Côte Saint-Lambert area of LaPrairie. They signed two property agreements with the Jesuits, the first on 9 October 1674³⁰ and the second on 8 December 1674.³¹ As was typical, both were recorded after the actual property transfers, since the Jesuits' secretary, who acted in place of a notary, often documented such transactions months later. The back-to-back agreements didn't mark the purchase of two distinct properties but reflected a swift decision to exchange the first parcel for a more desirable one. The new property, located on a hill, measured two *arpents* along the Fleuve Saint-Laurent and



This reshuffling of property marked a new chapter for the Robidou family. Their pursuit of stability shifted away from life on the river, the village, and even the fur trade, turning instead toward the land which was something they could cultivate together as a family and eventually pass down to their children. The Robidous were becoming *habitants*, the independent farmers who would come to define the colony of Nouvelle-France.



By acquiring land, *habitants* accepted a series of obligations, including annual payments made in money, produce, or labor as well as restrictions on how they could later use the property. For André and Jeanne, these duties fell under the authority of their *seigneur*, the Jesuits. Starting 1 December 1674, they owed the Jesuits twenty *sols*, two live capons (or their equivalent value), and two *deniers* each year, payable by 1 December.³²

André had one year to build a house and settle on the land. He was required to clear it up to his neighbors' boundaries, help build roads designated by the Jesuits, dig trenches as ordered, and bring his grain to the Jesuits' mill as he was forbidden from using any other. He also needed permission to cut timber for construction, limited to a designated area chosen by the Jesuits, who reserved the right to harvest timber for their own purposes.

Between the standing timber and the Fleuve Saint-Laurent lay a communal meadow that the Jesuits permanently granted to all settlers of Côte Saint-Lambert.³³ Each head of cattle stabled in the meadow incurred a fee of 5 *sols* to the Jesuits, with young calves exempt. The Jesuits retained the right to stable their own cattle in the meadow, while pigs were banned from the area except after the harvest. This communal space made it easy to transport and monitor livestock. Overall, this communal space stretching in front of most of Côte Saint-Lambert was about 100 *arpents*, and at its widest was 3 *arpents* wide. This communal land was a bonus to the adjoining owners.





The obligations contained in the concession reflected the standard duties expected of every *habitant* and were typical for the time and place.

While this new land of the Robidous was intended to be farmed, the soil itself, described as hard, black, clayey earth, and not fit, presented its own challenges.³⁴ It was land that asked for backbone before it gave bread. The annual payments due to the Jesuits reflected the low value of the land for farming use.

Now André and Jeanne set out to build their home on what would become their final property. André already had experience constructing homes from his earlier residences in LaPrairie which was a skill he may have learned during his time as an *engagé*, when his master, Eustache Lambert, nearly doubled the size of his house in Basse-Ville de Québec.



5.10 *Pièce sur pièce* technique

Instead of milling the timber, a costly luxury in the early days, *habitants* typically built their homes using the *pièce sur pièce* technique. This method involved stacking horizontal





logs (or squared timbers) between vertical corner posts. Each timber was notched to fit tightly into grooves in the posts, allowing for a build that was both relatively quick and structurally sound. The interlocking timbers formed the home's walls, offering stability and insulation.

To ensure the home stayed warm through bitter winters, the gaps between logs were filled with a mixture called *torchis*, a blend of clay, straw, moss, and sometimes animal hair or lime – a humble recipe that kept weather at bay and warmth at stay. This helped to seal the structure from drafts and pests. Once the exterior walls were completed, the *habitant* turned his attention to the roof.



5.11 Typical 17th Century Home in Rural Nouvelle-France





The roof was typically steeply pitched to shed snow and rain, a design brought from Normandy but well-suited to the Canadian climate. Rafters were cut and raised using hand tools such as broad axes, adzes, and mallets. The roofing material varied. Where available, hand-split cedar shingles were used for their durability and rot resistance. In more remote or poorer homesteads, bark or thatch might suffice temporarily, though these materials required more maintenance.

Floors inside were often packed earth at first, but as time and resources allowed, wooden planks were laid over log joists. These were roughly hewn with axes and later smoothed with a hand plane. A central hearth constructed from fieldstone and mortar was the heart of the home. It provided heat, a place to cook, and served as the center of family life. The chimney was often made of stone or clay and wattle (woven wood), though this posed a fire risk until replaced with more durable masonry.

Windows were small, due to the difficulty and cost of glass. Often, oiled paper or an animal bladder was stretched over openings to admit light while keeping out wind. As trade improved and resources grew, glass panes might be installed in simple wooden frames, often with shutters to protect against storms and cold.

Doors were made of thick, solid planks - often pine - and hung on hand-forged iron hinges. The *habitant* might craft these himself or barter with a local blacksmith. Locks and latches were simple, often wooden, with iron nails used sparingly due to cost.





Inside, the home was modest and functional. Furniture was handcrafted: a sturdy table, benches, a few chairs, and sleeping platforms with straw or feather mattresses. Walls were sometimes whitewashed with lime to reflect light and brighten the space. Overhead, ceiling beams remained exposed, and from these might hang herbs, tools, or even drying meat.

Outbuildings followed, depending on need and resources. A root cellar might be dug into a hillside or under the house, insulated with earth to preserve vegetables through the winter. A barn, eventually, would house livestock of chickens and pigs, perhaps a cow or two. These buildings were also made of logs or sometimes *colombage* (a timber frame with infill of stone or mud), though barns tended to be simpler and quicker to build.

The land around the home was cleared in sections over the years, gradually expanding the family's fields. Early agriculture was labor-intensive: wheat, peas, and beans were common crops, along with hay for livestock. Tools were minimal and included a wooden plow, hand scythes, and hoes.

What truly sustained the *habitant*, though, wasn't just the home or the land; it was the community. When a home was built, neighbors gathered to help. The local priest might bless the home. Songs and cider might accompany the raising of the last rafter, and the moment became a celebration.

A new home meant space for more children, and the children came.





On 28 November 1675, Jeanne and André welcomed their first son, naming him Guillaume³⁵ after his godfather, Guillaume Brunet, a neighbor on Côte Saint-Lambert.³⁶ The godmother was 17-year-old Marguerite Beauvais, the new wife of 34-year-old neighbor Jacques Têtu *dit* Lapierre. Unlike many of the women Jeanne had known, Beauvais had been born in Nouvelle-France, just across the river in Montréal.³⁷

The year 1675 brought another change to that portion of the community living on Côte Saint-Lambert. Neighbors Pierre Perras and Denise LeMaître donated a building on their property that was 7.6 meters long and 6 meters wide with a thatched roof as a chapel for religious services.³⁸ The Jesuits would now offer mass to the local inhabitants so that they would no longer have to go to the church in the village of LaPrairie. Not only was the weekly trip to the church in LaPrairie far, but crossing the Rivière Saint-Jacques was very inconvenient except in winter when it was frozen over.

Life on Côte Saint-Lambert in LaPrairie was demanding. Winters stretched long, and while the land was fertile, it required relentless labor to yield enough for both survival and trade. Jeanne would have managed the household, raised the children, and assisted with lighter farm tasks, while André would have worked the fields, hunted, and bartered goods with local Amerindians.³⁹

In 1676, the Jesuits relocated the Amerindian settlement, originally just east of the heart of the village of LaPrairie, farther south and west, but still within the *seigneurie*. They did this because the soil near the original site had begun to give





out due to Amerindian farming methods, and to distance the Amerindians from the liquor supplied by the French inhabitants. This marked the first of several similar relocations of the Amerindian settlement, each carried out for the same reasons.

As LaPrairie expanded and prospered under Jesuit leadership, the Compagnie de Jésus conducted a formal inventory of all land concessions on 8 November 1677. André's December 1674 concession appeared on the list,⁴⁰ a quiet but official acknowledgment of the stability and effort he had brought to his family and the *seigneurie*.

On 15 January 1678, Jeanne gave birth to their son Joseph, who was baptized that same day in LaPrairie.⁴¹ Joseph Boyer, then only nine years old, lent the child his name, and served as godfather.⁴² As with earlier baptisms, the godparents came from the local community. Boyer was the son of Marguerite Ténard, who had served as godmother to Jeanne's and André's daughter, Marguerite, seven years before. Marie-Marguerite Gagné, wife of Pierre Lefebvre,⁴³ served as godmother. Lefebvre, a fur trader, had previously stood as godfather to the Robidou daughter Marguerite, and had also acquired the property from André in the village. This reflected an enduring bond between the families.

In the spring of 1678, André's health took a sudden turn, and he urgently needed medical attention.⁴⁴ The nature of his condition remains unknown. He arrived at the Montréal residence of Jean Martinet de Fonblanche, a surgeon.⁴⁵ Martinet de Fonblanche would later gain recognition as a surgeon at the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal and as a medical





expert in legal cases.⁴⁶ At that time, however, he practiced independently and occasionally trained apprentices in basic surgical techniques, often relying on limited medical instruments.



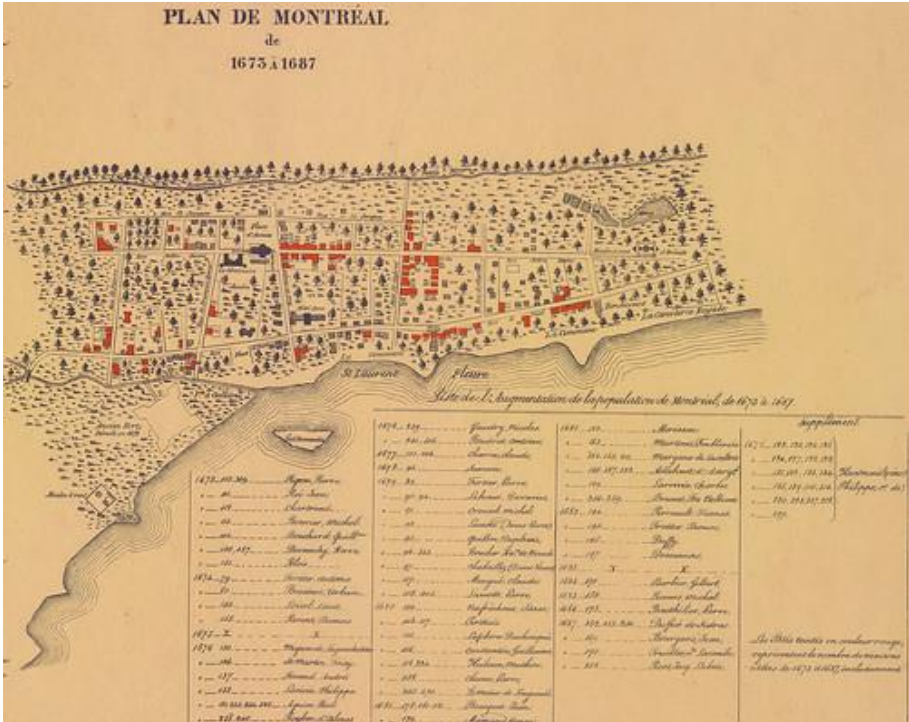
5.12 The Frozen Fleuve Saint-Laurent

André did not survive. He died at Martinet de Fonblanche's residence on 1 April 1678.⁴⁷ The co-founder of the Robidou family in North America was gone. His journey from Spain to the New World, from *marinier* in France to *habitant* in Nouvelle-France, from *engagé* to independent head of his own family, had come to an end.

His body was taken immediately to the church of Notre-Dame in Montréal, just about 50 meters from Martinet de Fonblanche's home,⁴⁸ where his funeral took place the same day.⁴⁹ Without anyone present to correct the record, priests

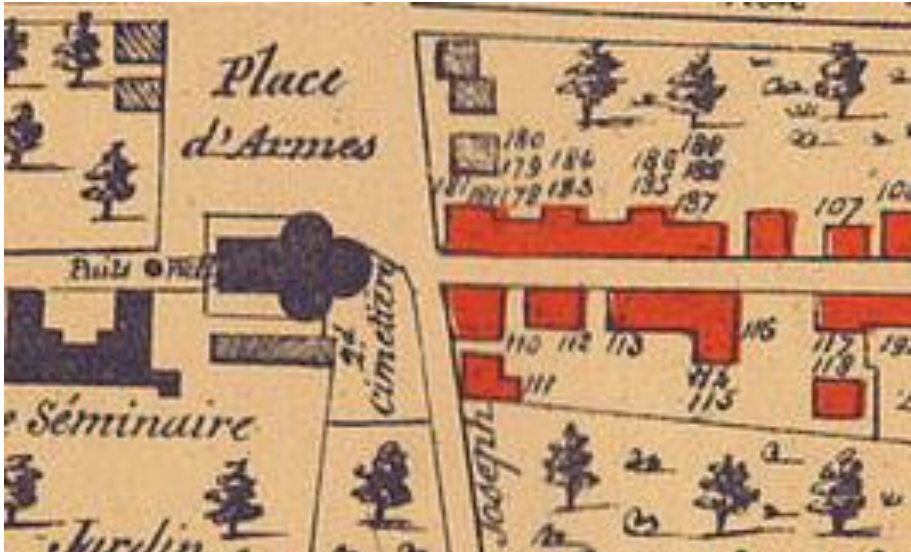


in Nouvelle-France often lowered the estimated age at death. André may not have had anyone to correct the funeral record





located at this time beneath the current Basilica of Notre-Dame de Montréal.⁵⁰



5.14 A Portion of the Plan de Montréal
Fonblanche's Residence is noted as 183 above, which is currently
around 55 Rue Notre-Dame Est, Montréal.
The cemetery is located adjacent to the church.

Jeanne, now a widow with four young children, remained in LaPrairie. With no extended family, the traditional safety net of the era, in Nouvelle-France to support her, she faced life alone as the sole caretaker for Marie Romaine, 8; daughter Jeanne, 4; Guillaume, 2; and Joseph, just 2½ months old. They all relied on Jeanne to draw from the resilience she had forged over the years, a resilience arising from her impoverished beginnings in Paris to her bold journey across the Atlantic, from her independent choice of husband to the tireless labor she and André had put into clearing land, building a farm, and creating a home.





Jeanne met this new challenge head-on and went on to build a lasting legacy for her family in the New World. Her journey, shaped by family, faith, community, and a determined spirit in the heart of the Canadian wilderness, continued onward.





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## 6. *Le Soldat*

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Jeanne Denot faced few choices. She had four young children to care for and a household to maintain. The *Coutume de Paris* was the legal code that governed life in Nouvelle-France, and under it, the land she and her late husband, André Robidou *dit* L'Espagnol, had acquired on Côte Saint-Lambert, LaPrairie, was considered community property. Now widowed, Jeanne held a dower by custom (*douaire coutumier*), which allowed her to claim half of André's estate protected from any creditors. Their children would later inherit the land, but Jeanne could rely on its income for the rest of her life. If the property's liabilities exceeded its value, she had the legal right to walk away. She chose not to, finding at least some value in holding onto the land where she and André had built their home. She kept the land, and her ground.

As a single woman, however, she likely couldn't meet the physical demands of farming the property alone. She needed

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another means of support, and she found it through remarriage.

Many eligible men lived in LaPrairie. The *Filles du Roi* program had ended in 1673 and had fallen far short of meeting the needs of single men in LaPrairie, let alone those across Nouvelle-France.

The man Jeanne chose was a neighbor from a few concessions down Côte Saint-Lambert: Jacques Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy - a surprising match by name.

Jacques was born around 1644<sup>1</sup> in Saint-Martin-au-Perche, France,<sup>2</sup> the son of Jacques Surprenant and Louise Roquet.<sup>3</sup> The Perche region, about 160 kilometers west of Paris, features gently rolling farmland and lush forests. Unlike much of France, it is known for its beautiful woodlands, making it a distinctive part of the country.<sup>4</sup> The Church of Saint-Martin, where Jacques was presumably baptized, dates to the 15th century. Its square Gothic tower bore sculpted decorations on each side: one depicting the church's patron saint, Saint Martin of Tours on horseback, and the other featuring allegorical figures of strength, faith, justice, and hope.<sup>5</sup>

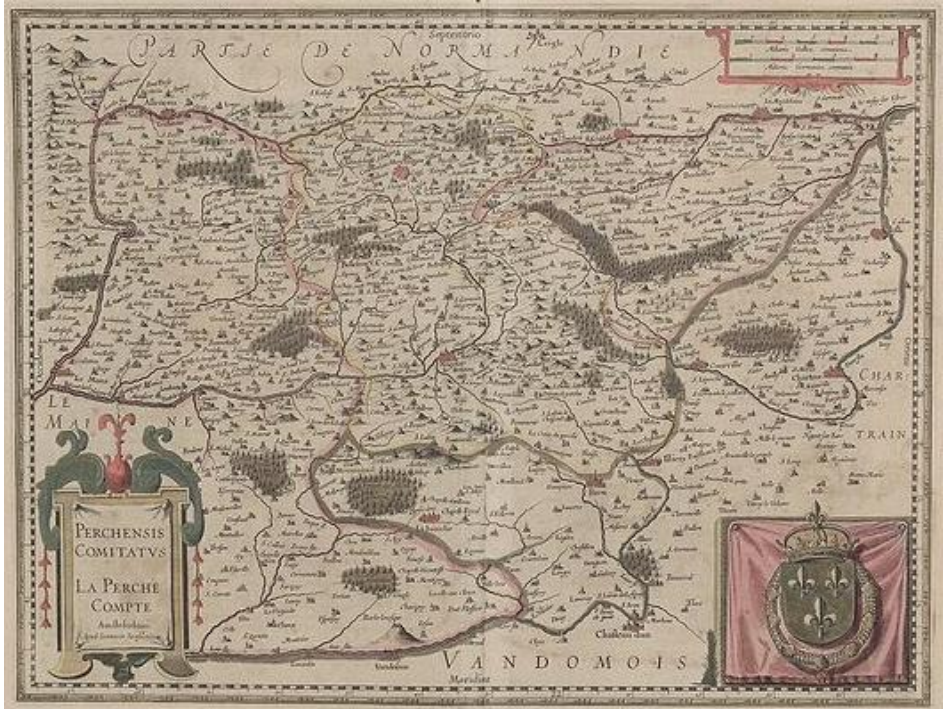
At some point, Jacques chose to join the military as a *soldat*, or soldier, serving in the Contrecœur Company of the Carignan-Salières Regiment.<sup>6</sup> Although his specific motivations remain unknown, military service in this regiment offered steady employment, a regular wage, and the potential for land ownership in the colonies. These prospects





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held strong appeal for men of the lower social classes, who faced limited opportunities in France.



6.2 “Perchensis Comitatus, La Perche Compe Amstlelodami” by Jan Jansson, 1636

The Carignan-Salières Regiment was formed from the union of two separate military units: the Carignan Regiment and the Salières Regiment. Each had its own history prior to the merger ordered by the French crown in early 1659.⁷

The Carignan Regiment was originally founded in 1644 by Thomas François de Savoie, Prince of Carignan, a member of

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### Swearing in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Nouvelle-France

In 17th-century Nouvelle-France, swearing was shaped by the deeply Catholic and hierarchical culture of the French colony. Blasphemy was the most serious form of swearing, as it directly violated religious norms. Common oaths invoked the name of God (“Par Dieu”), the Virgin Mary (“Morbleu” or “Morieu” from *mort de Dieu*), or the sacraments (“Sacrement!”), all considered grave offenses by the Church. Such blasphemous exclamations could lead to public penance or fines. Religious leaders worked hard to stamp them out, often substituting less nasty variants - euphemistic expressions like “saperlipopette” softened the impact of the original words while preserving the speaker’s emotion.

Unlike modern profanity, 17th-century French swearing was rarely sexual or scatological; instead, it reflected a society where religion and status defined the boundaries of polite speech. Insults often targeted someone’s lineage or honor. A man might be called a “coquin” (scoundrel), “gueux” (beggar), or “fils de chien” (son of a dog), all deeply offensive terms that attacked character and standing.

In Nouvelle-France, where clergy were ever-present and social cohesion essential, language was expected to reinforce order and piety. Even among soldiers or voyageurs - groups more likely to swear - open blasphemy was frowned upon. The courts occasionally recorded fines or punishments for public profanity, indicating it was not just a moral failing but a legal issue.

Overall, swearing in New France revealed much about the colony’s religious priorities, class divisions, and cultural values. It was not just about strong language, but about the power - and danger - of words.





the House of Savoy. The regiment was created as a unit of Piedmontese mercenaries during the 'Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), a brutal conflict that ravaged much of Europe, particularly the Holy Roman Empire. The regiment initially fought for the Duke of Savoy but was later integrated into French service. This transfer occurred as part of France's wider military strategy under Cardinal Jules Mazarin and Louis XIV, who sought to expand and centralize French power.

Once in French service, the Carignan Regiment participated in several European conflicts, particularly in northern Italy and along France's eastern borders. These engagements were often aimed at checking the Habsburgs and securing France's frontier provinces. The regiment became known for its discipline and effectiveness in mountainous terrain, a skill that would later prove valuable in the rugged landscapes of Nouvelle-France.

The Salières Regiment was created a bit later and named after its commander, Henri de Chastelard de Salières. Like many other regiments of the Ancien Régime, it was raised as part of a broader expansion of the royal army under Louis XIV, who came to the throne in 1643. The Salières Regiment's early history is less well documented than that of Carignan, but it likely participated in domestic campaigns aimed at suppressing internal revolts and maintaining order within the realm.

As the Thirty Years' War between France and Spain began winding down, France consolidated its military units in preparation for both European campaigns and overseas





ventures. As part of this restructuring, the Carignan and Salières regiments were merged in 1659 to form the Carignan-Salières Regiment. The move reflected broader trends in French military organization: combining smaller units to create more effective, centralized forces that could act as instruments of royal authority both at home and abroad. By the early 1660s, the total force of the Carignan-Salières Regiment was about 600 to 700 *soldats*.

As part of making Nouvelle-France a royal province instead of being managed by the Compagnie des Cent-Associés, King Louis XIV finally decided to provide the military power to defend the colony against the Iroquois, and the Carignan-Salières Regiment was named to spearhead the effort. But first, the number of *soldats* in the Regiment needed to nearly double, and recruitment was intensified beginning in 1664. Considering Jacques likely age, then about 20, it was probably then that he was recruited as a *soldat* for the Contrecoeur Company, part of the Regiment. The Contrecoeur Company was led by Antoine Pécaudy de Contrecoeur, then about 68 years old.<sup>8</sup>

While *dit* names were common in Nouvelle-France, they were even more common among *soldats*. Jacques acquired the *dit* name of Sanssoucy, meaning “carefree”, “without worry”, or even “happy-go-lucky.” This probably meant that Jacques had a cheerful personality or a casual, carefree attitude, unusual for a *soldat*, and thus why he acquired the *dit* name.

