

GENERATION 1

ZACHARIE CLOUTIER and SAINTE DUPONT

THE COUPLE

Our ancestor Zacharie Cloutier, the first Cloutier arrived in Canada, was born around 1590. He married Sainte Dupont, the widow of Michel Lermusier at Saint-Jean church in Mortagne (Orne) on July 18th, 1616. He died in Château-Richer on September 17th, 1677 and was buried the next day at the La-Visitation-de-Notre-Dame-de-Château-Richer¹ Church. His widow followed him on July 13th, 1680.

Robert Giffard hiring the Cloutiers

The first two future settlers to accept Robert Giffard's call were tradesmen in an important basic trade: Jean Guyon was master mason and Zacharie Cloutier was master carpenter, each with a family of five young children.

In Mortagne, on March 14th 1634, Zacharie Cloutier signed a contract before Notary Mathurin Roussel tying him to Robert Giffard and agreeing to come to Canada with his eldest son Zacharie II, almost 17 years old. According to the contract, they would work for him for three years and leave for Canada alone. Robert Giffard would have Sainte Dupont and the rest of the family brought across in 1636. But on departure day, some families were complete. Genealogist Archange Godbout² has let us to believe that Zacharie's whole family may have boarded at that moment³. However, Historian Marcel Trudel believes that the commitments of the contract were kept⁴. In fact, he found no evidence or traces of the

¹ This is the official name of the parish at Château-Richer.

² Founder of the Société généalogique Canadienne-Française.

³ *SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉALOGIQUE CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE, Mémoires de la*, volume XXIV, 1973, page 115.

⁴ In 1636, the fleet arrives from France on June 11th. It comprises of three or four ships among them the Saint-Joseph. She has 100 people on board of which 91 are immigrants. Among them Marcel Trudel names Sainte Dupont and her children Jean, Anne, Charles and Louise. See TRUDEL, Marcel, *Catalogue des immigrants 1632-1662*, Éditions Hurtubise HMH, Montréal, 1983, page 53.

presence of Sainte Dupont in New France until July 27th, 1636⁵. The same goes for Mathurine Robin, the wife of Jean Guyon⁶.

Robert Giffard, Sieur de Moncel and de Beauport had received his “Seigneurie de Beauport” from the King on January 16th, 1634. It was a large piece of land of 99 arpents (5.8 km) wide by 4 leagues (19.9 km) long, located from the Beauport River going east to the Montmorency River and from the St. Lawrence River to the north. In Zacharie Cloutier’s hiring contract was included the grant of a back fief which he later named La Clousterie.

THE TRIP AND THE ARRIVAL

The departure from Mortagne took place at the beginning of April 1634. The travelers piled up in large carts filled with supplies, a few pieces of furniture, tools, family keepsakes and heirlooms. They traveled via Rouen to Dieppe⁷, where they were to board the ship. There, they meet with Jean Juchereau, Sieur de Maure, his wife Marie Langlois and their three children. A few bachelors who must think that they have nothing to loose made up the rest of the group.

Such a sea trip could be long and difficult. The ships were small – measuring between 37 and 57 m long on the average – and uncomfortable. They took about two months on the average to cross from France to Québec city often fighting winds and currents. The passengers “brought with them a trunk or a chest containing their clothes, sometimes a straw mattress, personal effects and bags containing tools, utensils and seeds”⁸. The passengers would be crammed into dark and smelly quarters, tossed about by the rolling of the ship, harassed by seasickness and forced to a difficult crowding and lack of privacy. Food was biscuits in the morning, soup at noon and meat or fish at night. The meat came from animals and fowls taken alive on board. The fish was salted or fresh if the sailors managed to catch some. Often the drinking water got stale during the crossing. Once in a while wine made up for the lack of

⁵ Sainte Dupont was present at her daughter’s marriage contract signing on July 27th, 1636. See TRUDEL, Marcel, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, tome III, *La seigneurie des Cent-Associés*, Fides, 1979, page 135.

⁶ There is one more clue for Mathurine Robin arriving only in 1636. From 1617 to 1634, the Guyon-Robin couple had eight children, the last one in March 1634, an average of one child every two years. The next child arrived only in August 1638, which would be consistent with a two-year separation of the couple. As for the Cloutier-Dupont couple, it did not have children born here.

⁷ Departures usually took place from the port city of La Rochelle. But at that time the harbor was closed by a blockade due to the religious war against the Huguenots for which La Rochelle was a stronghold.

⁸ PALARDY, Jean, *Les meubles anciens du Canada Français*, Pierre Tisseyre, Montréal, 1963, page 16.

good water while the sailors might be treated to brandy. Otherwise, fresh water was deemed too precious to “waste” on personal ablution or on washing of clothing.⁹

“After a long crossing but without incident, our ancestors’ ship arrived in front of the Québec city rock on June 4th, 1634 with determined men, courageous women and children filled with wonder”.¹⁰

FIRST ACTIVITIES

As early as July 22nd, 1634, Zacharie Cloutier had begun building a house in Beauport for Seigneur Robert Giffard. After three years his contract ran out and he obtained his promised back fief, La Clousterie. He therefore became himself a Seigneur on February 3rd, 1637. After that, free of his time, he could accept the work than he wanted. He worked at building the parish church of Québec city and on the Saint-Louis Fort. He did work for the nuns on their convents. He worked on