By 1665, the Carignan-Salières Regiment reached a strength of about 1,200 regular soldiers and about 80 officers, and was ready to be sent to Nouvelle-France. The Contrecoeur





Company was one of 24 companies comprising the Regiment, each company with about 50 men. Seven ships were procured to transport the Regiment and its supplies to Nouvelle-France.

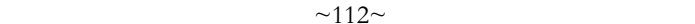
Aboard the ship *La Paix* (an ironic name for a ship carrying soldiers), on 13 May 1665 Jacques left La Rochelle for Québec.<sup>9</sup> Along with his own Contrecoeur Company, three other companies of the Carignan-Salières Regiment were onboard. Another ship transporting troops, *L’Aigle d’Or*, accompanied *La Paix*. After first stopping in Tadoussac to take on a pilot, *La Paix* landed in Québec on 19 August, a voyage of 96 days. Highlighting the dangers of travel by ship of the time, *La Paix* was shipwrecked on its way back to France.<sup>10</sup>

The residents of Québec were very happy to now have these *soldats* there to protect them. There was an immediate problem, though. Québec then only had a population of about 500 people, but over 1,200 *soldats* had just arrived that needed to be housed and fed, and there was limited infrastructure. The arrival of the Regiment immediately increased the population of the entire colony by about 25%.

Upon their arrival in Québec, the Carignan-Salières Regiment was initially housed in existing structures within the city. However, due to space constraints, many companies were soon dispatched to various locations to construct forts. To aid in this dispatch of troops, 152 flat-bottomed boats were built. In October 1665, the Contrecoeur Company, alongside other units, commenced the construction of a fort on the Sainte-Thérèse rapids in the Rivière Richelieu. This



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On 26 October 1665, the Contrecoeur Company was about to set out for Montréal when many of the men were then tasked with building a road from Fort Saint-Louis to Montréal through woods and marshes.¹¹ Most of the Company's men were then sick. Though the officer tried to delay the work until winter set in when it would be easier to



build, the order still went out to have the work done. The balance of the men went on to Montréal.

Detailed records of the Contrecoeur Company's contribution towards the ensuing efforts against the Iroquois are lacking, but it is believed that it participated in several military campaigns aimed at neutralizing the Iroquois threat. Notably, during the Winter Campaign of 1666, the Regiment, including the Contrecoeur Company, engaged in operations against the Mohawk, one of the Iroquois nations. The Regiment set out from Montréal in late January 1666 with about 500 to 600 men, which not only included many of its *soldats*, but also Amerindian allies and Canadian militia. This was a rare winter attack, hoping to catch the Mohawk off-guard and force a peace settlement. The goal was to reach and attack Mohawk villages located in what is now eastern New York State.

The troops endured extreme cold, deep snow, and poor supplies. Sleds and snowshoes were used, but many suffered frostbite, hunger, and exhaustion. The trek through the Adirondack wilderness was extraordinarily difficult and the Regiment was ill-prepared. When they reached the Mohawk Valley, they found the villages abandoned. The Mohawk had been warned or had fled. The forces were too weak to pursue or hold territory and were forced to retreat back to Nouvelle-France. Though no major battle occurred, several men died from exposure or illness. The campaign was considered a strategic failure militarily, but it demonstrated French resolve and sowed fear among the Iroquois.





Though the winter campaign failed to secure a military victory, it set the stage for a more successful expedition in the fall of 1666, led by Alexandre de Prouville de Tracy. The campaign destroyed several Mohawk villages. It is believed that the Contrecoeur Company participated in this campaign too. Facing repeated incursions and destruction, the Iroquois ultimately sued for peace in 1667.

The Carignan-Salières Regiment had achieved its objective. While peace was never permanent with the Iroquois, this lull gave the colony an opportunity to grow and prosper.

Many members of the Contrecoeur Company chose to settle in Nouvelle-France rather than return to France, including their commander, Antoine Pécaudy de Contrecoeur. In 1667, at the age of 71, he married a 15-year-old local girl. He ultimately received a *seigneurie* and settled in what is now the modern-day city of Contrecoeur. He and his very young wife went on to have three children.¹²

In 1668, Jacques was discharged from the regiment following the completion of the Carignan-Salières Regiment's major assignments.¹³

On 29 April 1674 in Montréal, Jacques entered into a fur trading partnership with his friend Pierre Rebours.¹⁴ Rebours, about the same age as Jacques, had appeared in the 1666 and 1667 censuses as a servant of the Sulpicians in Montréal.¹⁵ By 1674, both he and Jacques were listed as residents of Longueuil, located across the Fleuve Saint-Laurent from Montréal and not far from Côte Saint-Lambert.¹⁶ This listing may have been in error and may





instead have referred to Côte Saint-Lambert, within the *seigneurie* of LaPrairie, which lies nearby. Jacques and Rebours had been close friends for four years by this time.

The contract they signed was a five-year agreement in which they agreed to share equally in all profits. Any expense over five *sols* “other than for a bit of spirits” required mutual approval. If either partner chose to leave the agreement before its term ended, he would owe the other 60 *livres*, and they would then divide all assets equally. Rebours was the one designated to travel into Amerindian territory to trade. Jacques, having left his life as a *soldat* behind, now took an active role in the fur trade.

On 4 June 1674, Jacques stood as godfather to Jacques Benoît in Montréal¹⁷ and may have lent his name to the child. The boy was the son of Paul Benoît *dit* Livernois and Élizabeth Gobinet. Benoît *dit* Livernois had been living in Montréal since 1653. Since fur trading expeditions into Amerindian territory typically would have begun by early summer, Jacques’s presence in Montréal at that time confirms that only Rebours traveled to trade with the Amerindians, while Jacques remained in the French-settled areas to manage other aspects of their partnership. One partner ranged, the other arranged.

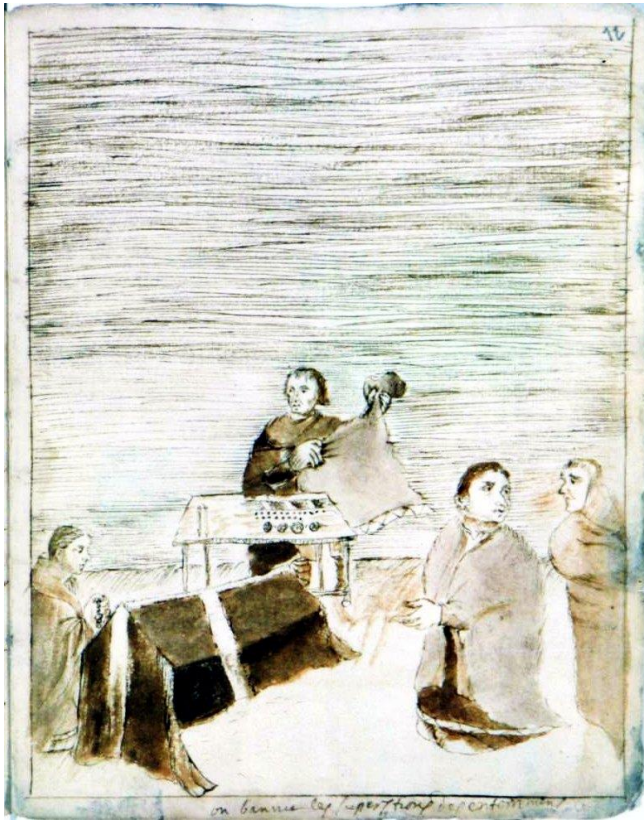
Prior to 16 July 1674, Jacques received a concession of land on Côte Saint-Lambert¹⁸ near the Robidou residence. The Jesuits officially documented this concession on 9 October 1674.¹⁹ Jacques likely acquired the land before entering into his partnership with Rebours in April; otherwise, under the





terms of that agreement, Rebours would have been a co-owner of the property.²⁰

By early 1676, Jacques and Rebours ended their partnership less than two years into the original five-year term. On 26 January, they mutually agreed to dissolve the agreement without financial penalty to either party.²¹



6.4 Changing burial customs of the Amerindians in LaPrairie (1673), by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686





Shortly afterward, Jacques and Rebours completed one final transaction. For the sum of 30 *francs*, Jacques acquired additional property on Côte Saint-Lambert directly adjacent to his own.²² The new parcel, one *arpent* wide and twenty *arpents* deep, amounted to half of Rebours's property and expanded Jacques's landholding by 50%. They signed the agreement before the Jesuits' secretary in LaPrairie.



6.5 Amerindian women working the LaPrairie fields (circa 1673),
by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686





Life Among Saints (Part 3)

Marguerite Bourgeoys, born in 1620 in Troyes, France, was the daughter of a modest but devout artisan family. At age twenty, during a procession honoring the Virgin Mary, she felt a profound spiritual call that redirected the course of her life. Though she longed for religious service, she did not enter a cloistered convent; instead, she joined the extern congregation of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame in Troyes, devoting herself to teaching and charitable work. Her gifts for leadership, humility, and practical organization soon caught the attention of Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, governor of the struggling settlement of Ville-Marie (Montréal) in Nouvelle-France.

In 1653, Marguerite sailed to the young colony, arriving to find a frontier community beset by hardship, isolation, and repeated conflict. She immediately set to work educating the settlement's children, teaching them in small cabins, barns, and even outdoor spaces until a proper school could be built. She founded the Congrégation de Notre-Dame of Montréal, an uncloistered active community of women dedicated to education, nursing, and supporting families.

Marguerite played a significant role in welcoming the *Filles du Roi*, helping them adapt to colonial life. Known for her resilience, compassion, and tireless work ethic, she walked long distances, negotiated with officials, and sought resources for her schools, living simply and without personal possessions. She died 12 January 1700, revered as the “Mother of the Colony.”

As a resident or trader in Montréal, Jacques probably met her about the settlement teaching young children, aiding new arrivals, or visiting the sick. She was canonized in 1982.





In September 1676, Jacques witnessed a theft in Montréal that resulted in a death sentence for the accused.²³ The defendant appealed, and on 17 November 1676, Jacques was summoned along with other witnesses to give his deposition again.²⁴ His testimony was taken once more in March 1677, and the court issued its final judgment on 8 March 1677.²⁵

The court convicted Jean Belleville of stealing at night from the home of Jean Aubuchon, a resident of Montréal. The stolen items included eighteen beaver pelts, two pairs of French shoes, two pairs of St. Missan stockings (high-quality stockings, possibly from Saint-Mihiel in Lorraine, France), seven pounds of powder, three *aunes* of coarse linen (less than four meters in total), five marten pelts (considered valuable furs), and 25 *francs* in silver coin. Belleville had initially received a death sentence, but on appeal, the court commuted it. Instead, the executioner was ordered to beat him with rods until blood was drawn and then take him to the market square of the lower town of Montréal, where he was to be branded with a fleur-de-lis on the shoulder – a mark meant to leave its impression and its lesson. Belleville was also fined 60 *livres* and required to pay the costs of the court proceedings.

Just as the Robidou property had been, Jacques's concession on Côte Saint-Lambert appeared in the Jesuits' inventory dated 9 November 1677.²⁶ Despite owning land there, up to this time Jacques remained actively involved in various matters that frequently brought him to Montréal.

Although no marriage contract has been found for Jeanne and Jacques, records show they were married on 16 August





1678 at the Church of Saint-François-Xavier in LaPrairie.²⁷ The ceremony was performed by Father Claude Chauchetière, a recently arrived priest who would later publish an account of his mission work titled *Narration annuelle de la Mission du Sault depuis la fondation jusqu'à l'an 1686*.²⁸ Chauchetière was the person to provide the most detail about the life of the Mohawk woman who would become Saint Kateri Tekakwitha.²⁹ There was only one of two marriages performed in LaPrairie that year.³⁰



6.6 Bishop François de Laval baptizing Amerindians in LaPrairie (1675), by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686



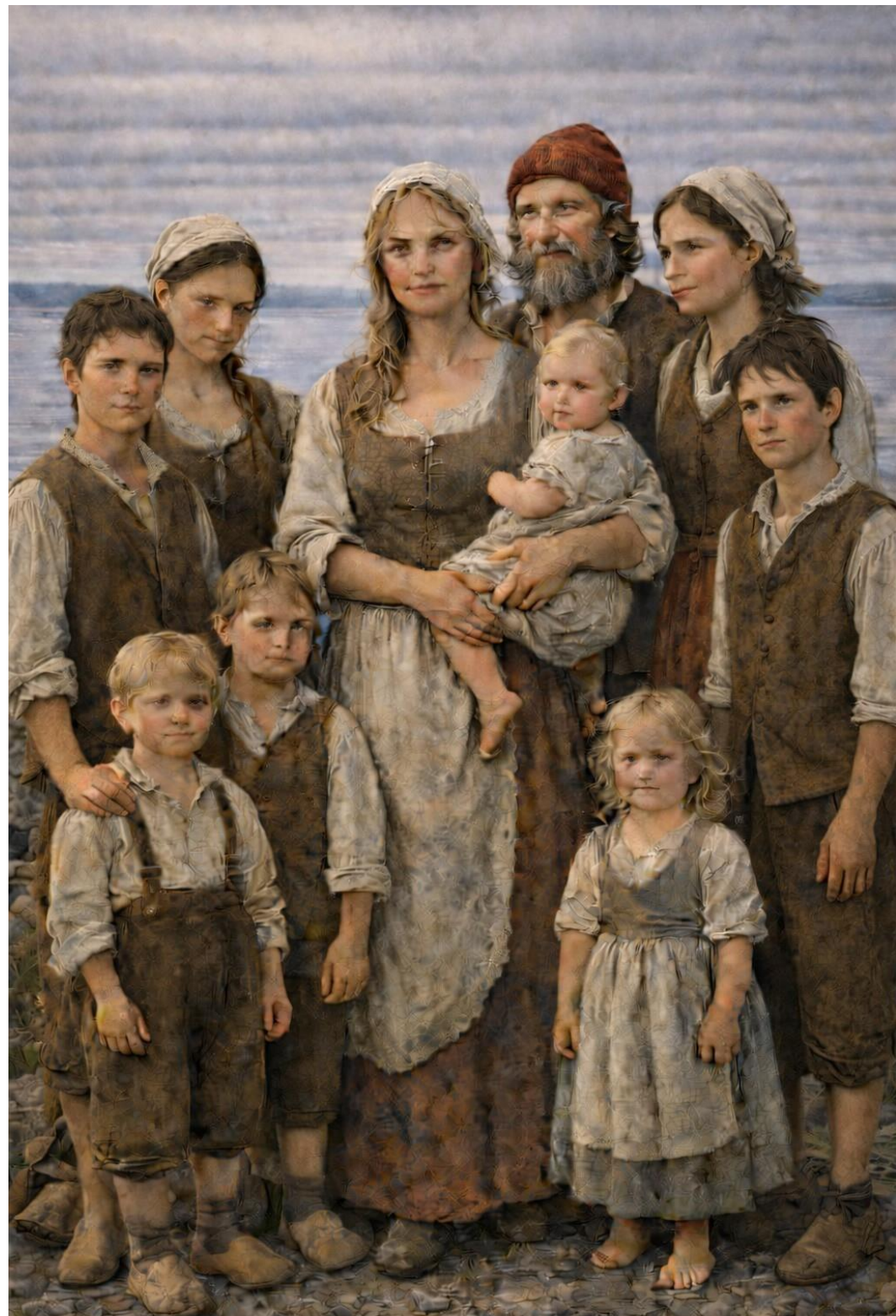


The wedding witnesses were Pierre Lefebvre and Charles Boyer.³¹ Lefebvre had previously served as godfather to Jeanne's daughter Marguerite, and his wife was godmother to Jeanne's son Joseph, while Boyer's wife was godmother to Marguerite and his son had been godfather to Joseph.³² These connections reflected not only the closeness of their families to Jeanne but also the tight-knit nature of the LaPrairie community.

Jeanne married Jacques just four and a half months after André's death. Grief moved quickly, need moved quicker. While such a short interval might seem surprising by modern standards, it was not uncommon in Nouvelle-France at the time, though there is a lack of research into the customary intervals between widowhood and remarriage for this time period.³³

With this marriage, Jeanne showed herself to be resilient and forward-thinking, who, in the face of loss, chose to remarry not out of dependence, but out of strength and foresight. At the time, the challenges of raising children alone in a demanding and often unforgiving colony were nearly impossible. This new partnership offered economic stability, security, and continuity. Her decision ensured that her children would have a stable home, access to resources, and the guidance of a supportive household. Her remarriage was a practical act of care both for herself and for her family's future. In doing so, she embodied the pragmatic wisdom that helped shape the fabric of colonial society.





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## 7. *La Mère des Familles*

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In the heart of Côte Saint-Lambert in northern LaPrairie, Jeanne Denot carved out a life of endurance and maternal devotion. Having already borne five children with her first husband, André Robidou *dit* L'Espagnol, Jeanne entered a new chapter upon marrying Jacques Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy. Together with her four surviving children, Jeanne and Jacques began building a blended family that would come to represent two enduring French-Canadian bloodlines.

With remarkable consistency during her marriage to André, Jeanne gave birth every two years, and this regularity continued in her new marriage to Jacques. On 4 December 1679, two years after the birth of Joseph Robidou, Jeanne and Jacques had their first child baptized in LaPrairie: a son named Jean.¹ In that household, even hope seemed to keep a schedule. The baby was named after his godfather, Jean Chevalier, about whom little is known. Tragically, baby Jean

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died just six months later and was buried on 4 June 1680 in LaPrairie's church cemetery.<sup>2</sup>

The following month, on 23 July 1680, Jacques and Jeanne made a formal agreement with Jeanne's old friend, Catherine Houart, for Jeanne's eldest daughter, Marie Romaine, to work for Houart in Québec.<sup>3</sup> Only 11 years old at the time, Marie Romaine was being sent far from her parents to a region of Nouvelle-France she hadn't likely seen since infancy. The



7.2 Consecrated virginity amount Amerindian women (1678), by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686



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contract began on 25 July and was to last one year. Houart agreed to feed, clothe, and house Marie Romaine, treat her humanely, and oversee her religious education. The agreement gave Marie Romaine the option to leave after one year. It specified no pay or defined duties. Like André and Jeanne before him, Jacques was unable to sign his name. The contract, made in Montréal, was signed by Houart in person.⁴



7.3 Midday lightning strike near the LaPrairie church (1680), by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686

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In that era, parents often arranged long-term apprenticeship contracts for children to learn trades, but this was neither long-term nor educational. Instead, it was simply an employment agreement that required an 11-year-old to travel and work far from home under someone who, while familiar to the mother, would have been largely unknown to the child. According to the child-rearing norms of the time, Marie Romaine should have been at home caring for younger siblings or helping with domestic and farm chores. Sending her away, especially without pay, was highly unusual. Was the purpose to broaden her horizons in the largest settlement of the colony, or was it an attempt to separate a difficult child from the household for a time? Could the arrangement have been connected to the recent death of baby Jean? The answers remain unknown.

About seven months later, on 5 February 1681, Jeanne served as a godmother for the first time on record.<sup>5</sup> The child, born just the day before, was Romaine Gervais, daughter of Mathieu Gervais *dit* Parisien and his wife, Michelle Picard. The baptism took place in LaPrairie and was officiated by the same priest who had married Jeanne and Jacques a few years earlier. Like Jacques, Gervais had served in the Carignan-Salières Regiment. Romaine was the second of what would become ten children born to Gervais and Picard in LaPrairie.<sup>6</sup> Coincidentally, the baby shared her name with the daughter Jeanne who had recently sent to Québec.

On 5 June 1681, Jacques and Jeanne welcomed their second child together.<sup>7</sup> She was baptized the same day in





### **Life Among Saints (Part 4)**

Kateri Tekakwitha, born around 1656 in the Mohawk village of Ossernenon (present-day Auriesville, New York), was the daughter of a Mohawk chief and a Christian Algonquin woman. At age four, a smallpox epidemic swept through her village, killing her parents and younger brother and leaving her scarred and partially blind. Orphaned, she was taken in by her uncle, a traditional Mohawk leader, and raised according to Iroquois customs. Despite her physical frailty and the pressure to marry, Kateri remained quiet, modest, and drawn to the Christian faith.

At age 19, after years of silent devotion, she was baptized “Catherine” (Kateri in Mohawk) on Easter Sunday. Her conversion caused friction within her village; she was ridiculed, ostracized, and even threatened with violence. In 1677, seeking a place to live out her faith more freely, she undertook a grueling 200-mile journey north to LaPrairie.

In this devout Christian Amerindian community, known as the “Praying Indians”, Kateri embraced a life of prayer, penance, and service. She made a private vow of perpetual virginity, an extraordinary act for a young Mohawk woman. Her intense devotion, humility, and care for others won admiration from both missionaries and fellow converts.

Kateri died on April 17, 1680, at age 24. Witnesses reported that her scarred face became radiant and clear at the moment of death, which many saw as a sign of sanctity. Beatified in 1980 and canonized in 2012, she is the first Amerindian saint and is honored today as the patroness of Amerindian peoples, ecology, and youth. Her tomb lies at Kahnawake, Québec, Canada. The Robidou and Surprenant families would have met her during mass, charitable visits, or out in the village where she walked in quiet prayer.





LaPrairie and named Marguerite, after her godmother Marguerite Petit.<sup>8</sup> The godfather was Jean Roux *dit* LaPlante, a landowner in LaPrairie who was about 30 years old at the time. While little is known about this Marguerite's godmother, this marked the second time Jeanne had chosen the name Marguerite for a daughter. The first Marguerite, born during her marriage to André, had died at only two months old.<sup>9</sup>

That same year, Nouvelle-France conducted its first census since 1667. Jacques, listed as age 37, and Jeanne, age 36, were recorded with their daughter Jeanne (age 8), sons Guillaume and Joseph (ages 6 and 4 respectively), and infant daughter Marguerite (age 1). The household owned one rifle, two cows, and had six *arpents* of cultivated land.<sup>10</sup> While the census listed only six *arpents*, this likely represented the land actively being worked, not the family's total holdings.

Meanwhile, the 1681 census recorded Marie Romaine, age 13, working as a maidservant for Catherine Houart, age 43, in Québec.<sup>11</sup> Houart's household was significantly larger than Jeanne's and included her innkeeper husband, Pierre Nolan; five of their children, aged 7 through 17; another maidservant, age 15, who was pregnant; a male cook, age 24; and what appear to be eight guests of the inn. Among those guests was Pierre-Esprit Radisson, then age 41. Radisson's extraordinary life included capture and adoption by the Mohawks, subsequent torture when he tried to return to the French, escape to the Dutch in what is now Albany, New York, and fur trading expeditions deep into Amerindian territory for both the French and the English.<sup>12</sup> He also co-





founded the Hudson Bay Company, the most influential enterprise in Canadian history, and had served in the French navy during an attack on the island of Tobago in the West Indies.<sup>13</sup> If Jeanne had sent Marie Romaine to gain exposure to the broader world, her placement at Houart's inn certainly accomplished that.



**7.4 “Radisson and Groseilliers” (Radison stands, Médard des Groseilliers sits by him), by Frederic Remington, 1905**

On 16 January 1683, Jacques and Jeanne welcomed their third child, Pierre.<sup>14</sup> He was baptized five days later, on 21 January, in LaPrairie. His namesake godfather, Pierre Foubert, lived in LaPrairie, and the godmother was Marie Romaine who had returned from Québec after her time working at the inn. The baptism was performed by Vincent Bigot, a relatively new priest who had arrived in Nouvelle-France in 1680 and assigned to LaPrairie in 1682.<sup>15</sup> Bigot





would later go on to carry out many missionary efforts among the Amerindians.

Later that year, on 8 November 1683, the first of Jeanne's children married<sup>16</sup> in what would be the only marriage recorded in LaPrairie that year.<sup>17</sup> At just 14 years old, Marie Romaine wed Jean Roux *dit* LaPlante, who was 33. Roux had earlier served as godfather to Marie Romaine's half-sister, Marguerite Surprenant. Their wedding took place in LaPrairie and was officiated by Claude Chauchetière, the same priest who had married Jacques and Jeanne. The wide age gap between Marie Romaine and Roux, though striking by modern standards, was not unusual at the time.

Marie Romaine was now stepping into the role that Jeanne had played for many years. The wife and mother held a central, indispensable role in the life of the family both practically and culturally. While the legal system of the time prioritized paternal authority, it was *la mere de famille*, the mother of the family, who served as the heart of the household. She managed the home, raised the children, cooked meals, tended gardens, cared for livestock,<sup>18</sup> and often took on tasks of sewing, spinning, and food preservation. In frontier settlements where life was physically demanding and resources scarce, the mother's work was essential to survival.

Beyond daily labor, mothers were also the moral and spiritual guides of the family. They taught prayers, catechism, and manners, preparing children for both religious duties and social responsibilities. Mothers typically chose godparents,





attended baptisms, and ensured children were raised in the Catholic faith.

She often managed household assets alone. Despite lacking formal legal power, many women exerted influence through economic decisions, and social networks.

Mothers also served as emotional anchors in families buffeted by the dangers of war, illness, and isolation. Their strength, continuity, and care giving helped stabilize not only the home but the broader fabric of colonial society. In many ways, the endurance of Nouvelle-France rested on the shoulders of its mothers.

The year 1684 brought both joy and sorrow. Jacques and Jeanne had another son, Laurent, although no baptismal record has survived.<sup>19</sup> That happiness was tempered by the loss of their daughter Marguerite Surprenant, who died on 25 July 1684 and was buried the next day.<sup>20</sup> She was only three years old.

In LaPrairie, the Jesuits were finding some success among the Christian Amerindians, and around this time, certain members of the Christian faithful from other parts of Nouvelle-France began visiting the grave of the Mohawk woman Kateri Tekakwitha. Her burial site lay in the cemetery near the Amerindian settlement south of the village, and devotion to her was steadily growing. Pilgrims came seeking strength in a soft voice. While it remains uncertain whether Jeanne or her family were among her devotees, the presence of someone regarded as holy and spoken of with





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high esteem by the local priests suggests they likely held at least some reverence for her.

Marie Romaine and Jean Roux welcomed their first child, Marie-Anne Roux, who was baptized in LaPrairie on 28 April 1686.²¹ Reflecting the strong bond between Marie Romaine and her stepfather, Jacques stood as the child's godfather.

The year 1686 also marked the year that the Sulpicians took over from the Jesuits the parish in LaPrairie. They also built



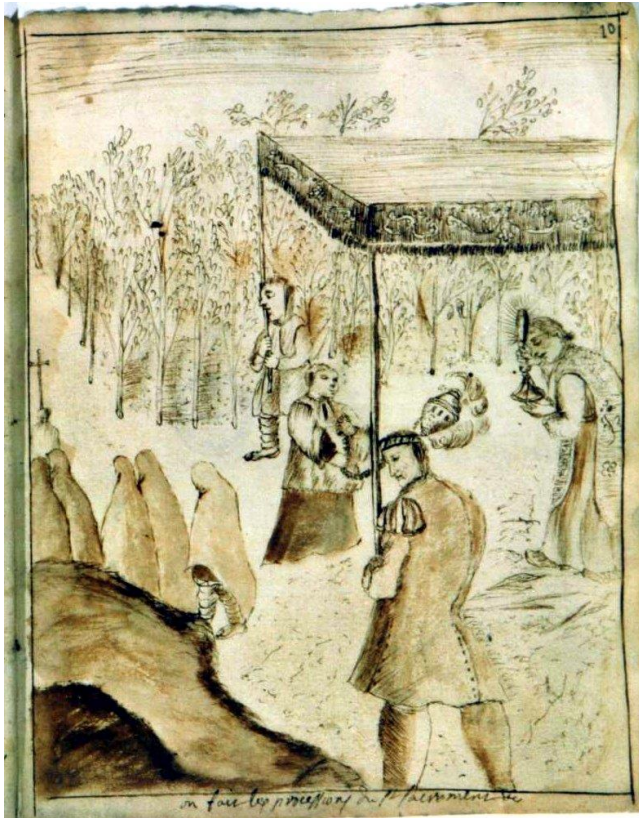
7.5 Building in LaPrairie supervised by the Jesuits (circa 1683), by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686

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a new church in LaPrairie, made of wood, that was six meters wide, and had nine benches for the parishioners. This church was to stand until a more permanent structure of stone was built in 1704 and 1705.

With her usual regularity, Jeanne gave birth to her and Jacques's next child, Catherine, on 24 July 1686.²² The baptism followed five days later, on the 29th. This marked the only known time Jeanne chose not to name her child after



7.6 Religious procession in LaPrairie (circa 1682), by Claude Chauchetière, LaPrairie parish priest, 1686 p125

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a godparent. The godmother was Jeanne's own daughter, Jeanne Robidou, who, pursuant to Jeanne Denot's custom, would have been the namesake. However, Jeanne likely decided that having a Jeanne Denot, a Jeanne Robidou, and a Jeanne Surprenant in the same immediate family would have created too much confusion. The baptismal record lists no godfather, only noting the presence of Jacques and Marie-Marguerite Gagné. Gagné had previously served as godmother to Jeanne's son Joseph, suggesting a long-standing friendship with the family. The presiding priest was Jean Morin.

On 10 December 1686, Marie Romaine, recently widowed, remarried in LaPrairie to Jean Patenaude.<sup>23</sup> Patenaude, a 32-year-old widower from Montréal, brought his daughter, Marie Patenaude, then just 7½ months old, into the marriage, while Marie Romaine brought her daughter of the same age. Several witnesses attended the ceremony, including Jacques and Jeanne. Others listed as mutual friends of the couple were Pierre Gagné, Jean Laroche, Pierre Poupard, and Étienne Trudeau (an ancestor of Canadian Prime Ministers Pierre<sup>24</sup> and Justin Trudeau). The dates of death for their first spouses remain unknown, but the age of the children suggests both had been widowed only briefly. At just 17 years old, Marie Romaine had now been married twice to men in their 30s and was both a mother and stepmother to two infants under the age of one.

Motherhood returned once again to Jeanne on 19 September 1688 with the birth of her 11th child, Claude.<sup>25</sup> He was baptized in LaPrairie on 21 September. His





godparents were Claude Caron, a resident of LaPrairie and married father of nine, and Marguerite Faye *dite* Lafayette, a 14-year-old unmarried daughter of neighbors Mathieu Faye *dit* Lafayette and Marguerite-Françoise Moreau. Sadly, young Claude lived just short of a year and died at home on 9 September 1689; he was buried the following day.<sup>26</sup>

On 15 June 1689, a year and a half after her second marriage, Marie Romaine gave birth to her first child with Jean Patenaude; a boy named Jean-François Patenaude.<sup>27</sup> He became Jeanne's second biological grandchild.

That fall, on 11 October 1689, while in Montréal, Jacques and Jeanne entered into a contract with their neighbors, Jean Roy *dit* Deschats and his wife Françoise Saulnier *dite* Duverdier, to share farming responsibilities between their respective properties on Côte Saint-Lambert.<sup>28</sup> Under the agreement, both parties agreed to supply a work ox and share its labor. In the event of Roy's death from his current illness, the ox workdays would still be owed and compensated at a rate of 20 *sols* per day until the work was completed. As it happened, Roy did not survive to see the spring planting. He died in Montréal on 1 November 1689,<sup>29</sup> just weeks after the contract was signed. His widow entered into a contract for a new marriage the next month and married in February 1690, well before the new planting season,<sup>30</sup> making it likely that the agreement was never fulfilled.

In 17th-century LaPrairie, Sunday was more than just a day of worship, it was the social heartbeat of the week. Early in the morning, families rose, dressed in their best clothes, and prepared for the walk to the parish church. The walk could





take an hour or more, especially for those living on distant farms. As they traveled the well-trodden dirt paths and cart roads, families met up with neighbors and relatives, forming small processions that grew in size the closer they came to the church.

Along the way, conversation flowed easily: news of births, deaths, marriages, and weather; rumors of raids or crop failures; and stories of events in nearby settlements. Children played as they walked, and adults caught up on matters of community and family. The walk became a moment of connection in an otherwise isolated, labor-intensive rural life – six days to work the land; one to work the bonds.

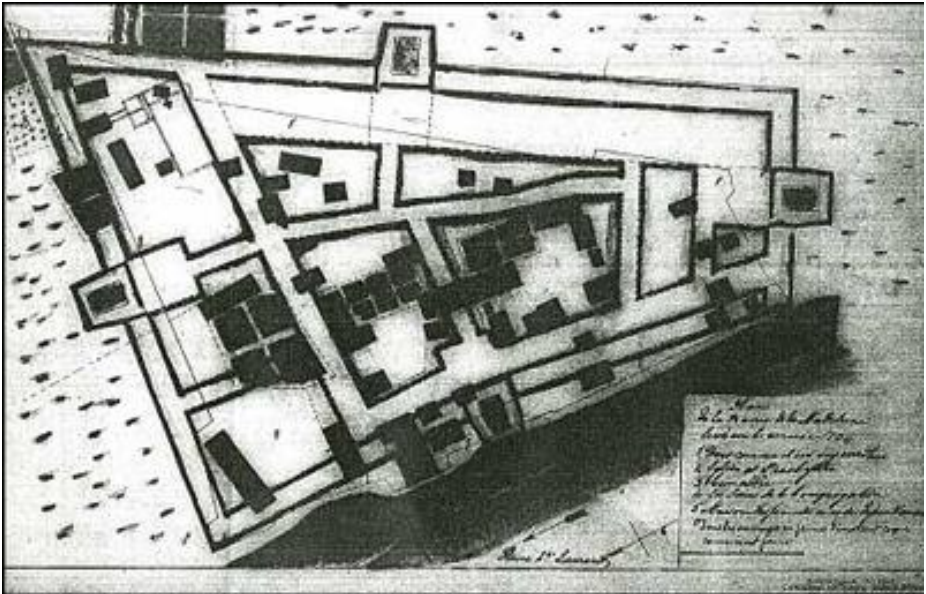
By the time they reached the church, the entire community had gathered. Mass was both a religious obligation and a civic ritual, binding the faithful to each other and to the colonial order. Afterward, families lingered outside the churchyard, chatting and exchanging goods, arranging marriages or labor, and discussing recent events. These Sunday gatherings helped maintain the fragile fabric of community life in Nouvelle-France, reinforcing ties of faith and cooperation in an often harsh and uncertain world.

While Jeanne's family continued to grow and contribute to LaPrairie's population, trouble loomed on the horizon. In 1689, King William's War erupted as a colonial extension of the broader European conflict between France and England. The rivalry transformed Nouvelle-France and New England into bitter battlegrounds. Villages that had once slumbered at the edge of deep forests now braced for violence.





Since 1687, LaPrairie had been protected by Fort LaPrairie, constructed by Gédéon de Catalogne, an engineer of the French colonial forces. Built as a defensive stronghold to safeguard Montréal from future wars between the French and English, the fort offered shelter to nearby settlers during periods of danger.



### 7.7 Fort LaPrairie

Closer to home for Jacques and Jeanne, though, another fort, Fort Côte Saint-Lambert, was constructed between 1689 and 1690.<sup>31</sup> This fort, built by militiamen mainly for the protection of Montréal, was a square, wooden palisade of black ash, about 3.6 meters high. Like Fort LaPrairie, its design was by de Catalogne. Being much closer, it would have afforded the Robidou and Surprenant families greater protection in the event of an attack.







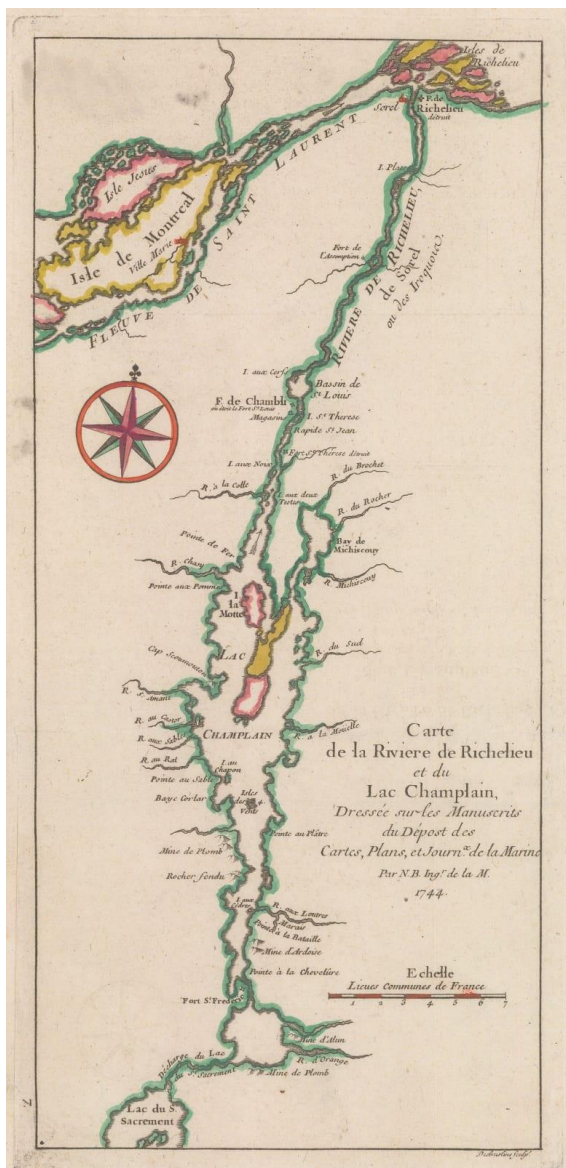
In February 1690, the war escalated. A French-Canadian force, allied with native warriors, launched a devastating raid on the English village of Schenectady, New York. They killed or captured many of its residents. While the attack aligned with a broader French strategy to destabilize English colonies, it left lasting trauma and fueled demands for retaliation. Among the loudest voices calling for revenge were Dutch-English officers and brothers Johannes and Pieter Schuyler of Albany, who knew the routes from the Hudson Valley to the Fleuve Saint-Laurent well.

LaPrairie soon emerged as a prime target. Located near the Rivière Richelieu–Lake Champlain corridor, it stood directly along the natural invasion route from New York into the heart of Nouvelle-France. More than a mere farming community, LaPrairie now served as a key military outpost.

Colonel Johannes Schuyler led an expedition of 29 New York provincials and 120 Amerindian allies toward LaPrairie.<sup>32</sup> On 23 August 1690, Schuyler launched his attack just outside the settlement, targeting primarily civilians. The assault left 11 farmers, ten soldiers, and three women dead, and one girl either captured or killed. The attackers also destroyed 16 homes, barns, haystacks, and slaughtered 150 cattle.<sup>33</sup>

Yet even amidst the turmoil of war, Jeanne and Jacques's family continued to grow. In 1690, they welcomed a daughter, Marie.<sup>34</sup> Later that year, on 5 December, Jeanne's daughter Jeanne Robidou married Gabriel Lemieux in LaPrairie.<sup>35</sup> Jacques attended the wedding, and although Jeanne's presence isn't specifically noted, the marriage record





7.8 “Carte de la Riviere de Richelieu et du Lac Champlain”, by Jacques-Nicolas Bellin, 1744



does mention unnamed additional witnesses. The bride was 17, the groom 27. Lemieux, originally from the parish of Saint-Joseph of Pointe de Lévis near Québec, appears to have been living in LaPrairie at the time of the marriage.

The year 1690 marked another change for the Amerindians of LaPrairie. Their settlement was again moved further away from the center of the village, now to the far extreme southwestern corner of the LaPrairie *seigneurie*, another move necessitated by the exhaustion of the soil near their old settlement and the need to distance them from the French who would trade liquor with them for furs. This move, though, also lessened the protection that the Amerindians' fighting skills offered the village from attacks by the Iroquois.

For the Robidou and Surprenant families, in 1691 their own neighborhood chapel would move too, from its original location on Côte Saint-Lambert into Fort Côte Saint-Lambert to provide the chapel more protection.<sup>36</sup> The work was carried out by a Hyerome Charpentier, who was paid 50 livres and some salt for his services.<sup>37</sup>

King William's War pressed on. In the summer of 1691, Major Pieter Schuyler set his invasion plan in motion. He assembled a force of about 120 colonial militiamen from Albany and nearby settlements, and allied himself with roughly 80 Mohawks and 66 Schaghticokes. These Amerindian warriors, hardened by years of brutal conflict with the French and their native allies, were eager to strike.

Schuyler's expedition advanced northward, navigating the interconnected waterways of the Hudson River, Lake George,





Lake Champlain, and the Rivière Richelieu. His orders were unambiguous: strike swiftly, cause maximum destruction, and retreat before the French could organize a counterattack.

Despite oppressive heat, relentless insects, and difficult supply lines, the force moved with speed and silence. By early August, they had crossed into French territory.

In the predawn darkness of 11 August 1691, Schuyler's mixed force slipped through the woods encircling LaPrairie. At that time, Fort LaPrairie held an active French garrison, ready, though perhaps not fully prepared, for what would follow.

The attackers waited for the first light of day and then struck. Fierce fighting broke out as the French launched counterattacks in waves. Schuyler's force eventually retreated, falling back toward their canoes on the Rivière Richelieu.<sup>38</sup>

The French reacted quickly. One small pursuing party, though, was completely wiped out. A larger force of about 160 colonial soldiers, militia, and French-allied Amerindians, led by Philippe Clément du Vuault de la Valrennes, then set out in pursuit.<sup>39</sup>

By that afternoon, Schuyler's retreating troops found themselves slogging through swampy, uneven terrain near the Richelieu. The rough ground slowed their escape and gave de la Valrennes's men the chance to close in, and a running battle erupted.

Both sides suffered heavy losses, but Schuyler managed to lead most of his men south to Lake Champlain. He later





reported 37 dead and 31 wounded. The French, by contrast, counted 45 dead and 60 wounded, most of them during the earlier assault on Fort LaPrairie.

Jacques, once a soldier himself, may have joined the civilian militia defending LaPrairie or chasing Schuyler's forces. However, there are few records of who participated in these events and no records survive to confirm his involvement.

The raid on LaPrairie didn't destroy the settlement, but it rattled its confidence. In response, the French rebuilt and reinforced their defenses, doubling down on fortifications along the southern approaches to Montréal. For the English and Iroquois, the raid marked a symbolic victory and was proof that Nouvelle-France was not invulnerable. For LaPrairie's civilians, the attack served as a bitter and terrifying reminder that no place was truly safe in this war.

The conflict dragged on for six more years, bringing more raids, reprisals, and suffering. Yet the 1691 assault on LaPrairie stood out as one of the boldest English-Iroquois incursions into French territory during King William's War, and it was a turning point in the long, violent struggle for control of the northeast.

Even though Jeanne and Jacques lived close to Fort Côte Saint-Lambert, it did not provide complete protection against enemy attacks. One of their neighbors, 55-year-old Denise LeMaître, was killed on 29 October 1691 by Iroquois on Côte Saint-Lambert.<sup>40</sup> LaPrairie recorded more burials in 1691 than any other year until 1727 when the population was much larger.<sup>41</sup>





During the war, while many residents fled LaPrairie for the relative safety of Montréal, it appears Jeanne and her family remained. Records of births and baptisms continued uninterrupted in LaPrairie. On 12 January 1692, Jeanne Robidou and Gabriel Lemieux welcomed their first child, Jean-Gabriel Lemieux.<sup>42</sup> Jeanne Denot served as godmother at the baptism the next day, while Marie Romaine's husband, Jean Patenaude, acted as godfather.

Despite being in her forties, mother to twelve children, and grandmother to four with a fifth step-grandchild, Jeanne was not yet finished bearing children. On 20 January 1692, she gave birth to her thirteenth child, Anne, who was baptized the following day.<sup>43</sup> Patenaude again served as godfather, just as he had for Jean-Gabriel Lemieux. The godmother, Marie Anne Roy, served as Anne's namesake. Roy was the wife of André Babeu, whom she had married in LaPrairie in 1689.<sup>44</sup>

Anne's birth marks the last dated record that confirms Jeanne was still alive. No official record of her death has been found, and her date of death must be inferred from later documents. The only certainty is that she died before 16 June 1697,<sup>45</sup> though likely well before that.

Anne was buried in LaPrairie on 1 February 1692, just 11 days after her birth.<sup>46</sup> This was the fifth child of Jeanne that died in infancy or young childhood. Anne's burial record makes no mention of Jeanne's death. While not an absolute rule, if an infant's mother had recently died, baptism or burial records often included that detail sometimes by noting the mother as *fene* (deceased).







### **Food in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Nouvelle-France**

In 17th-century Nouvelle-France, everyday food reflected a blend of Old World traditions and New World adaptations, shaped by seasonal availability, limited imports, and local agriculture. The staple of most meals was pain (bread), typically made from wheat or rye, and baked in communal or home ovens. Porridge (bouillie) made from cornmeal or oats was a common breakfast, often sweetened with maple syrup, a local substitute for imported sugar.

Salted pork, dried fish (especially cod), and peas formed the protein base of many diets, alongside occasional wild game like venison, hare, and partridge. Vegetables such as cabbage, carrots, turnips, and onions were grown in family gardens. The harsh climate limited the growing season, so colonists relied heavily on preservation methods like salting, smoking, and pickling. Dairy products, particularly milk, butter, and cheese, were available on farms, though not always in abundance.

The diet was shaped by Catholic practices: fast days prohibited meat, leading to heavier use of fish and legumes. Wine was rare and expensive, but cider and beer were locally produced. Amerindians also influenced settler cuisine, particularly the use of corn (maize), wild rice, and herbal teas.

Meals were simple and repetitive, with luxury goods like spices, coffee, or chocolate reserved for the elite or special occasions. Food scarcity was a frequent concern, particularly in isolated settlements or harsh winters.





Five days later, Jeanne Robidou’s infant son, Jean-Gabriel Lemieux, was also buried in LaPrairie at just 25 days old.<sup>47</sup> While his death does not provide a direct clue about Jeanne Denot’s fate, the close timing raises the possibility that a contagious illness, such as smallpox, which often followed war, may have caused both infant deaths.

Not all was sorrowful in 1692. On 20 July, Marie Romaine gave birth to her daughter, Marguerite Patenaude, who was baptized the next day in LaPrairie.<sup>48</sup>

On 28 September 1693 in Montréal, Jacques entered into a contract<sup>49</sup> with merchant Nicolas Janvrin *dit* Dufresne, age 39, married to Madeleine Berson and father to two young children.<sup>50</sup> The agreement placed Jacques and Jeanne’s 10-year-old son, Laurent, into Janvrin’s service until the age of 25. Laurent was described as “being weak at the present and... unable to perform any type of service for anyone, for a prolonged period of time and seeing that he may not be able to do so in an appropriate fashion...” This agreement essentially handed Laurent over to Janvrin, as it was believed the child would not become self-sufficient.

The contract further stipulated that if Laurent left Janvrin’s service before turning 25, the legal age of majority, Jacques gave Janvrin the right to sue Laurent to compensate Janvrin for all expenses incurred in Laurent’s care. By modern standards, this agreement seems harsh. Notably, the document makes no mention of Jeanne, even as Laurent’s mother. At the time, paternal authority (*puissance paternelle*) gave fathers legal control over decisions related to a child’s labor, residence, and education, including the right to sign





long-term apprenticeships or indentures. Mothers had a secondary legal role unless the father was deceased, and their consent wasn't required.

Still, compared to the earlier contract that arranged for Marie Romaine to work for Catherine Houart, Jeanne's absence in this 1693 document stands out, strongly suggesting she had already passed away by that time, especially since the same notary was used for both agreements and would likely have used the same format for both agreements had Jeanne still been alive. Sometimes facts are found only in their absence.

Jacques did not enter into another formal agreement until 24 April 1696, when he purchased land on Côte Saint-Lambert from Jacques Deniau and Marie Rivet.<sup>51</sup> Once again, Jeanne was not mentioned, an omission that stands out when compared to the land transactions André entered during his marriage to Jeanne.

Then, on 3 March 1697, Jacques sold land on Côte Saint-Lambert to Étienne Trudeau.<sup>52</sup> This was the same property Jacques had previously acquired from Pierre Rebours, and thus was a premarital asset. While technically he didn't need Jeanne's consent to sell this land, the continued absence of any reference to her remains notable.

On 6 June 1697, Guillaume Robidou entered into a marriage contract with Marie-Françoise Guérin.<sup>53</sup> In that document, the notary described Guillaume as “...*Guillaume Robidou demeurant en la prairie S.<sup>t</sup> Lambert fils de desfunts André Robidou Vivant habitant de lad.<sup>te</sup> prairie et de Jeanne Surprenand*





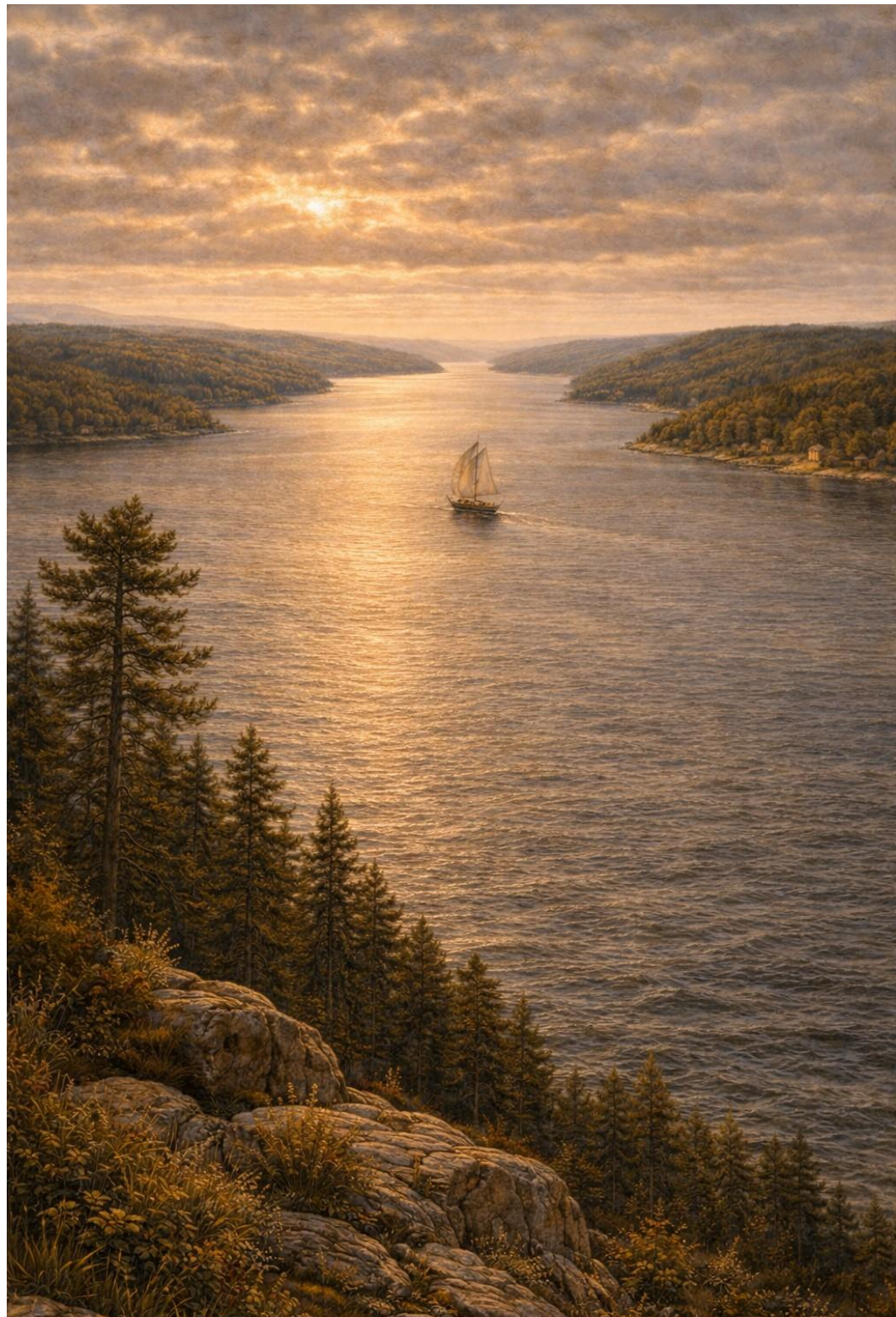
[Jeanne Denot] *ses pere et Mere ...*” The plural term “*desjunts*” suggests that both André and Jeanne were deceased, not just André. Yet, the actual marriage record dated 11 June 1697<sup>54</sup> presents some ambiguity. While André is marked with *feu* (deceased), Jeanne’s name appears without the corresponding *feue*, which would have indicated her death too.

Despite these conflicting clues, clarity arrives on 16 June 1697, just five days after the marriage record, when Jacques, along with Jeanne’s adult daughters and their husbands, agreed to distribute Jeanne’s and André’s assets among the heirs.<sup>55</sup> In this document, Jeanne is explicitly acknowledged as deceased, confirming the posthumous division of her community property with André.

Jeanne’s burial record is missing probably due to a clerical omission by the parish priest, but considering her extensive connections to LaPrairie over two decades, it is almost certain that she was buried at the local parish cemetery in LaPrairie.

Jeanne had given birth to thirteen children and remained a constant presence during a time of war, hardship, and growth. She was an essential part of the life and growth of LaPrairie for more than two decades, witnessed battles near her home, and became a grandmother while still bearing children herself. Though her death left no record, her life left a record as the mother and founder of two of the original families of LaPrairie, and those families were to grow into large, multigenerational mainstays of Nouvelle-France.





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8. *Le Fleuve*

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With both André Robidou *dit* L'Espagnol and Jeanne Denot now deceased, their assets needed to be distributed. As neither appears to have left a will, the estate fell under the jurisdiction of the  *Coutume de Paris*, the prevailing legal code.

On 16 June 1697, Jacques Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy, Marie Romaine Robidou and her husband Jean Patenaude, along with Jeanne Robidou and her husband Gabriel Lemieux, formally agreed to divide the property belonging to André and Jeanne.<sup>1</sup> Although Guillaume and Joseph Robidou were also heirs, they had not yet reached the age of majority (25 years old) and therefore did not participate in the agreement.

The agreement divided various assets, including two homes, indicating that Jeanne had likely never sold the house she shared with André before marrying Jacques in 1678. Jacques retained the use of both homes, though with significantly reduced acreage. The rest of the property Jeanne had acquired with André was shared equally among their four

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children. For the property Jeanne acquired with Jacques, half went to Jacques, one quarter to her children with André, and one quarter to her children with Jacques. Jacques retained control of the shares belonging to any children who had not yet reached legal adulthood, i.e. all except Marie Romaine and Jeanne Robidou, and he was not required to pay interest on those shares he controlled. The agreement also included the distribution of livestock under the same terms.

Although Guillaume would not turn 25 until 28 November 1700, he confirmed his inheritance on 24 February 1698 at age 22. Joseph, who reached majority in early 1703, confirmed his inheritance on 24 February 1704.²

A decade later, on 22 March 1708, Jacques finalized an agreement with his own children regarding the property they inherited from Jeanne and arranged for a retirement, of sorts, for Jacques.³ The agreement, remarkably detailed, lists each farm animal and household item along with corresponding values. Portions of the notary's handwriting are difficult to decipher, but the inventory appears to consist of:

Two three-year-old oxen — 60 *livres*

Two cows — 40 *livres*

Two calves — 15 *livres*

Three pigs — 9 *livres*

A pregnant cow — 50 *livres*

A cooking pot — 5 *livres*

A frying pan — 10 *livres*

An axe — 7 *livres*

Two hooks — 4 *livres*

Two saws — 16 *livres*





Eighteen hens and a rooster — 9 *livres* 10 *sols*

A shod plow — 20 *livres*

A blanket — 12 *livres*

One bed, including pillows, bolsters, feather mattress,
straw mattress, sheets, blankets, and a pair of
green curtains — 40 *livres*

One wooden table, four benches, and two stools — 6
livres

A barrel — 4 *livres*

A flintlock gun — 4 *livres*

Ten shirts — 25 *livres*

A metal plate — 22 *livres*

Two iron barrels — 4 *livres*

An iron grill — 3 *livres*

Three sickles — 3 *livres*

Three scythes — 12 *livres*

A chest — 10 *livres*

A large frying pan — 2 *livres*

A small cauldron — 15 *livres*

This inventory reflects the stable and well-supplied homestead that Jacques and Jeanne built over the course of their marriage.

Despite Jeanne's passing, Jacques remained involved with his stepchildren. On 26 June 1699, following the deaths of Marie Romaine and her husband Jean Patenaude, Jacques participated in the decision over custody of their surviving children.⁴ Custody ultimately went to Patenaude's brothers. Notably, Françoise Moisan *dite* Belhumeur, the first mother-in-law of Jean Patenaude and grandmother to his first child,





also played a role in the decision. Her involvement is striking as she was widely regarded at the time as a woman of very loose morals.⁵

Jacques also attended the wedding of Joseph Robidou to Jeanne Séguin at Saint-Antoine-de-Longueuil on 10 October 1701.⁷ Longueuil was only about 10 kilometers from LaPrairie, but the attendance of Jacques, then in his late 50s, was a further indication of his ongoing commitment to the Robidou family.

Jacques passed away and was buried in LaPrairie on 16 July 1710,⁸ at around 66 years of age. He had fathered eight children of his own and served as stepfather to four more.

The concept of *puissance paternelle* - paternal authority - deeply shaped family life in Nouvelle-France. Rooted in the *Coutume de Paris*, the legal code brought from France, it positioned the father as head of the household, with extensive authority over both wife and children. His role encompassed far more than that of provider; he managed family property, acted as the household's legal representative in contracts and public affairs, and made key decisions concerning marriage, inheritance, and discipline.

A father's consent was essential, especially in the marriage of his children. Daughters could not legally marry without his permission; doing so risked rendering the union invalid or socially improper. Fathers were expected to lead not just in practical matters, but in spiritual ones as well. They taught the Catholic faith, enforced moral behavior, and upheld discipline in the home. In a society dominated by the





Church, the father served as both secular and spiritual leader within the domestic sphere.

Yet this authority was not absolute. If a father abused his power or neglected his duties, the Church or colonial courts could step in. Children had legal rights to protection and inheritance that could not be arbitrarily withheld. Despite the formal hierarchy, many families operated with a spirit of cooperation, where mothers played significant roles and children gradually assumed their own responsibilities.

In practice, *puissance paternelle* reflected a patriarchal structure with the father at its center. Still, negotiation, affection, and practical need often tempered the sharp edges of paternal power. The records we have of Jacques suggest that he exercised this authority with care, for both his own children and his stepchildren, before and after Jeanne's death. It could not have been easy. He lost four of his children in infancy, and the eldest of his stepchildren before his own passing. Yet the fact that he stood godfather to step-grandchildren speaks to the respect and perhaps the affection he earned from the Robidou family, as well as from his own children. After all, Jacques was the only father that Guillaume, Joseph, and likely Jeanne Robidou could ever remember.

Perhaps it was his *dit* name, Sanssoucy “carefree” that reflected the character they admired. Perhaps it was the way he stepped in to raise Jeanne's four children after their marriage, or how he ensured they received their rightful inheritance after her death. Whatever the reason, Jacques





The Near 300-Year-Old Defamation

In the 1960s, an author claimed in his book that Marie Romaine Robidou, while married to Jean Patenaude, consorted with Jean's former mother-in-law, a known prostitute, and joined in the prostitution herself. It implied that Marie Romaine's daughter was born because of such prostitution. The author, though, mixed up the people in the story.⁶

On September 18, 1688, Jean's brother Pierre Patenaude filed a formal complaint before the bailiff of Montréal against his mother-in-law, Françoise Moisan *dite* Belhumeur, and her son François Brunet. Pierre and Jean had been married to sisters, and at one time had the same mother-in-law, Belhumeur, but by this time Jean had been widowed and was remarried to Marie Romaine.

The dispute arose after Pierre struck his wife, Belhumeur's daughter Catherine, with a wooden spoon following a domestic disagreement. Catherine fled to her mother's home at Côte-Saint-François. The next day, Belhumeur and a group of women returned their infant child to Pierre at his workplace, then physically assaulted him - beating him, pulling his hair, and tearing his clothes. Later, Belhumeur, François, and others broke into Pierre's lodging, vandalized the property, and stole from his chests.

Pierre accused Belhumeur of corrupting his wife and inciting her toward separation. He referenced threats of poisoning and claimed her home was morally dangerous. Supporting depositions from neighbors painted Belhumeur as a woman of scandal and immorality, engaged in ongoing sexual relationships with multiple soldiers while her husband was away. One man even admitted to cohabiting with her for two years,





during which her daughters witnessed lewd acts. Witnesses also confirmed Belhumeur's involvement with men despite orders from military officers forbidding such associations. The testimonies described her household as a site of ongoing infamy, known and condemned by the community.

Pierre sought the court's intervention to return his wife, recover his stolen property, and stop further influence from his mother-in-law, whom he viewed as a danger to his marriage and Christian morality.

Marie Romaine and Jean were not involved in any way.

proved himself a wise choice as a stepfather and a steady guardian to the Robidou family. He also laid the foundation for a branch of the Surprenant family in the same land, a patriarch whose influence spanned two lineages.

As for all the children of André, Jeanne and Jacques:

Marie Romaine Robidou: On 11 July 1669, she is born, and is baptized the same day at Notre-Dame-de-Québec, Québec⁹ and is named after her godmother Romaine Boudet. On 8 November 1683, she marries Jean Roux *dit* LaPlante at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.¹⁰ Prior to 10 December 1686, she is widowed when her husband Roux dies.¹¹ On 10 December 1686, she marries Jean Patenaude at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.¹² On 1 September 1697, she is buried (age 28 years) at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.¹³ She had given birth to 5 children,¹⁴ and is survived by her husband Patenaude.¹⁵

Marguerite Robidou: On 5 June 1671, she is born and is baptized the same day at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.¹⁶





She is named after her godmother Marguerite Ténard. On 15 January 1672, she is buried (age 2 months) at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.¹⁷

Jeanne Robidou: On 20 September 1673, she is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie,¹⁸ and is named after her godmother Jeanne Roinay. On 5 December 1690, she marries Gabriel Lemieux at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.¹⁹ On 12 April 1736, she dies in LaPrairie (age 62 years).²⁰ She had given birth to 11 children,²¹ and is survived by her husband Lemieux.²²

Guillaume Robidou: On 28 November 1675, he is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.²³ He is named after his godfather Guillaume Brunet. On 6 June 1697, he contracts for marriage with Marie-Françoise Guérin.²⁴ On 11 June 1697, he marries Guérin at Notre-Dame, Montréal.²⁵ On 2 July 1754, he dies in Montréal (age 78 years).²⁶ He had fathered 13 children,²⁷ and is survived by his wife Guérin.²⁸

Joseph Robidou: On 15 January 1678, he is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie,²⁹ and is named after his godfather Joseph Boyer. On 9 October 1701, he contracts for marriage with Jeanne Séguin.³⁰ On 10 October 1701, he marries Séguin at Saint-Antoine-de-Longueuil, Longueuil.³¹ On 24 March 1728, he dies in Montréal (age 50 years).³² He had fathered 11 children,³³ and is survived by his wife Séguin.³⁴

Jean Surprenant: On 4 December 1679, he is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.³⁵ He is named after his





godfather Jean Chevalier. On 4 June 1680, he is buried (age 6 months) at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.³⁶

Marguerite Surprenant: On 5 June 1681, she is born, and is baptized the same day at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.³⁷ She is named after her godmother Marguerite Petit. On 26 July 1684, she dies (age 3 years), and is buried at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.³⁸

Pierre Surprenant *dît* Sansoucy: On 16 January 1683, he is born.³⁹ On 21 January 1683, he is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie,⁴⁰ and is named after his godfather Pierre Foubert. On 27 November 1702, he marries Anne Têtu at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁴¹ On 7 June 1736, he is widowed when his wife Têtu dies.⁴² On 2 June 1739, he dies (age 56 years) at Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal.⁴³ He had fathered 11 children.⁴⁴

Laurent Surprenant *dît* Sansoucy: Circa 1684, he is born.⁴⁵ On 17 May 1711, he contracts for marriage with Jeanne Beauvais.⁴⁶ On 20 May 1711, he marries Beauvais at Notre-Dame, Montréal.⁴⁷ On 2 December 1752, he dies (age approximately 68 years).⁴⁸ He had fathered 14 children,⁴⁹ and is survived by his wife Beauvais.⁵⁰ On 3 December 1752, he is buried at Notre-Dame, Montréal.⁵¹ Once called “weak at the present and... unable to perform any type of service for anyone”,⁵² he completed his contractual engagement after having worked 15 years, then married, and had more children than any of his siblings. He proved the record understated and the future underwritten.





Catherine Surprenant: On 24 July 1686, she is born.⁵³ On 29 July 1686, she is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁵⁴ On 23 September 1705, she contracts for marriage with Jean Deniger.⁵⁵ On 4 November 1705, she marries Deniger at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁵⁶ On 11 April 1716, she is widowed when her husband Deniger dies.⁵⁷ On 11 April 1717, she contracts for marriage with Julien Bariteau *dit* Lamarche.⁵⁸ On 12 April 1717, she marries Bariteau at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁵⁹ On 14 July 1736, she is widowed for a second time when her husband Bariteau dies.⁶⁰ On 8 September 1737, she contracts for marriage with Antoine Boyer.⁶¹ On 9 September 1737, she marries Boyer at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁶² On 27 March 1747, she is widowed for a third time when her husband Boyer dies.⁶³ On 26 February 1762, she dies in Saint-Philippe (age 76 years).⁶⁴ She had given birth to 9 children.⁶⁵ She lived the longest of all her siblings, and lived to see the surrender of Nouvelle-France to England.

Claude Surprenant: On 19 September 1688, he is born.⁶⁶ On 21 September 1688, he is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie,⁶⁷ and is named after his godfather Claude Caron. On 9 September 1689, he dies (age 11 months) at home in LaPrairie.⁶⁸ On 10 September 1689, he is buried at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁶⁹

Marie Surprenant: Circa 1690, she is born.⁷⁰ On 2 November 1712, she contracts for marriage with François Lefebvre.⁷¹ On 13 November 1712, she marries Lefebvre at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁷² On 20 February 1717, she dies (age approximately 27 years), and is buried at Saint-





François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁷³ She had given birth to 3 children,⁷⁴ and is survived by her husband Lefebvre.⁷⁵

Anne Surprenant: On 20 January 1692, she is born.⁷⁶ On 21 January 1692, she is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie,⁷⁷ and is named after her godmother Marie Anne Roy. On 1 February 1692, she is buried (age 11 days) at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.⁷⁸

Both Pierre and Laurent Surprenant carried on the *dit* name of Sansoucy (a slight spelling variation from Sanssoucy). This may have helped distinguish themselves from the other Surprenant family in Nouvelle-France, that of Marin Surprenant *dit* La Fontaine, an immigrant originally from Saint-Philibert-sur-Orne, France, who primarily settled in Longueuil.⁷⁹ There is no known family connection between Jacques and Marin Surprenant.

As for Guillaume and Joseph, neither used their father's *dit* name of L'Espagnol. There are two likely reasons for this: first, their father André had died when they were so young that the *dit* name was no longer associated with the family; and, second, Jeanne's genetics could have won out and they bore so Spanish resemblance. There is a third possible reason. In their small community of Côte Saint-Lambert, the *dit* name of L'Espagnol likely took on a very bad connotation because of the other *dit* L'Espagnol family to settle there, that of Joseph Serran *dit* L'Espagnol. His wife, Marguerite Viard, was a thief who stole from many of her neighbors on Côte Saint-Lambert.⁸⁰ Her reputation was so bad, the only thing she couldn't steal was sympathy. The family was so disliked by the other nearby settlers that (probably through the





mediation of the parrish priest) they were expelled from Côte Saint-Lambert, going on to settle on the island of Montréal, where she continued stealing from neighbors there until she was arrested.

Viard was so disliked at her new home that, returning from mass one day, a then neighbor, Jean Patenaude (prior to his marriage to Marie Romaine), beat her badly injuring her face and arms. Patenaude later had to pay restitution for this beating, but once he married into the Robidou family he must have added his own opinion that no Robidou should use the *dit* name of L'Espagnol. But the question remains, on the day that she was beaten, was Viard in church for the sermon, or for the collection plate?

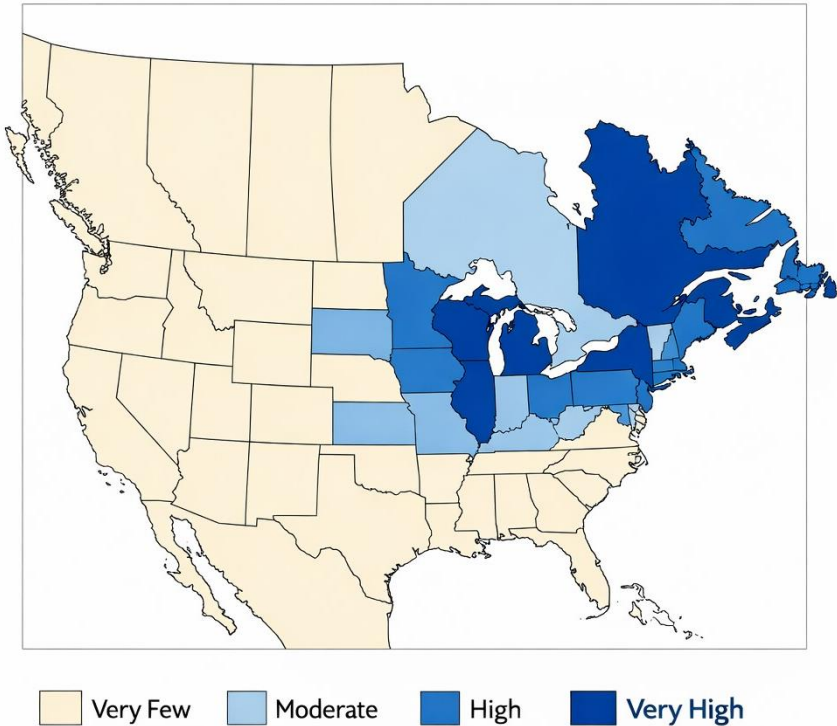
It wasn't just André, Jeanne, and Jacques who were prolific. Most early settlers of Nouvelle-France were. From an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 immigrants, some 6 to 7 million people in Québec today can trace at least part of their ancestry back to the colony. An additional 1 to 2 million descendants live elsewhere in Canada, and between 1.5 and 2 million in the United States. Among those original settlers, the approximately 800 *Filles du Roi* played a crucial role in populating the colony. They fulfilled their mission with extraordinary success.

Between them, André and Jeanne had five children, who in turn gave them 40 grandchildren. Together, they are the founders of the Robidou family in North America with every Robidou traced back to them. Jeanne's second marriage to Jacques brought 37 more grandchildren into the family, raising her total to 77. Further, Jeanne and Jacques are the





founders of one branch of the Surprenant family in North America with many Surprenants traced back to them.



8.2 The current distribution of Robidou and Surprenant descendants

How many descendants do they have today? Though we will never know the precise number, estimates for typical settler families often reach the tens of thousands. Some *Filles du Roi* are believed to have between 700,000 and a million descendants. Clyde Rabideau, a noted genealogist of the Robidou family, counted thousands of descendants bearing the Robidou name or a variation of it, excluding all maternal-line descendants. Using even conservative estimates, it is





almost certain that tens of thousands of André's and Jeanne's descendants now live across Canada and the United States.

The families have grown, but they have also changed. In



8.3 Work of the 1600s

early Nouvelle-France, the family stood at the center of colonial life. It was more than a private unit of affection; it





served as an institution of economic production, religious instruction, and social order. Families were large often with six to twelve children and every member had a defined role – households where duty was the firstborn. Under the



8.4 Work of the 2000s

authority of *puissance paternelle*, fathers wielded legal and moral control over the household, while mothers managed the





home, bore and raised children, and ensured that faith and obedience took root from an early age. Extended families often lived nearby and provided mutual support, forming the backbone of the colony's survival.

Marriage was less a matter of romance and more a civic and religious duty. Young people were expected to marry early and raise large families not just to populate the colony, but to solidify alliances and secure property. The Catholic Church played a dominant role in this structure. It shaped moral behavior, enforced religious practice, and mediated domestic disputes. Prayers were a daily part of life, sacraments marked each stage of existence, and the priest held influence both within the confessional and the broader community.

Modern Canadian and American families, by contrast, are smaller, more flexible, and shaped by entirely different social forces, from must to might, from fixed roles to chosen ones. Today, families often consist of one or two children. Households may include single parents, blended families, or same-sex couples; configurations unimaginable in the 17th century. The focus has shifted from duty and survival to personal fulfillment, emotional support, and mutual respect. Parental authority is shared more equally, and traditional gender roles have softened or disappeared altogether.

Religion, once the foundation of family life, now seems optional. While some homes remain devout, many are secular or pluralistic, reflecting a society no longer shaped by a single faith. Responsibilities once held by parents and priests have shifted to the state. Public education, healthcare,





social services, and legal systems now mediate many aspects of family life.

Yet even amid these transformations, the family remains central. Forms change, foundations endure. It has adapted to changing economies, evolving cultural norms, and shifting legal frameworks. From patriarchal households of Nouvelle-France to today's diverse and dynamic family units, the family carries on, not unchanged, but resilient and a constant presence in new forms.

As the Robidou and Surprenant families grew and evolved, so too did LaPrairie, their original home in the New World. When André and Jeanne first arrived, LaPrairie was home to fewer than 100 residents. Today, it is a thriving municipality of over 24,000.

In the 1670s, LaPrairie was a frontier settlement carved from the forest along the southern shore of the Fleuve Saint-Laurent. Life was dictated by the seasons, the Church, and the ever-present threat of conflict with the Iroquois. Residents lived in modest wooden homes and practiced subsistence agriculture. At the heart of the town stood the church and mission, which functioned not only as a place of worship but also as a community hub and a refuge in times of danger.

Today's LaPrairie is a modern suburb within the greater Montréal region. Its landscape, economy, and culture have transformed in ways the early settlers could scarcely have imagined. Streets, schools, homes, and parks now occupy land once covered by forest and meadow. Where there were





once cabins and livestock pens, there are now condominiums, supermarkets, and drive-through restaurants.

Even LaPrairie's riverfront character has changed. In the 17th century, the Fleuve Saint-Laurent was central to LaPrairie's life and trade, but it also brought destructive floods. In the 1950s, the building of the Saint Lawrence Seaway alleviated flooding, and, in the 1960s, during construction of a new highway to Montréal, LaPrairie permanently addressed the flooding issue by routing the highway to physically separate itself from the river. Today, it is possible to stand in the heart of LaPrairie and hardly know the river is anywhere nearby.

LaPrairie also played a role in the Jesuits' mission to Christianize the Amerindians. In the 1670s, the Jesuits established a settlement for converted Amerindian people near the village, but over time they moved the settlement further south and west, gradually distancing it from the town center. In 1696, the mission was relocated outside the *seigneurie* altogether, to the nearby *seigneurie* of Sault-Saint-Louis. The Christianizing effort continued, but LaPrairie was no longer directly involved.

Fort LaPrairie, once a strategic military post built to protect settlers, also faded into history. It stood from 1687 until 1713, when it was abandoned following the Peace of Utrecht. Where armed troops once patrolled and villagers sought shelter, there are now parks and homes. Fort Côte Saint-Lambert was also abandoned in the early 1700s, and the





Playing Card Money⁸¹

In the late 17th century, the colony of Nouvelle-France faced a persistent shortage of coinage. Trade was growing, soldiers needed to be paid, and supplies had to be bought, but there was often no silver to go around. In 1685, an extraordinary solution emerged - playing card money. This improvised currency began when Governor Jacques de Meulles faced with empty coffers and an urgent need to pay troops, ordered that playing cards be cut, marked with denominations in *livres*, *sols*, and *deniers*, and signed by colonial officials. These cards, often made from ordinary decks imported from France, became the first form of paper money in North America.

At first, the cards were trusted because they carried the official seal and were redeemable for coin once French funds arrived. They circulated easily among merchants, soldiers, and farmers - portable, and accepted in place of heavy or unavailable specie. But as their use grew and more cards were issued without immediate reimbursement confidence in the system began to waver. Still, for decades, card money remained a vital part of the colonial economy enabling commerce and government operations in a wilderness far from the royal treasury.

Though intended as a temporary fix, playing card money was used intermittently for nearly 70 years, becoming a symbol of colonial ingenuity and economic adaptation. Its legacy endures as a remarkable chapter in early Canadian financial history where games of chance became instruments of survival.





chapel that stood within was torn down and its religious articles given to the church in LaPrairie.

In terms of governance, 17th-century LaPrairie was part of a colonial regime governed by a French-appointed governor and *intendant*. Local authority resided with the Jesuits, who held the land in *seigneurie*. *Habitants* rented land, paid dues, and owed labor obligations. Legal disputes were handled by notaries or religious leaders, and justice could be inconsistent. Today, LaPrairie is a self-governing municipality led by a mayor and city council. It operates under provincial and federal laws, with democratic elections, private property rights, and access to public services. The *seigneurie* has long since disappeared, replaced by civil institutions and legal protections.

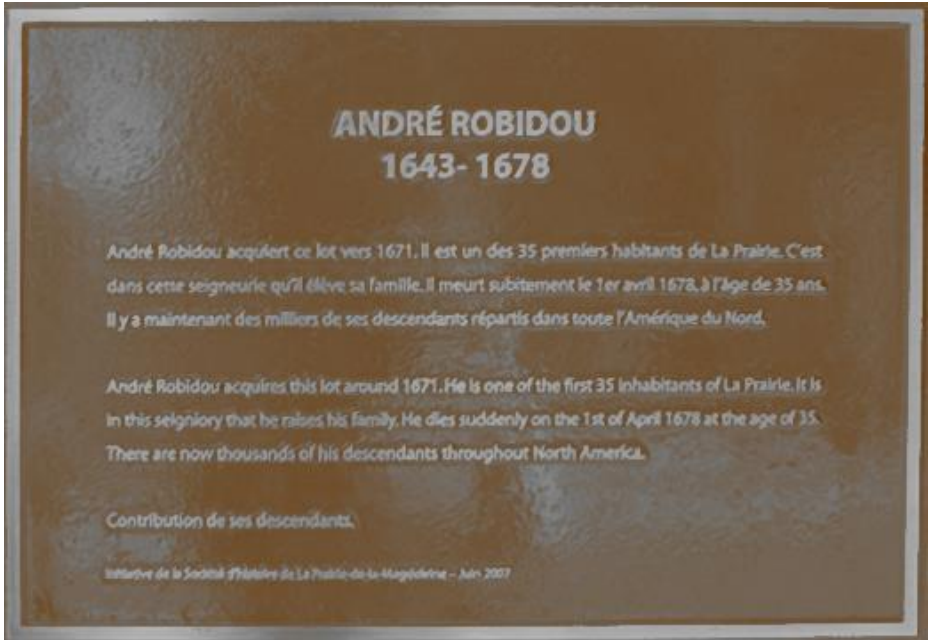
Côte Saint-Lambert, that part of LaPrairie that was the home to André, Jeanne, and Jacques, has gone through different changes. It was administratively separated from LaPrairie in 1958 and is now part of Brossard, a city with a population of over 91,000. The land which André, Jeanne, and Jacques owned is not separated from the river like LaPrairie is currently, but it is now overshadowed by the Samuel-de Champlain Bridge, which has a 3.4-kilometer length and reaches a height of 168 meters.

Despite these many differences, traces of the past remain. Place names, preserved sites, and family lineages continue to tie modern LaPrairie to its 17th-century origins. Descendants of early settlers still live in the region. Its history endures in historical societies, public commemorations, and local





heritage. A plaque now stands in the LaPrairie honoring the legacy of André Robidou.



8.5 Plaque for André Robidou in LaPrairie

But what about André and Jeanne? What were they really like? The historical record is limited, and the details of their personalities are elusive. Yet certain traits emerge through the fragments that survive.

André was almost certainly hardworking and well-liked. His master, Eustache Lambert, clearly held him in high regard allowing him at least one land concession even before his *engagement* formally ended. André continued living with Lambert afterward, likely still working for him as a *matelot*, which suggests a bond of trust and closeness. When he





moved to LaPrairie, his drive and determination were unmistakable. He quickly built homes and cleared land, visible signs of his energy and industry.

For Jeanne, mother of a large family, it is nearly impossible to imagine her as anything but industrious. In this, she and André were well matched. But they may have shared something more than diligence. Despite the size of their family and their years in the colony, neither appears often in community records. André is never recorded as a godfather or a witness to a marriage or marriage contract, and Jeanne, outside her own children and grandchildren, is noted only once as a godmother and once as a witness to a marriage contract. These absences suggest that both were reserved, private individuals, perhaps introverts. They likely took part in the religious life of LaPrairie, as expected of all parishioners, but beyond what was necessary, they seem to have kept to themselves, investing their efforts in the welfare of their household, both emotionally and economically.

Both endured deep personal loss. André lost one child in his lifetime, and Jeanne lost five. They knew the ache of empty arms and the silence that replaces a child's laughter. These sorrows they shared, and endured.

Yet there was another vital quality they shared, one that speaks across centuries: courage born of a dream.

The Fleuve Saint-Laurent was more than a waterway; it was the artery of Nouvelle-France, wide and ceaseless, carrying with it the promise of a future unbounded. To stand upon its shores in the 17th century was to feel the immensity of





possibility; its currents spoke of fertile lands upriver, of bustling settlements to be built, of lives that could be remade upon its banks. The river was like a dream flowing endlessly forward, a dream of a better tomorrow, of prosperity, of posterity.

Yet such a dream did not unfold by itself. It called for courage. It demanded the strength to leave behind the familiar and embrace the unknown. André and Jeanne, two immigrants to Nouvelle-France, each heard that call. They left the certainty of their past lives for the peril of the open sea, the harshness of northern winters, the ever-present risks of hunger, isolation, and conflict. Their bravery was not in the absence of fear, but in their decision to act in spite of it, to grasp the uncertain and make it their own. Without such risk, the river's promise would have remained an idle vision, a dream never touched by human hands.

Through their journey and their sacrifice, André and Jeanne wove their story into the wider fabric of the colony. Their courage became the foundation upon which families were raised, fields were tilled, and communities took root. In choosing to risk everything for the dream of a better life, they bequeathed to their children's children not only land and livelihood, but an enduring legacy: the knowledge that the greatest inheritance is not safety, but the courage to step into the unknown. For it is in that courage, in that willingness to risk, that dreams and possibility flow forward like the river itself toward a future yet to be realized.



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## Acknowledgments

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This book could not have been done without access to copies of original records and a lot of help.

The main source of church records was the Jupiter Family History Center, part of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' Family History Library. Its work in preserving genealogical records is outstanding.

Other documentary material, particularly notary and court records, came through the Archives nationales du Québec, both from the Montréal and Québec offices, whose staff was very helpful in tracking down additional sources.

The online archives of the Canada-France Archives Database - Centre des archives d'outre-mer; located in Aix-en-Provence, France, were particularly helpful with copies of original census records and government documents written during the 17th century.

Of special help was the staff at Archives départementales

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de la Charente-Maritime; La Rochelle, France. Without them, the critical record of André's *engagement* would not have been located.

Background information came largely through the Interlibrary Loan Department of the Palm Beach County Library System. This material was instrumental in putting genealogical and historical facts in context.

Transcriptions and translations for most of the documents were done by Paul-Antoine Lavoie of Orléans, Ontario, and by Mark R. Newton of Boston, Massachusetts. Early records were all handwritten. The transcription of these documents is tedious and difficult, made all the more complicated by the 17<sup>th</sup> century legalese in which many of these documents were written.

Research cannot always turn up results in every avenue, but it is important nonetheless in narrowing the possibilities of what occurred. In this regard, I am grateful for the research performed by Alain Dupas of Saint-Mars-du-Désert, France, in the Archives départementales de Loire Atlantique on the quest to locate any notary documents relating to André during his stay there, and to Matthew Hovis in Madrid, Spain, for assistance in locating Spanish church records.

When writing for information, I needed assistance in making myself understood in both French and Spanish. My daughter, Jeline Rabideau Childers, and my wife, Chimane Rabideau, stepped in with help in French, and my brother-in-law, Adbeel Martinez, helped in Spanish. All such aid is greatly appreciated. Further, my daughter, Briand Rabideau,





gave computer and technical assistance and my daughter Alyze Rabideau gave the final and much needed proofreading of the text for which I am grateful.

Besides translation help, my wife has been more than patient in the hours devoted to completing this work. For that, and much more, I remain indebted to her.

Guy Rabideau



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Chronology

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| Date                   | Event                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| circa 1640             | <b>André Robidou <i>dit</i> L’Espagnol</b> is born in Santa Maria, Spain, the son of <b>Manuel Robidou &amp; Catherine Alue</b> .                                                                                                                                                                             |
| circa 1644             | <b>Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy</b> , future husband of <b>Jeanne Denot</b> , is born in Saint-Martin-au-Perche, France, the son of <b>Jacques Surprenant &amp; Louise Roquet</b> .                                                                                                                |
| circa 1645 or later    | <b>Jeanne Denot</b> is born, the daughter of <b>Antoine Denot &amp; Catherine Leduc</b> . She is baptized at Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois, Paris, France.                                                                                                                                                        |
| prior to 20 April 1661 | <b>André Robidou <i>dit</i> L’Espagnol</b> works as a <i>marinier</i> in Nantes, Brittany [now Loire-Atlantique, Pays-de-la-Loire], France.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 20 April 1661          | <b>André Robidou <i>dit</i> L’Espagnol</b> , in La Rochelle, Aunis [now Charente-Maritime, Poitou-Charentes], France, enters an <i>engagement</i> with Antoine Grignon, on behalf of merchant Eustache Lambert, obligating André Robidou <i>dit</i> L’Espagnol to go to Nouvelle-France and work for 3 years. |
| after May 1661         | <b>Manuel Robidou &amp; Catherine Alue</b> die.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| late spring &          | Possibly working as a member of the crew, <b>André Robidou <i>dit</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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Date	Event
summer 1661	L’Espagnol sails from La Rochelle to Île-Percé (on the Gaspé Peninsula), Acadia, and finally to Nouvelle-France aboard <i>La Marguerite</i> , a ship originally hailing from Dieppe, Normandy (now Seine-Maritime), France.
late summer 1661	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol arrives in Québec.
between late summer 1661 & prior to 15 June 1664	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol is an <i>engagé</i> to merchant Eustache Lambert in Québec.
15 June 1664	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol receives a concession of land on Côte Lauzon [now Lévis], Nouvelle-France.
circa 1664	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol receives a concession of land in what is now Saint-Laurent on Île-d’Orléans, Nouvelle-France.
25 April 1665	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol begins work as a <i>matelot</i> aboard the royal galiotte hailing from Québec.
prior to 13 May 1665	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy joins the Contrecoquer Company of the Carignan Regiment.
13 May 1665	Aboard the ship <i>La Paix</i> , Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy leaves La Rochelle for Québec as a soldier in the Contrecoquer Company of the Carignan Regiment.
circa 1665	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol gives up his concessions of land on Côte Lauzon and Île-d’Orléans.
10 August 1665	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy arrives in Québec.
10 August 1665 through 1667	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy , with the Contrecoquer Company of the Carignan Regiment, serves in defending Nouvelle-France from the Iroquois.
prior to May 1666	Antoine Denot dies.
13 May 1666	Jeanne Denot leaves from La Rochelle as a <i>Fille du Roi</i> aboard <i>Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste</i> , a ship originally hailing from Dieppe.





Date	Event
after May 1666	Catherine Leduc dies.
1666	Census records show André Robidou dit L’Espagnol works as a <i>matelot</i> and lives with merchant Eustache Lambert in Québec.
circa 11 August 1666	After first stopping at the Gaspé Peninsula, the ship carrying Jeanne Denot arrives in Québec.
between circa 11 August 1666 & 17 June 1667	Jeanne Denot resides at a house on the grounds of the Ursuline monastery, Québec.
16 May 1667	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot contract for marriage in Québec.
17 June 1667	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot marry at Notre-Dame-de-Québec, Québec.
5 July 1667	Jeanne Denot witnesses the marriage contract of François Dumas and Marguerite Foy in Québec.
1668	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy is discharged from the Carignan Regiment.
11 July 1669	Marie Romaine Robidou , daughter of André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot , is born, and is baptized the same day at Notre-Dame-de-Québec, Québec. She is named after her godmother Romaine Boudet.
circa 1671	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol, Jeanne Denot & Marie Romaine Robidou move to the seigneurie of LaPrairie, Nouvelle-France, acquiring property within the village of LaPrairie.
10 November 1671	Marguerite Robidou , daughter of André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot , is born, and is baptized the same day at Saint-François-Xavier-des-Prés, LaPrairie. She is named after her godmother Marguerite Tenard.
15 January 1672	Burial for Marguerite Robidou (age 2 months) at Saint-François-Xavier-des-Prés, LaPrairie.
prior to 2 June	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol acquires property on Côte de la





Date	Event
1672	Rivière Saint-Jacques, LaPrairie.
4 December 1672	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol exchanges with Jean Caillault the property on Côte de la Rivière Saint-Jacques, LaPrairie, for property on Côte de la Tortue, LaPrairie. He also sells the property in the village of LaPrairie to Pierre Lefebvre.
22 January 1673	The prior concession to André Robidou dit L’Espagnol by the Compagnie de Jésus of the property on Côte de la Rivière Saint-Jacques, LaPrairie, is confirmed
20 September 1673	Jeanne Robidou , daughter of André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot , is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier-des-Prés, LaPrairie. She is named after her godmother Jeanne Roinay.
prior to 29 April 1674	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy lives in Longueuil, Nouvelle-France.
29 April 1674	In Montréal, Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy partners with Pierre Rebours to trade with Amerindians.
4 June 1674	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy becomes godfather to Jacques Benoît at Montréal.
circa 1674	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol receives a concession of land on Côte Saint-Lambert, LaPrairie from the Compagnie de Jésus, and gives up his concession of land on Côte de la Tortue, LaPrairie.
prior to 16 July 1674	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy receives a concession of land on Côte Saint-Lambert, LaPrairie, from the Compagnie de Jésus.
9 October 1674	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy ’s concession of land on Côte Saint-Lambert, LaPrairie, is confirmed by the Compagnie de Jésus.
8 December 1674	André Robidou dit L’Espagnol ’s concession of land on Côte Saint-Lambert, LaPrairie, is confirmed by the Compagnie de Jésus.
28 November 1675	Guillaume Robidou , son of André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot , is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier-des-Prés, LaPrairie. He is named after his godfather Guillaume Brunet.
26 January 1676	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy and Pierre Rebours end their





Date	Event
	partnership.
19 March 1676	Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy acquires from Pierre Rebours additional property on Côte Saint-Lambert, LaPrairie.
17 November 1676	Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy is summoned as a witness involving a theft which occurred in Montréal.
8 March 1677	Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy gives testimony as a witness involving the theft in Montréal.
8 November 1677	The Compagnie de Jésus, as seigneur of LaPrairie, inventories all of the concessions, which inventory lists the 8 December 1674 concession to André Robidou <i>dit</i> L'Espagnol and the 9 October 1674 concession to Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy and includes the land Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy acquired from Rebours.
15 January 1678	Joseph Robidou , son of André Robidou <i>dit</i> L'Espagnol & Jeanne Denot , is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. He is named after his godfather Joseph Boyer.
1 April 1678	Burial for André Robidou <i>dit</i> L'Espagnol (age approximately 42 years) at Notre-Dame, Montréal, wherein he is noted as residing in LaPrairie. He had fathered 5 children.
16 August 1678	Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot marry at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
4 December 1679	Jean Surprenant , son of Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot , is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. He is named after his godfather Jean Chevalier.
4 June 1680	Burial for Jean Surprenant (age 6 months) at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
23 July 1680	Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot contract Marie Romaine Robidou , age 11 years, to work for a period of one year for Catherine Houart in Québec.
5 February 1681	Jeanne Denot becomes godmother to Romaine Gervais at LaPrairie.





Date	Event
5 June 1681	Marguerite Surprenant , daughter of Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot , is born, and is baptized the same day at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. She is named after her godmother Marguerite Petit.
1681	Census records show Marie Romaine Robidou lives with and works as a maidservant for innkeepers Pierre Nolan & Catherine Houart in Québec, while Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy, Jeanne Denot, Jeanne Robidou, Guillaume Robidou, Joseph Robidou & Marguerite Surprenant live together in LaPrairie.
16 January 1683	Pierre Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy , son of Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot , is born.
21 January 1683	Pierre Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. He is named after his godfather Pierre Foubert.
8 November 1683	Marie Romaine Robidou marries Jean Roux <i>dit</i> LaPlante at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
circa 1684	Laurent Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy , son of Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot , is born.
26 July 1684	Marguerite Surprenant (age 3 years) dies, and the Burial for her is at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
28 April 1686	Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy becomes godfather to Marie-Anne Roux, daughter of Jean Roux <i>dit</i> LaPlante & Marie Romaine Robidou , at LaPrairie.
24 July 1686	Catherine Surprenant , daughter of Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot , is born.
29 July 1686	Catherine Surprenant is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. Her godmother is Jeanne Robidou .
prior to 10 December 1686	Marie Romaine Robidou is widowed when her husband Jean Roux <i>dit</i> LaPlante dies.
10 December 1686	Marie Romaine Robidou marries Jean Patenaude at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie, in the presence of Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot .





Date	Event
19 September 1688	Claude Surprenant , son of Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot , is born.
21 September 1688	Claude Surprenant is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. He is named after his godfather Claude Caron.
9 September 1689	Claude Surprenant (age 11 months) dies at home in LaPrairie.
10 September 1689	Burial for Claude Surprenant at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
11 October 1689	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot contract with neighbors Jean Roy & Françoise Saulnier to share farming responsibilities.
circa 1690	Marie Surprenant , daughter of Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot , is born.
5 December 1690	Jeanne Robidou marries Gabriel Lemieux at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie, and Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy witnesses.
13 January 1692	Jeanne Denot becomes godmother to Jean-Gabriel Lemieux, son of Gabriel Lemieux & Jeanne Robidou , at LaPrairie.
20 January 1692	Anne Surprenant , daughter of Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot , is born.
21 January 1692	Anne Surprenant is baptized at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. She is named after her godmother Anne Roy.
1 February 1692	Burial for Anne Surprenant (age 11 days) at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie, and Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy witnesses.
28 September 1693	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy contracts Laurent Surprenant dit Sansoucy , age 10 years, to work until age 25 years for Nicolas Janvrain in Montréal.
24 April 1696	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy purchases land on Côte Saint-Lambert, LaPrairie, from Jacques Deniau & Marie Rivet.
between 20 January 1692 & 2 June 1696	Jeanne Denot (age approximately 51 years) dies. She had given birth to 13 children.





Date	Event
2 June 1696	Before Jesuit priest François Valliant, Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy agrees with Jean Patenaude, Marie Romaine Robidou , Gabriel Lemieux & Jeanne Robidou , as the adult heirs of André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot , to distribute certain assets to the heirs.
3 August 1696	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy becomes godfather to Jeanne Lemieux, daughter of Gabriel Lemieux and Jeanne Robidou , at LaPrairie.
3 March 1697	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy sells land on Côte Saint-Lambert, LaPrairie, to Étienne Trudeau.
6 June 1697	Guillaume Robidou contracts for marriage with Marie-Françoise Guérin.
11 June 1697	Guillaume Robidou marries Marie-Françoise Guérin at Notre-Dame, Montréal.
16 June 1697	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy , Jean Patenaude, Marie Romaine Robidou , Gabriel Lemieux & Jeanne Robidou reconfirm before a notary their 2 June 1696 agreement regarding the distribution of certain assets of André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot .
1 September 1697	Burial for Marie Romaine Robidou (age 28 years) at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. She had given birth to 5 children, and is survived by her husband Jean Patenaude.
24 February 1698	Guillaume Robidou confirms his inheritance from his parents, André Robidou dit L’Espagnol & Jeanne Denot .
26 June 1699	Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy participates in deciding custody of Marie Romaine Robidou ’s children after her widower Jean Patenaude dies.
9 October 1701	Joseph Robidou contracts for marriage with Jeanne Séguin.
10 October 1701	Joseph Robidou marries Jeanne Séguin at Saint-Antoine-de-Longueuil, Longueuil, Nouvelle-France, and Guillaume Robidou & Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy witness.





Date	Event
27 November 1702	Pierre Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy marries Anne Têtu at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie, and Laurent Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy witnesses.
24 February 1704	Joseph Robidou confirms his inheritance from his parents, André Robidou <i>dit</i> L'Espagnol & Jeanne Denot .
23 September 1705	Catherine Surprenant contracts for marriage with Jean Deniger.
4 November 1705	Catherine Surprenant marries Jean Deniger at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
22 March 1708	Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy agrees with Pierre Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy , Jean Deniger, Catherine Surprenant & Laurent Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy , as the adult heirs of Jeanne Denot , to distribute certain assets to the heirs.
16 July 1710	Burial for Jacques Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sanssoucy (age approximately 66 years) at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. He had fathered 8 children.
17 May 1711	Laurent Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy contracts for marriage with Jeanne Beauvais.
20 May 1711	Laurent Surprenant <i>dit</i> Sansoucy marries Jeanne Beauvais at Notre-Dame, Montréal.
2 November 1712	Marie Surprenant contracts for marriage with François Lefebvre.
13 November 1712	Marie Surprenant marries François Lefebvre at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
11 April 1716	Catherine Surprenant is widowed when her husband Jean Deniger dies.
20 February 1717	Marie Surprenant (age approximately 27 years) dies, and the Burial for her is at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie. She had given birth to 3 children, and is survived by her husband François Lefebvre.
11 April 1717	Catherine Surprenant contracts for marriage with Julien Bariteau <i>dit</i> Lamarche.





Date	Event
12 April 1717	Catherine Surprenant marries Julien Bariteau <i>dit</i> Lamarche at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
24 March 1728	Joseph Robidou (age 50 years) dies. He had fathered 11 children, and is survived by his wife Jeanne Séguin.
25 March 1728	Burial for Joseph Robidou at Notre-Dame, Montréal.
12 April 1736	Jeanne Robidou (age 62 years) dies. She had given birth to 11 children, and is survived by her husband Gabriel Lemieux.
13 April 1736	Burial for Jeanne Robidou at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
7 June 1736	Pierre Surprenant dit Sansoucy is widowed when his wife Anne Têtu dies.
14 July 1736	Catherine Surprenant is widowed for a second time when her husband Julien Bariteau <i>dit</i> Lamarche dies.
8 September 1737	Catherine Surprenant contracts for marriage with Antoine Boyer.
9 September 1737	Catherine Surprenant marries Antoine Boyer at Saint-François-Xavier, LaPrairie.
2 June 1739	Pierre Surprenant dit Sansoucy (age 56 years) dies at Hôtel Dieu de Montréal. He had fathered 11 children.
3 June 1739	Burial for Pierre Surprenant dit Sansoucy at Notre-Dame, Montréal.
27 March 1747	Catherine Surprenant is widowed for a third time when her husband Antoine Boyer dies.
2 December 1752	Laurent Surprenant dit Sansoucy (age approximately 68 years) dies. He had fathered 14 children, and is survived by his wife Jeanne Beauvais.
3 December 1752	Burial for Laurent Surprenant dit Sansoucy at Notre-Dame, Montréal.
2 July 1754	Guillaume Robidou (age 78 years) dies. He had fathered 13 children, and is survived by his wife Marie-Françoise Guérin.





Date	Event
3 July 1754	Burial for Guillaume Robidou at Notre-Dame, Montréal.
26 February 1762	Catherine Surprenant (age 76 years) dies. She had given birth to 9 children.
28 February 1762	Burial for Catherine Surprenant at Saint-Jean-François-Régis, Saint-Philippe, Nouvelle-France.



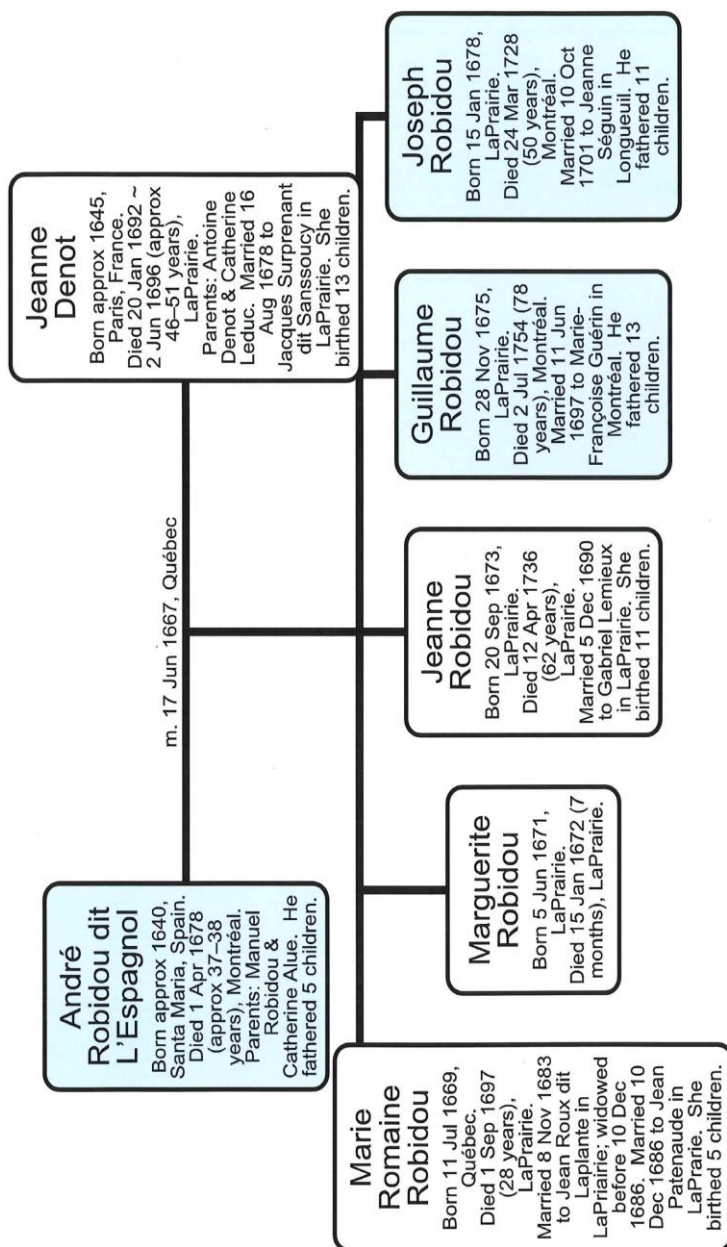
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## Family Tree

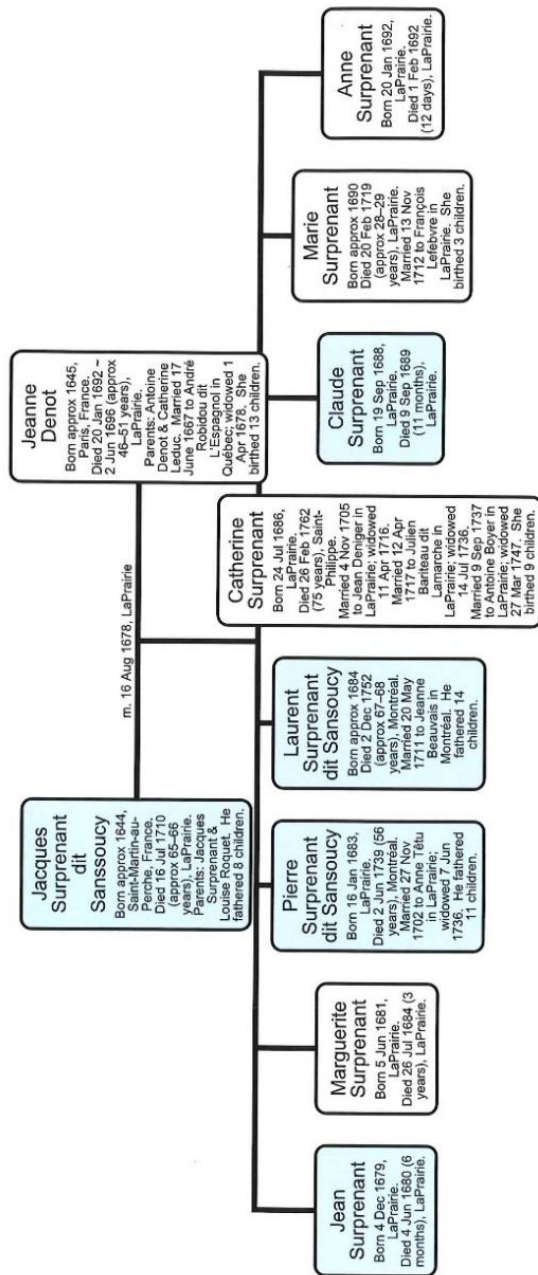
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# Family of André Robidou dit L'Espagnol & Jeanne Denot



# Family of Jacques Surprenant dit Sanssoucy & Jeanne Denot





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## Notes



### 1. *Le Marinier*

1. Engagement: André Roberdou [André Robidou] to Antoine Grignon for Eustache Lambert, Greffe de notaire Pierre Moreau, La Rochelle, France. Archives départementales de la Charente-Maritime, 3 E 59/265, fol. 91v, 20 April 1661.
2. André Robidou is listed as 25 years old (b. c. 1636) in: Engagement: André Roberdou [André Robidou] to Antoine Grignon for Eustache Lambert, *Greffe de notaire Pierre Moreau*, La Rochelle, France. Archives départementales de la Charente-Maritime, 3 E 59/265, fol. 91v, 20 April 1661. He is listed as 26 years old (b. c. 1640) in: Census record: Eustashe Lambert [Eustache Lambert] and Marie Laurence, Recensement du Canada. Centre des archives d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France: COL G1 460, p. 15, 1666. He is listed as approximately 35 years old (b. c. 1643) in: Burial record: André L'Espagnol [André Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 375840, article 1, S5, 1 April 1678. Burial records are generally unreliable indicators of age. It is possible that André exaggerated his age in the 1661 engagement to show he had reached the age of majority.
3. Marriage contract: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet de Lachesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 16 May 1667 (Sainte-Marie noted as “near ‘Caly’” or “near ‘Calin’”). Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667 (Sainte-Marie noted as a parish). Marriage record: Jean Roux and Romaine Robidou [Marie Romaine





Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833, article 1, pp. 18–19, 8 November 1683 (Sainte-Marie noted as being in Galicia, Diocese of Burgos; however, Galicia and Burgos have never overlapped. It is possible “Sainte-Marie” was a French rendering of “Santa Maria”).

4. See note 2 above.
5. Marriage contract: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet de Lachesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 16 May 1667 (“Manuel” noted as “Emanüel”). Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667. In both records, “Alue” may instead be read as “Alve.”
6. Marriage record: Jean Roux and Romaine Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833, article 1, pp. 18–19, 8 November 1683.
7. Burial record: André L’Espagnol [André Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 375840, article 1, S5, 1 April 1678.
8. Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667.
9. Saint-Omer’s records for this time period are much more extensive than those for Sainte-Marie-Kerque. See: “Canada, Quebec, Quebec Federation of Genealogical Societies, Family Origins, 1621-1865”, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QKDB-HQYS: Wed Feb 19 20:18:24 UTC 2025>), Entry for André Marcil and Guilbert Marsille, x.
10. Clyde M. Rabideau Sr. conducted extensive genealogical research on immigrants bearing the Robidou name or its variations, with no additional immigrants identified. See: Rabideau, Clyde M. *The Descendants of André Robidou*. Plattsburgh, NY: Heartnut Press, 2011.
11. In each surviving document where André signed, he used an “X,” indicating illiteracy, which was common for the period.
12. Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667.
13. Marriage contract: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet de Lachesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 16 May 1667.





14. Bossard, Pierre. *Tinténia: Essai de monographie paroissiale et communale*. Rennes Cedex, France: Rue des Scribes, 1986, pp. 64, 71, 146.
15. For the general background of the life of *mariniers* on La Loire, the most authoritative source is: Toscan, Raoul. *L'épopée des mariniers de la Loire*. Paris: Éditions des Régionalismes, 2007. For a fictional depiction, see: de Glouvet, Jules [pseudonym of Jules Quesnay de Beaurepaire]. *Le marinier au bord de la Loire*. Broché grand format. Paris: Cheminements, 1 June 2002.
16. Engagement: André Roberdou [André Robidou] to Antoine Grignon for Eustache Lambert, *Greffe de notaire Pierre Moreau*, La Rochelle, France. Archives départementales de la Charente-Maritime, 3 E 59/265, fol. 91v, 20 April 1661.
17. Ibid.
18. Food and lodging—but not clothing—were standard terms of engagement contracts.
19. Engagement: André Roberdou [André Robidou] to Antoine Grignon for Eustache Lambert, *Greffe de notaire Pierre Moreau*, La Rochelle, France. Archives départementales de la Charente-Maritime, 3 E 59/265, fol. 91v, 20 April 1661.
20. Extensive discussion of Grignon's trading ventures with family members in Nouvelle-France can be found in: Pritchard, James S. *Ships, Men and Commerce: A Study of Maritime Activity in New France*. Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1971, pp. 71–80.
21. Antoine Grignon appears in the baptismal record of a son of Eustache Lambert, PRDH Document 57712 (18 December 1658), and was also documented in Nouvelle-France in 1654 and 1656: PRDH Document 57474 (Baptism of Antoine Hupe, 4 October 1654); PRDH Document 99774 (Baptism of Florence Boucher, 26 October 1654); PRDH Document 57570 (Baptism of Antoine Dognon, 4 July 1656).
22. Pritchard, *Ships, Men and Commerce*, pp. 69–70.
23. Ibid., pp. 69–70.
24. According to PRDH records.
25. On the economic downturn, see: Pritchard, *Ships, Men and Commerce*, p. 80.
26. Campeau, Charles Vianney. *Navires venus en Nouvelle-France des origines à 1699*. <http://naviresnouvellefrance.iquebec.com/>.
27. Ibid.
28. Campeau, Charles Vianney. *Navires venus en Nouvelle-France des origines à 1699*. <http://naviresnouvellefrance.iquebec.com/>.
29. Concession of land: Hôtel-Dieu of Québec to André Robidou, Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet, Sieur de LaChesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 15 June 1664. Because engagés were not allowed land concessions, Robidou's 36-month term must have ended before this date, implying it began before 15 June 1661. As he was still aboard *La Marguerite*, this suggests he served on the ship, which aligns with Grignon's connections to the ship's owner.





30. Descriptions of life aboard ship for crew members are summarized from: Proulx, Gilles. *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Sailing Ships*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1984, pp. 100–128.

## 2. *L'Engagé*

1. Proulx, Gilles. *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Sailing Ships*. Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Press, 1984, p. 127. (Describes the “baptism” ceremony, where initiates were sometimes covered in soot rather than dunked in water.). The route of *La Marguerite* is covered in: Campeau, Charles Vianney. *Navires venus en Nouvelle-France des origines à 1699*. <http://naviresnouvellefrance.iquebec.com/>.
2. Proulx, Gilles. *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Sailing Ships*. Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Press, 1984, p. 127. (While one task of *La Marguerite* was fishing, it is unknown whether this occurred before or after its stops in Percé, Acadia, and Québec.). Campeau, Charles Vianney. *Navires venus en Nouvelle-France des origines à 1699*. <http://naviresnouvellefrance.iquebec.com/>. (If fishing occurred after the stops, it was likely limited to ship use.).
3. Proulx, Gilles. *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Sailing Ships*. Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Press, 1984, pp. 76–80; Pritchard, James S. *Ships, Men and Commerce: A Study of Maritime Activity in New France*. Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1971, pp. 34–37. (Minor differences may reflect their focus on the 18th and 17th centuries, respectively. The description here follows Pritchard, as it aligns with the timeframe of *La Marguerite*.).
4. Thwaites, Reuben Gold, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. Cleveland, Ohio: Burrows Brothers, vol. 46, pp. 171–173. <http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/>.
5. Ibid., vol. 46, p. 181. (The first ships arrived in Québec on 22 and 24 August 1661; *La Marguerite* was not among them.).
6. Ibid., p. 165.
7. Ibid., p. 169.
8. Ibid., pp. 171–173.
9. Ibid., p. 173.
10. Ibid., p. 177.
11. Marshall, Joyce, ed. *Word from New France: The Selected Letters of Marie de L'Incarnation*. Toronto, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 262–263.
12. Ibid., p. 260.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 265.
15. Boucher, Pierre. *True and Genuine Description of New France, Commonly Called Canada, and the Manners and Customs and Productions of That Country*. Paris: Florentin Lambert,





1664. Trans. Edward Louis Montizambert as *Canada in the Seventeenth Century*. Montréal, Québec: George E. Desbarats & Co., 1883, p. 18.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. PRDH Document 57712.
19. The biography of Eustache Lambert is extensively covered in: Laforest, Thomas J. *Our French-Canadian Ancestors*, vol. XXVI. Palm Harbor, Florida: The LISI Press, 1997, pp. 161–169. Additional information about Eustache Lambert, particularly his interests in the Côte de Lauzon area, can be found in: Roy, Léon. *Les premiers colons de la rive sud du Saint-Laurent de Berthier-en-Bas à Saint-Nicolas, 1636–1738*. Lévis, Québec: Société d'histoire régionale de Lévis, 1984, pp. 289–291.
20. See: Greer, Allan. *The People of New France*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997; Trudel, Marcel. *Initiation à la Nouvelle-France*. Montréal: Fides, 1997; Gagnon, Serge. *Daily Life in New France*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1968.
21. Pritchard, James S. *Ships, Men and Commerce: A Study of Maritime Activity in New France*. Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1971, p. 17.
22. Boucher, Pierre. *True and Genuine Description of New France*. Trans. Montizambert. Montréal: Desbarats & Co., 1883, pp. 17–18, 75.
23. See, for example: Legal proceeding: Eustache Lambert & Geffin Voysin [Geffin Voisin]. *Jugements et délibérations du Conseil souverain de la Nouvelle-France (1663–1716)*. Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, cote TP1, S28, P1462, 24 November 1663. (Lambert ordered to pay a sailor for a trip to Montréal.).
24. Boucher, Pierre. *True and Genuine Description of New France*. Trans. Montizambert. Montréal: Desbarats & Co., 1883, p. 75.
25. Thwaites, Reuben Gold, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. Cleveland, Ohio: Burrows Brothers, vol. 46, pp. 177, 179.  
<http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/>.
26. Pritchard, James S. *Ships, Men and Commerce: A Study of Maritime Activity in New France*. Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1971, p. 9.
27. Ibid., p. 37.
28. Ibid.
29. Long, John. “Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter and Trader, Describing the Manners and Customs of the North American Indians.” In *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites. New York: AMS Press, 1966, vol. 2, p. 75.
30. Ibid.
31. Laforest, Thomas J. *Our French-Canadian Ancestors*, vol. XXVI. Palm Harbor, Florida: The LISI Press, 1997, p. 164.
32. Ibid., p. 19.
33. Boucher, Pierre. *True and Genuine Description of New France*. Trans. Montizambert. Montréal: Desbarats & Co., 1883, p. 19.





34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Laforest, Thomas J. *Our French-Canadian Ancestors*, vol. XXVI. Palm Harbor, Florida: The LISI Press, 1997, p. 164.
38. Moussette, Marcel. *La pêche sur le Saint-Laurent: Répertoire des méthodes et des engins de capture*. Montréal, Québec: Les Éditions du Boréal Express, 1979, pp. 35–43.
39. Laforest, Thomas J. *Our French-Canadian Ancestors*, vol. XXVI. Palm Harbor, Florida: The LISI Press, 1997, p. 164.
40. Thwaites, Reuben Gold, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. Cleveland, Ohio: Burrows Brothers, vol. 6, p. 307.  
<http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/>.
41. Ibid., p. 309.
42. Boucher, Pierre. *True and Genuine Description of New France*. Trans. Montizambert. Montréal: Desbarats & Co., 1883, p. 18.

### 3. *Le Matelot*

1. Concession of land: Hôtel-Dieu of Québec to André Robidou, Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet, Sieur de LaChesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 15 June 1664.
2. Two transfers of a neighboring property state that André Robidou is the adjoining owner: Concession of land: Charles Aubert, Sieur de LaChesnaye to Estienne Girard, Greffe de notaire Michel Fillion, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 8 February 1665; Sale of land: Estienne Girard *dit* Champaigne to Marin Dallery [Marin Dalleray], Greffe de notaire Romain Becquet, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 22 December 1665.
3. Concession of land: Hôtel-Dieu of Québec to André Robidou, Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet, Sieur de LaChesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 15 June 1664.
4. See note 2 above.
5. The superior quality of the soil on Île-d'Orléans compared to the south shore of the river is described in: Boucher, Pierre. *True and Genuine Description of New France, Commonly Called Canada, and the Manners and Customs and Productions of That Country*. Paris: Florentin Lambert, 1664. Translated by Edward Louis Montizambert as *Canada in the Seventeenth Century*. Montréal: George E. Desbarats & Co., 1883, 18.
6. Ibid., p. 81.
7. "Louis Fontaine (abt. 1633–1685)," Wikitree, Accessed 31 May 2025.  
<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Fontaine-345>.





8. Judicial decree, Jugements et délibérations du Conseil souverain de la Nouvelle-France, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M9/1, 4M01-1859, 13 May 1665.
9. Ibid. (Calculation of André's start date on the vessel is based on his rate of pay.).
10. Ibid. (Payments were made to five crewmen, including André.).
11. Census record: Eustashe Lambert [Eustache Lambert] and Marie Laurence, Recensement du Canada. Centre des archives d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France: COL G1 460, p. 15, 1666.
12. Ibid.
13. Declaration: by Marie Laurenne [Marie Laurence], Fonds Intendants, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, Cote: E1, S4, SS2, P143, 11 January 1668.

#### 4. *La Fille du Roi*

1. Jeanne Denot is listed as 36 years old, indicating birth is circa 1645, in: Census record: Jacques Suprenan [Jacques Surprenant] and Jeanne Denote [Jeanne Denot], Recensement du Canada. Centre des archives d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France: COL G1 460/fol. 1–168, p. 311, 14 November 1681. She regularly gave birth approximately every two years from 1669 through January 1692 at which time she would have been approximately 46 or 47 years old if she was born in 1645. Since 46 or 47 years old would be quite old for a woman to give birth, this indicates that she herself may have been born later than 1645. As for her parents' names: Marriage Record: Jacques Suprenant [Jacques Surprenant] and Jeanne Denotte [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 18, M1), 16 August 1678. In earlier documents (Marriage contract: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet de Lachesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 16 May 1667; Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667) she went by her mother's maiden name of "Leduc" causing her father's family name to be noted as "Leduc" and no family name noted for her mother.
2. Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667; Marriage Record: Jacques Suprenant [Jacques Surprenant] and Jeanne Denotte [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 18, M1), 16 August 1678.
3. Jeanne's father had clearly passed before she reached Nouvelle-France. Antoine Denot is noted as deceased in: Marriage contract: André Robidou and Jeanne





Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet de Lachesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 16 May 1667. Further, since Jeanne used her mother's last name of Leduc in Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667, this would indicate that her father had died not recently, but several years prior.

4. This was common for the poor at the time, especially when there was not a husband/father for the household. Jeanne's father had clearly passed before she reached Nouvelle-France. Antoine Denot is noted as deceased in: Marriage contract: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet de Lachesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 16 May 1667. Due to the probable inability of Jeanne Denot to receive family news after leaving France, his death almost certainly occurred prior to her departure to Nouvelle-France in May 1666. Further, since Jeanne used her mother's last name of Leduc in Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667, this would indicate that her father had died not recently, but several years prior. As for Jeanne living in a charitable institutions, many *Filles du Roi* came from such institutions. Further, she is believed to have travelled by the ship *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* to Nouvelle-France, and this ship in the year prior to Jeanne's voyage to Nouvelle-France was known to have transported *Filles du Roi* from this quote: "The ship from Normandy arrived, with 82 girls and women — among others, 50 from a charitable institution in Paris, where they have been very well taught." Thwaites, Reuben Gold, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610–1791*, Vol. 49. Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Company, 1899, p. 167.
5. The departure date is provided in: Campeau, Charles Vianney. *Navires venus en Nouvelle-France des origines à 1699*. <http://naviresnouvellefance.iquebec.com/>. Jeanne Denot's status as a *Fille du Roi* arriving this year is detailed in: Gagné, Peter J. *King's Daughters and Founding Mothers: The Filles du Roi, 1663–1673*, Vols. 1 and 2. Pawtucket, RI: Quintin Publications, 2001; Vol. 1, pp. 41, 202; Vol. 2, p. 582.
6. An extensive article about the 1666 voyage of *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* can be found at: Perron, Guy. «L'expédition du navire *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* pour le Canada en 1666», *Le blogue de Guy Perron*, publié le 5 juillet 2020. <https://lebloguedeGuyPerron.wordpress.com/2020/07/05/265-lexpedition-du-navire-le-saint-jean-baptiste-pour-le-canada-en-1666/>; also in Langlois, Michel. "Les passagers des navires – Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste et le Moulin d'Or en 1666." *Mémoires de la Société Généalogique Canadienne-Française* 48, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 241–56.







7. Thwaites, Reuben Gold, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610–1791*, Vol. 49. Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Company, 1899, p. 167.
8. Perron, Guy. «L'expédition du navire *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* pour le Canada en 1666», *Le blogue de Guy Perron*, publié le 5 juillet 2020. <https://lebloguedeGuyPerron.wordpress.com/2020/07/05/265-lexpedition-du-navire-le-saint-jean-baptiste-pour-le-canada-en-1666/>. See also: Langlois, Michel. “Les passagers des navires – Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste et le Moulin d’Or en 1666.” *Mémoires de la Société Généalogique Canadienne-Française* 48, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 241–56.
9. Census record: Unknown Households, Recensement du Canada. Centre des archives d’outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France: COL G1 460, p. 15, 1666.
10. Marshall, Joyce, ed. *Word from New France: The Selected Letters of Marie de L’Incarnation*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1967.
11. Marriage contract: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Greffe de notaire Pierre Duquet de Lachesnaye, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 16 May 1667.
12. André Vachon, “JÉRÉMIE, dit Lamontagne, NOËL,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 7 June 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jeremie\\_noel\\_1E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jeremie_noel_1E.html).
13. Gefin Voisin is noted as a *matelot* in Legal Proceeding: Eustache Lambert and Geffin Voysin [Voisin], *Jugements et délibérations du Conseil souverain de la Nouvelle-France (1663–1716)*. Québec, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec (Cote: TP1, S28, P1462), 24 November 1663.
14. Blanché is noted as a soldier in: Judgment: François Blanche dit Langevin, *Jugements et délibérations du Conseil souverain de la Nouvelle-France*, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, TP1, S28, P643, 8 July 1669.
15. Biographical information on Nolan and Houart can be found at: *NolanFamilies Archive*. <https://nolanfamilies.org/knowledge-base/families-in-quebec/>, Accessed 7 June 2025.
16. Marriage record: André Robidou and Jeanne Leduc [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec (Québec, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1289658, article 1, p. 164, 17 June 1667.
17. *Basilique-cathédrale Notre-Dame-de-Québec*, Accessed 8 June 2025. <https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/relig/ndamq/ndamqexe.htm?nodsclaimer=1>.
18. Ibid.
19. Census record: Unknown Households, Recensement du Canada. Centre des archives d’outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France: COL G1 460, p. 15, 1666.





## 5. *Les Habitants*

1. Marriage contract: François Dumas and Marguerite Foy, Greffe de notaire Gilles Rageot, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 5 July 1667 (insinuated 25 October 1667).
2. *Passagers du La Constance de Cadix 1667*. <https://www.geni.com/projects/Passagers-du-La-Constance-de-Cadix-1667/25447>, Accessed 8 June 2025.
3. Baptism record: Romaine Robideau [Marie Romaine Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec, Québec, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1289658 (article 2, p. 31), 11 July 1669.
4. Honorius Provost, “Dudouyt, Jean,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 8 June 2025. [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dudouyt\\_jean\\_1E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dudouyt_jean_1E.html).
5. This naming trend was found in all known baptisms of Jeanne’s children. It is attributed to her rather than André since it continued on in Jeanne’s second marriage.
6. Honorius Provost, “Becquet, Romain,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 8 June 2025. [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/becquet\\_romain\\_1E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/becquet_romain_1E.html).
7. J. Monet, “Gaultier de Comporté, Philippe,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 8 June 2025. [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/gaultier\\_de\\_comporte\\_philippe\\_1E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/gaultier_de_comporte_philippe_1E.html).
8. Judgment: François Blanche *dît* Langevin, Jugements et délibérations du Conseil souverain de la Nouvelle-France, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, TP1, S28, P643, 8 July 1669.
9. Jean-François Loiseau, “Jacques Nourry (~1626 Feings – 1669 Québec), colon percheron condamné à mort,” *Perche-Québec*, last modified April 12, 2023, accessed 24 July 2025, <https://www.perche-quebec.com/perche/individus/nourry-jacques.htm>.
10. The following documents list many of the inhabitants of LaPrairie; neither André nor Jeanne are listed as present: Marriage contract: Mathieu Faye and Marguerite-Françoise Moreau, sous seing privé, Curé G. Perot, Montréal, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 27 September 1670; Marriage contract: Pierre Gagnier and Catherine D’Aubigeon, Greffe de notaire Bénigne Basset *dît* Deslauriers, Montréal, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 21 March 1671.
11. Lucien Campeau, “Raffeix, Pierre,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 8 June 2025. [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/raffeix\\_pierre\\_2E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/raffeix_pierre_2E.html).
12. Chauchetière, Claude. *Annual Narrative of the Mission of the Sault from Its Foundation until the Year 1686*. Bristol, PA: Evolution Publishing, 2006, p. 18.





13. André's and Jeanne's first home in LaPrairie was located within the village itself. While the purchase record cannot be found, the sale of this property is: Sale of property: André Robidou to Pierre Lefevre [Pierre Lefebvre], Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 4 December 1672.
14. Baptism record: Marguerite Robidou [Marguerite Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 2, B4), 10 November 1671.
15. *Marguerite Tenand (1646–1678)*, Accessed 8 June 2025. <https://www.geni.com/people/Marguerite-Tenard/6000000003855349501>. She gave birth to a child in Montréal in 1669 and to a child in LaPrairie in 1671 indicating she had moved to LaPrairie between those two dates.
16. *Pierre Le Febvre 6 August 1652–4 April 1694*, Accessed 8 June 2025. <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/LHV1-QKP/pierre-le-febvre-1652-1694>.
17. *Catholic Encyclopedia (1913)/James Fremin*, Accessed 8 June 2025. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic\\_Encyclopedia\\_\(1913\)/James\\_Fremin](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/James_Fremin).
18. J. Monet, "Frémin, Jacques," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 8 June 2025. [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/fremin\\_jacques\\_1E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/fremin_jacques_1E.html).
19. Ibid.
20. Chauchetière, Claude. *Annual Narrative of the Mission of the Sault from Its Foundation until the Year 1686*. Bristol, PA: Evolution Publishing, 2006, p. 23.
21. Ibid., at 26.
22. Baptism record: Marguerite Robidou [Marguerite Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 2, B4), 10 November 1671.
23. Concession of land: Compagnie de Jésus to André Robidou, Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 22 January 1673.
24. André Robidou exchanged this property for another on 04 December 1672 and at that time the contract indicated that Robidou had been plowing this acreage, which he would have done earlier in the year (Exchange of property: André Robidou and Jean Cailloud [Jean Caillault], Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 4 December 1672.). Further, Robidou is noted as a neighbor in concessions of adjoining properties in June of 1672: Concession of land: Compagnie de Jésus to Thomas Hébert, Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1,





- 4M01-0565, 2 June 1672; Concession of land: the Compagnie de Jésus to Léonard Besse, Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 8 June 1672. Robidou's title to the property he gave in exchange would not be confirmed until later (Concession of land: Compagnie de Jésus to André Robidou, Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 22 January 1673).
25. Exchange of property: André Robidou and Jean Cailloud [Jean Caillault], Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 4 December 1672.
  26. Sale of property: André Robidou to Pierre Lefevre [Pierre Lefebvre], Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 4 December 1672.
  27. Baptismal record: Jeanne Robidou, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 3, B6), 20 September 1673.
  28. François Roinay 1625 - 1688 (63 years), Accessed 8 June 2025, <https://familygenealogy.us/getperson.php?personID=I29457&tree=ZLITree>.
  29. Thomas Hébert *dit* Larose (Hébert), II (1651 - 1701), Accessed 8 June 2025, <https://www.geni.com/people/Thomas-H%C3%A9bert-dit-Larose-II/6000000003855217839>.
  30. Concession of land: Compagnie de Jésus to Jacques Surprenant [Jacques Surprenant], Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie de LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 9 October 1674.
  31. Concession of land: Compagnie de Jésus to André Robidou, Greffe de secrétaire Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Biens des Jésuites, Seigneurie de LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, M158/1, 4M01-0565, 8 December 1674.
  32. Ibid.
  33. For extensive information on this communal space, see: Choquet, Élisée. *Les communes de LaPrairie*. La Prairie, Québec: Imprimerie du Sacré-Cœur, 1935, pp. 26-33.
  34. Ibid., at 29.
  35. Baptismal record: Guillaume Robidou, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 4, B7), 28 November 1675.





36. Declaration and census of the fief and seigneurie of LaPrairie-de-la-Madeleine, Greffe de notaire Romain Becquet, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 8 November 1677. It notes Guillaume Brunet as landowner.
37. Marguerite Beauvais (1658 - 1715), Accessed 8 June 2025, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Beauvais-24>.
38. Foley, Gerald, “Minnesota, Eh? A Foley/Perras Family History”. Accessed 12 August 2025, <https://fahfminn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Minnesota-eh-book.pdf>.
39. These activities are presumed based on the normal life of *habitants* of this time period.
40. Declaration and census of the fief and seigneurie of LaPrairie-de-la-Madeleine, Greffe de notaire Romain Becquet, Québec, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 8 November 1677.
41. Baptism record: Joseph Robidou, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 5, B1), 15 January 1678.
42. “Ripples from La Prairie Voyageur Canoes, Chapter Three – Boyer Family.” *La Prairie Voyageur Canoes* (blog), Accessed 8 June 2025. <https://laprairie-voyageur-canoes.blogspot.com/2017/03/ripples-from-la-prairie-voyageur-canoes-62.html>.
43. Marie Marguerite (Gagné) Gasnier (1653 - 1720), Accessed 8 June 2025, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Gagn%C3%A9-77>.
44. It is presumed that this was a sudden medical matter since it would have been dangerous to cross the Fleuve Saint-Laurent from LaPrairie to Montréal this time of year due to the melting of ice and this trip likely would not have been undertaken without an urgent need. Further, since André was treated by a surgeon rather than a doctor, this indicates an injury versus an illness.
45. Burial record: André L’Espagnol [André Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 375840, article 1, S5, 1 April 1678.
46. Charles-Marie Boissonnault, “MARTINET DE FONBLANCHE (Tourblanche), JEAN,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 8 June 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/martinet\\_de\\_fonblanche\\_jean\\_2E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/martinet_de_fonblanche_jean_2E.html). See also: Rheault, Marcel J. *La médecine en Nouvelle-France: Les chirurgiens de Montréal, 1642–1760*. Sillery, Québec: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 2004, pp. 34-36, 263-267.
47. Burial record: André L’Espagnol [André Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 375840, article 1, S5, 1 April 1678.
48. The proximity of the Fonblanche residence to the church of Notre-Dame can be found on the map: Plan de Montréal de 1673 à 1687 (Map of Montreal from 1673 to 1687), P501-1-D013. Archives de la Ville de Montréal.





49. Burial record: André L'Espagnol [André Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 375840, article 1, S5, 1 April 1678.
50. The close location of the cemetery to the church can be found on the map: Plan de Montréal de 1673 à 1687 (Map of Montreal from 1673 to 1687), P501-1-D013. *Archives de la Ville de Montréal*. When the present basilica was built it covered most of this cemetery.

## 6. *Le Soldat*

1. Jacques is listed as 37 years old, indicating birth is circa 1644, in: Census record: Jacques Supernan [Jacques Surprenant] and Jeanne Denote [Jeanne Denot], Recensement du Canada. Centre des archives d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France: COL G1 460/fol. 1–168, p. 311, 14 November 1681.
2. Marriage Record: Jacques Suprenant [Jacques Surprenant] and Jeanne Denotte [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 18, M1), 16 August 1678.
3. Ibid.
4. Wilker, Paul. “Our Ancestors, The Settlers.” *Our Ancestors, The Settlers (blog)*, July 23, 2016. Accessed 9 June 2025, <https://ouranceorsthesettlers.wordpress.com/2016/07/23/our-ancestors-the-settlers-3/>.
5. Open Churches. "Church of Saint-Martin in Longny-au-Perche." Accessed 9 June 2025. <https://openchurches.eu/en-fr/churches/longny-au-perche-martin-orne-cof-eng>.
6. The membership of Jacques Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy in the Contrecoeur Company is first noted in: Roy, Régis, and Gérard Malchelosse. *Le Régiment de Carignan: Son organisation et son expédition au Canada (1665–1668), officiers et soldats qui s'établirent en Canada*. Montréal, QC: G. Ducharme, 1925, 88, and his membership in the Company has been widely accepted since that time. Nearly all of the regular soldiers in the Carignan Regiment only used a *nom de guerre* in official Regiment documents, including several in various companies who used the name “Sanssoucy” and its variants. Few *noms de guerre* with the corresponding actual names of the men are contained in the documents of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Roy and Malchelosse made certain assumptions in assigning actual names to the *noms de guerre*, and some identifications were based on tenuous evidence. They may have, as they similarly did with others, made an assumption that since Jacques Surprenant used the name “Sanssoucy” that he was the “Sanssoucy” of the Contrecoeur Company. No document confirming Jacques Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy as a member of the Contrecoeur Company or of any other company of the Regiment





is currently available. If Roy and Malchelosse were correct in their identification, then Jacques Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy sailed from La Rochelle, France on 13 May 1665 aboard the ship *La Paix* and arrived in Québec on 20 August 1665 (Société des Filles du Roi et Soldats du Carignan, Inc. “*Ships of the Regiment*.” Accessed 7 July 2025. <http://www.fillesduroi.org/Regiment/Ships/ships.html>).

7. A detailed history of the Carignan-Salières Regiment can be found in: Verney, Jack. *The Good Regiment: The Carignan-Salières Regiment in Canada, 1665–1668*. Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991.
8. Fernand Grenier, “PÉCAUDY DE CONTRECŒUR, ANTOINE,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, Université Laval/University of Toronto, 2003–, Accessed 11 June 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pecaudy\\_de\\_contrecoeur\\_antoine\\_1E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pecaudy_de_contrecoeur_antoine_1E.html).
9. Société des Filles du Roi et Soldats du Carignan, Inc. “*Ships of the Regiment*.” Accessed 7 July 2025. <http://www.fillesduroi.org/Regiment/Ships/ships.html>.
10. Perron, Guy. « L’expédition du navire La Paix pour le Canada en 1665 ». *Le blogue de Guy Perron*, 27 décembre 2015, Accessed 11 June 2025, <https://lebloguedeGuyPerron.wordpress.com/2015/12/27/lexpedition-du-navire-la-paix-pour-le-canada-en-1665/>.
11. Roy, Régis, and Gérard Malchelosse. *Le Régiment de Carignan: Son organisation et son expédition au Canada (1665–1668), officiers et soldats qui s’établirent en Canada*. Montréal, Québec: G. Ducharme, 1925, p. 29.
12. Fernand Grenier, “PÉCAUDY DE CONTRECŒUR, ANTOINE,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 11 June 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pecaudy\\_de\\_contrecoeur\\_antoine\\_1E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pecaudy_de_contrecoeur_antoine_1E.html).
13. List of soldiers of the Carignan-Salières Regiment who settled in Canada in 1668. Aix-en-Provence, France: *Canada-France Archives Database* (Centre des archives d’outre-mer, COL D2C 47, fols. 45–49 verso, p. 2), 1668.
14. Ibid.
15. François-Xavier Garneau, *Histoire des Canadiens-français, Tome IV*, chap. 4, Wikisource, Accessed 11 June 2025, [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Histoire\\_des\\_Canadiens-fran%C3%A7ais, Tome IV/Chapitre 4](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Histoire_des_Canadiens-fran%C3%A7ais, Tome IV/Chapitre 4).
16. Jacques Surprenant is noted as an adjoining neighbor in: Concession of land: Compagnie de Jésus to Guillaume Bruno [Guillaume Brunet]. Secretary’s registry, Joseph Tissot, Lands and Forests, Jesuit Properties, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine. Québec, Québec: *Archives nationales du Québec* (M158/1, 4M01-0565), 16 July 1674. Further, in March 1676, Rebours is noted as owning the adjacent land to Jacques in: Sale of land: Pierre Rebours to Jacques Surprenant [Jacques Surprenant]. Secretary’s registry, Joseph Tissot, Lands and Forests, Jesuit Properties, Seigneurie





- LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine. Québec, Québec: *Archives nationales du Québec* (M158/1, 4M01-0565), 19 March 1676.
17. Baptism record: Jacques Benoist [Jacques Benoît. ], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 375840 (article 1, p. 87, B30), 4 June 1674.
18. Jacques Surprenant is noted as an adjoining neighbor in: Concession of land: Compagnie de Jésus to Guillaume Bruno [Guillaume Brunet]. Secretary's registry, Joseph Tissot, Lands and Forests, Jesuit Properties, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine. Québec, Québec: *Archives nationales du Québec* (M158/1, 4M01-0565), 16 July 1674.
19. Land concession: Compagnie de Jésus to Jacques Suprenant [Jacques Surprenant], Secretary's registry, Joseph Tissot, Terres et Forêts, Jesuit Properties, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine. Québec, Québec: *Archives nationales du Québec*, (M158/1, 4M01-0565), 9 October 1674.
20. Ibid.
21. Partnership agreement: Pierre Rebours and Jacques Supernan *dit* Sansoucy [Jacques Surprenant] & annulment), Greffe de notaire Bénigne Basset *dit* Deslauriers. Montréal, Québec: *Archives nationales du Québec*, 29 April 1674 and 26 January 1676.
22. Sale of land: Pierre Rebours to Jacques Suprenant [Jacques Surprenant], Secretary registry, Joseph Tissot, Lands and Forests, Jesuit Properties, Seigneurie LaPrairie-de-la-Magdeleine. Québec, Québec: *Archives nationales du Québec*, (M158/1, 4M01-0565), 19 March 1676.
23. Legal proceeding: Jean Belleville, defendant, Duchesneau, Jugements et délibérations du Conseil souverain de la Nouvelle-France (1663-1716). Montréal, Québec: *Archives nationales du Québec*, 17 November 1676.
24. Ibid.
25. Legal proceeding: Jean Belleville, defendant, Duchesneau, Jugements et délibérations du Conseil souverain de la Nouvelle-France (1663-1716). Montréal, Québec: *Archives nationales du Québec*, 8 March 1677.
26. Declaration and census of the fief and seigneurie of LaPrairie-de-la-Madeleine, Greffe de notaire Romain Becquet, Québec, Québec. *Archives nationales du Québec*, 8 November 1677.
27. Marriage record: Jacques Suprenant [Jacques Surprenant] and Jeanne Denotte [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 18, M1), 16 August 1678.
28. Chauchetière, Claude. *Annual Narrative of the Mission of the Sault from Its Foundation until the Year 1686*. Bristol, PA: Evolution Publishing, 2006.







29. C.J. Jaenen, “CHAUCHETIÈRE, CLAUDE,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 4 July 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/chauchetiere\\_claude\\_2E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/chauchetiere_claude_2E.html).
30. “Laprairie”. Accessed 24 November 2006, <http://www.genealogy.umontreal.ca/en/statParoisses/2701.asp>.
31. Marriage record: Jacques Suprenant [Jacques Surprenant] and Jeanne Denotte [Jeanne Denot], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 18, M1), 16 August 1678.
32. Baptism record: Marguerite Robidoux [Marguerite Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. Family History Library, US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 2, B4), 10 November 1671; Baptism record: Joseph Robidou, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. Family History Library, US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 5, B1), 15 January 1678.
33. See Richter, Molly G. “Widowhood in New France: Consequences and Coping Strategies.” *French Colonial History* 4 (2003): 49–61, which covers the time periods in 18<sup>th</sup> century Nouvelle-France quite well.

## 7. *La Mère des Familles*

1. Baptismal record: Jean Surprenan [Jean Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 7, B11), 4 December 1679.
2. Burial record: Jean Suprenand [Jean Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 20, S1), 4 June 1680.
3. Engagement: Romaine Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou] to Catherine Houar [Catherine Houart] and Nollan [Pierre Nolan], Greffe de notaire Claude Maugue. Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 23 July 1680.
4. Ibid.
5. Baptismal record: Romaine Gervais. Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 9), 5 February 1681.
6. “Mathieu Gervais (abt. 1646–1728).” *WikiTree*, Accessed 5 July 2025. <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Gervais-6>.
7. Baptismal record: Marguerite Surprenant, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 10, B6), 5 June 1681.
8. Jeanne Denot had a pattern of naming her children after a godparent.





9. Baptismal record: Marguerite Surprenant, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 10, B6), 5 June 1681.
10. Census record: Jacques Supernan [Jacques Surprenant] and Jeanne Denot [Jeanne Denot], Recensement du Canada. Centre des archives d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France: COL G1 460/fol. 1–168, p. 311, 14 November 1681.
11. Census record: Pierre Nolan and Catherine Houar [Catherine Houart], Recensement du Canada. Centre des archives d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France: COL G1 460/fol. 1–168, p. 45), 14 November 1681.
12. Martin Fournier, “RADISSON, PIERRE-ESPRIT,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed 15 July 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/radisson\\_pierre\\_esprit\\_2E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/radisson_pierre_esprit_2E.html).
13. Ibid.
14. Baptismal record: Pierre Suprenant [Pierre Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 11, B3), 21 January 1683.
15. Thomas Charland, “BIGOT, VINCENT,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 5 July 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bigot\\_vincent\\_2E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bigot_vincent_2E.html).
16. Marriage record: Jean Roux and Romaine Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833, article 1, pp. 18–19, 8 November 1683.
17. “Laprairie”. Accessed 24 November 2006, <http://www.genealogy.umontreal.ca/en/statParoisses/2701.asp>.
18. The livestock that Jeanne Denot would have cared for included oxen, cows, pigs, and chickens, as set forth in the list of livestock in: Agreement: Jacques Surprenant [Jacques Surprenant], Pierre Surprenant, Jean Denige [Jean Deniger], Catherine Surprenant and Laurent Surprenant, Greffe de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 22 March 1708. Although this list was composed many years after Jeanne’s death, it is likely that the livestock was similar during Jeanne’s life.
19. Laurent Surprenant is noted as being 10 years old, indicating birth is circa 1673, in: Engagement: Laurent Surprenant to Nicolas Janvrain *dit* Dufresne [Nicolas Janvrin]. Greffe de notaire Claude Maugue. Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 28 September 1693; 27 years old, indicating birth is circa 1675, in: Marriage contract: Laurent Surprenant and Jeanne Beauvais, Greffe de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 17 May 1711; 26 years old, indicating birth is circa 1674, in: Marriage record: Laurent Surprenant *dit* Sansoucy and Jeanne Beauvais, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame. Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375841





- (article 1), 20 May 1711; and 68 years old, indicating birth is circa 1674, in: Burial record: Laurent Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy. Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame. Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375843 (article 1), 3 December 1752.
20. Burial record: Marie Suprenand [Marguerite Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 21), 26 July 1684.
  21. Baptismal record: Marie-Anne Roux], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 14, B6), 28 April 1686.
  22. Baptismal record: Catherine Suprenand [Catherine Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 14, B8), 29 July 1686.
  23. Marriage record: Jean Patenotre [Jean Patenaude] and Marie Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 15, M1), 10 December 1686.
  24. John English, “TRUDEAU, PIERRE ELLIOTT,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 22, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed 15 July 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/trudeau\\_pierre\\_elliott\\_22E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/trudeau_pierre_elliott_22E.html).
  25. Baptismal record: Claude Suprenan [Claude Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 32), 21 September 1688.
  26. Burial record: Claude Suprenan [Claude Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 39), 10 September 1689.
  27. Baptismal record: Jean-François Patenotre [Jean-François Patenaude], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 38, B9), 16 June 1689.
  28. Agreement: Jean Roy, Françoise Saulnier, Jacques Surprenant and Jeanne Denot. Greffe de notaire Claude Maugue. Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 11 October 1689.
  29. “Jean (Roy) Roy *dit* Deschats (1632–1689).” *WikiTree*, Accessed 5 July 2025. [https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Roy-3976#\\_note-2](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Roy-3976#_note-2).
  30. “Françoise (Saulneir) Saulnier *dite* du Verdier (abt. 1638 – aft. 1706),” *WikiTree*, Accessed 16 July 2025, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Saulnier-65>.
  31. Lacroix, Richard, “Le Fort de St-Lambert est...à...Brossaard”, Accessed 12 August 2025, <https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Pr%C3%A9sentation-Fort-de-St-Lamber-a-Brossard-Copie.pdf>.





32. John H.G. Pell, “SCHUYLER, JOHANNES (John),” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 3, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 9 July 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/schuyler\\_johannes\\_3E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/schuyler_johannes_3E.html).
33. Ibid.
34. Marie Surprenant is noted as 23 years old, indicating birth is circa 1689, in: Marriage contract: François Lefebvre and Marie Surprenant, Greffe de notaire Guillaume Barette *dit* Courville, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 2 November 1712, but this would place her birth unusually close to one of her brothers; therefore it is more likely that her birth is circa 1690.
35. Marriage record: Gabriel Mieux [Gabriel Lemieux] and Jeanne Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 64), 5 December 1690.
36. Lacroix, Richard, “Le Fort de St-Lambert est...à...Brossard”, Accessed 12 August 2025, <https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Pr%C3%A9sentation-Fort-de-St-Lamber-a-Brossard-Copie..pdf>.
37. Stanley, Norma, “The Prairie Called ‘Mouille-Pied’”. Accessed 12 August 2025, <https://chamblycounty.com/the-prairie-called-mouille-pied/>.
38. John H.G. Pell, “SCHUYLER, PETER (1657-1723/24),” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 9 July 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/schuyler\\_peter\\_1657\\_1723\\_24\\_2E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/schuyler_peter_1657_1723_24_2E.html).
39. W.J. Eccles, “CLÉMENT DU VUAULT (Vault) DE VALRENNES, PHILIPPE,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, Accessed 9 July 2025, [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/clement\\_du\\_vuault\\_de\\_valrennes\\_philippe\\_2E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/clement_du_vuault_de_valrennes_philippe_2E.html).
40. “Pierre Perras *dit* La Fontaine and Denise LeMaître”. Accessed 12 August 2025, <https://www.petellemotors.com/pet/pet1710Per.html>.
41. “Laprairie”. Accessed 24 November 2006, <http://www.genealogy.umontreal.ca/en/statParoisses/2701.asp>.
42. Baptismal record: Jean-Gabriel Mieux [Jean-Gabriel Lemieux], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 44, B1), 13 January 1692.
43. Baptismal record: Anne Supernan [Anne Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 44, B2), 21 January 1692.
44. “Marie Anne Roy (abt. 1672 – 1744),” WikiTree, Accessed 16 July 2025, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Roy-308>.
45. Agreement: Jacques Surprenant, Jean Patenoste [Jean Patenaude], Romaine Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Gabriel Lemieux, and Jeanne Robidou, Greffe





de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 16 June 1697.

46. Burial record: Anne Supernant [Anne Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 71), 1 February 1692.
47. Burial record: Jean-Gabriel Mieux [Jean-Gabriel Lemieux], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 71), 6 February 1692.
48. Baptismal record: Marguerite Patenostre [Marguerite Patenaude], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 45, B10), 21 July 1692.
49. Engagement: Laurent Surprenant to Nicolas Janvrain *dit* Dufresne [Nicolas Janvrin]. Greffe de notaire Claude Mauge. Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 28 September 1693.
50. *FamilySearch*. “Nicolas Janvrin *dit* Dufresne Roy (L8PB-ZLG).” *FamilySearch Family Tree*, Accessed 9 July 2025. <https://www.familysearch.org/en/tree/person/about/L8PB-ZLG>.
51. Sale of land: Jacques Deneau *dit* Detaillis [Jacques Deniau] and Marie Rivé [Marie Rivet] to Jacques Surprennant *dit* Sanssoucy [Jacques Surprenant], Greffe de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 24 April 1696.
52. Sale of land: Jacques Surprennant *dit* Sanssoucy [Jacques Surprenant] to Estienne Trutau [Étienne Trudeau], Greffe de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 3 March 1697.
53. Marriage contract: Guillaume Robidou and Marie Guerin [Marie-Françoise Guerin], Greffe de notaire Bénigne Basset *dit* Deslauriers, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 6 June 1697.
54. Marriage record: Guillaume Robidaut [Guillaume Robidou] and Marie Guerin [Marie-Françoise Guerin], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375840 (article 1, M), 11 June 1697.
55. Agreement: Jacques Surprenant, Jean Patenoste [Jean Patenaude], Romaine Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Gabriel Lemieux, and Jeanne Robidou, Greffe de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 16 June 1697.

## 8. *Le Fleuve*

1. Agreement: Jacques Surprenant, Jean Patenoste [Jean Patenaude], Romaine Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Gabriel Lemieux, and Jeanne Robidou, Greffe de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 16 June 1697.





2. Ibid.
3. Agreement: Jacques Surprenant [Jacques Surprenant], Pierre Surprenant, Jean Denige [Jean Deniger], Catherine Surprenant and Laurent Surprenant, Greffe de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 22 March 1708.
4. Guardianship Proceeding: Childred of Jean Patenotre [Jean Patenaude] and Marie Brunet [Marie-Françoise Brunet], and of Jean Patenotre [Jean Patenaude] and Marie Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Archives Judiciaires de Montréal, Montréal, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, TL4, S1, D351, 26 June 1699.
5. Conduct investigation: Belhumeur [Françoise Moisan], Archives Judiciaires de Montréal, Montréal, Québec. Archives nationales du Québec, 14 & 18 September 1688.
6. The case can be found at: Enquête su la conduite de la femme Belhumeur [Françoise Moisan]. Archives Judiciaires de Montréal. Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 14 & 18 septembre 1688.
7. Marriage record: Joseph Robidou and Jeanne Séguin, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Saint-Antoine-de-Longueuil, Longueuil, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1031703 (article 1, M1), 10 octobre 1701.
8. Burial record: Jaques Supernan [Jacques Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p185, S2), 16 July 1710.
9. Baptism record: Romaine Robideau [Marie Romaine Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame-de-Québec, Québec, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1289658 (article 2, p. 31), 11 July 1669.
10. Marriage record: Jean Roux and Romaine Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine (LaPrairie, Québec). FHL US/CAN Film 1288833, article 1, pp. 18–19, 8 November 1683.
11. Marie Romaine Robidou is noted as a widow in: Marriage record: Jean Patenotre [Jean Patenaude] and Marie Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 15, M1), 10 December 1686. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Burial record: Marie Robidou [Marie Romaine Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375833 (article 1, p97, S5), 1 September 1697.
14. PRDH Family Record 5224; PRDH Family Record 5795.
15. PRDH Individual Record 64007.
16. Baptism record: Marguerite Robidoux [Marguerite Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 2, B4), 10 November 1671.





17. Burial record: Marguerite Robidou, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p20, S1), 15 January 1672.
18. Baptismal record: Jeanne Robidou, Registres Paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 3, B6), 20 September 1673.
19. Marriage record: Gabriel Mieux [Gabriel Lemieux] and Jeanne Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 64), 5 December 1690.
20. Burial Record: Jeanne Robidou, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 2, p103, S11), 13 April 1736. PRDH Family Record 6658.
21. PRDH Family Record 6658.
22. PRDH Individual Record 46760.
23. Baptismal record: Guillaume Robidou, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 4, B7), 28 November 1675.
24. Marriage contract: Guillaume Robidou and Marie Guerin [Marie-Françoise Guerin], Greffe de notaire Bénigne Basset *dit* Deslauriers, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 6 June 1697.
25. Marriage record: Guillaume Robidaut [Guillaume Robidou] and Marie Guerin [Marie-Françoise Guerin], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375840 (article 1, M), 11 June 1697.
26. Burial Record: Guillaume Robidoux [Guillaume Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec, FHL US/CAN Film 375843 (article 1), 2 July 1754.
27. PRDH Family Record 7842.
28. PRDH Individual Record 32496.
29. Baptism record: Joseph Robidou, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 5, B1), 15 January 1678.
30. Marriage contract: Joseph Robidou & Jeanne Seguin, Greffe de notaire, Pierre Raimbault, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 9 October 1701.
31. Marriage record: Joseph Robidou & Jeanne Seguin, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Saint-Antoine-de-Longueuil, Longueuil, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1031703 (article 1, M1), 10 October 1701.
32. Burial record: Joseph Robidoux [Joseph Robidou], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 375842 (article 1), 25 March 1728.
33. PRDH Family Record 8871.
34. PRDH Individual Record 65080.





35. Baptismal record: Jean Surprenan [Jean Surprenant, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 7, B11), 4 December 1679.
36. Burial record: Jean Suprenand [Jean Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 20, S1), 4 June 1680.
37. Baptismal record: Marguerite Surprenant, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 10, B6), 5 June 1681.
38. Burial record: Marie Suprenand [Marguerite Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 21), 26 July 1684.
39. Baptismal record: Pierre Suprenant [Pierre Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 11, B3), 21 January 1683.
40. Ibid.
41. Marriage record: Pierre Supernan [Pierre Surprenant] & Anne Tatu [Anne Têtu], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p149), 27 November 1702.
42. PRDH Individual Record 69235.
43. Burial record: Pierre Surprenant, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame, Montréal, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 375843 (article 1), 3 June 1739.
44. PRDH Family Record 9091.
45. Laurent Surprenant is noted as being 10 years old, indicating birth is circa 1673, in: Engagement: Laurent Surprenant to Nicolas Janvrain *dit* Dufresne [Nicolas Janvrin]. Greffe de notaire Claude Maugue. Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 28 September 1693; 27 years old, indicating birth is circa 1675, in: Marriage contract: Laurent Surprenant and Jeanne Beauvais, Greffe de notaire Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 17 May 1711; 26 years old, indicating birth is circa 1674, in: Marriage record: Laurent Surprenant *dit* Sansoucy and Jeanne Beauvais, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame. Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375841 (article 1), 20 May 1711; and 68 years old, indicating birth is circa 1674, in: Burial record: Laurent Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy. Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame. Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375843 (article 1), 3 December 1752.
46. Marriage contract: Laurent Surprenant & Jeanne Beauvais, Greffe de notaire, Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec, Archives nationales du Québec, 17 May 1711.







47. Marriage record: Laurent Surprenant *dit* Sansoucy and Jeanne Beauvais, Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame. Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375841 (article 1), 20 May 1711.
48. Burial record: Laurent Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy. Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame. Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375843 (article 1), 3 December 1752.
49. PRDH Family Record 10919.
50. PRDH Individual Record 12978.
51. Burial record: Laurent Surprenant *dit* Sanssoucy. Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Notre-Dame. Montréal, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 375843 (article 1), 3 December 1752.
52. Engagement: Laurent Surprenant to Nicolas Janvrain *dit* Dufresne [Nicolas Janvrin]. Greffe de notaire Claude Maugue. Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 28 September 1693.
53. Baptismal record: Catherine Suprenand [Catherine Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 14, B8), 29 July 1686.
54. Ibid.
55. Marriage contract: Jean Denigé *dit* Sanssoucy [Jean Deniger] & Catherine Surprenant, Greffe de notaire, Antoine Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 23 September 1705.
56. Marriage record: Jean Denige [Jean Deniger] & Catherine Supernan [Catherine Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p150), 4 November 1705.
57. PRDH Individual Record 21605.
58. Marriage contract: Julien Bariteau & Catherine Surprenant, Greffe de notaire, Guillaume Barette *dit* Courville, Montréal, Québec, Archives nationales du Québec, 11 April 1717.
59. Marriage record: Julien Bariteau & Catherine Suprenant [Catherine Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p157), 12 April 1717.
60. PRDH Individual Record 11290.
61. Marriage contract: Antoine Boié [Antoine Boyer] & Catherine Surprenant. Greffe de notaire, Guillaume Barette *dit* Courville,. Montréal, Québec, Archives nationales du Québec, 8 September 1737.
62. PRDH Family Record 20405.
63. PRDH Individual Record 2290.
64. Burial record: Catherine Suprenant [Catherine Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Saint-Jean-François-Régis, St-Phillipe, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288842 (article 1, p39), 28 February 1762.





65. PRDH Family Record 9692; PRDH Family Record 12527.
66. Baptismal record: Claude Suprenan [Claude Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 32), 21 September 1688.
67. Ibid.
68. Burial record: Claude Suprenan [Claude Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 39), 10 September 1689.
69. Ibid.
70. Marie Surprenant is noted as 23 years old, indicating birth is circa 1689, in: Marriage contract: François Lefebvre and Marie Surprenant, Greffe de notaire Guillaume Barette *dit* Courville, Montréal, Québec: Archives nationales du Québec, 2 November 1712, but this would place her birth unusually close to one of her brothers; therefore it is more likely that her birth is circa 1690.
71. Marriage contract: François Lefebvre & Marie Surprenant, Greffe de notaire, Guillaume Barette *dit* Courville, Montréal, Québec, Archives nationales du Québec, 2 November 1712.
72. Marriage record: François Lefebvre & Marie Suprenant [Marie Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p153), 13 November 1712.
73. Burial record: Marie Supernant [Marie Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, LaPrairie, Québec. FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p189, S2), 20 February 1717.
74. PRDH Family Record 11311.
75. PRDH Individual Record 44464.
76. Baptismal record: Anne Supernan [Anne Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 44, B2), 21 January 1692.
77. Ibid.
78. Burial record: Anne Supernant [Anne Surprenant], Registres paroissiaux, Église Catholique, Nativité-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine. LaPrairie, Québec: FHL US/CAN Film 1288833 (article 1, p. 71), 1 February 1692.
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ISBN 979-8-234-04375-7



9 798234 043757 >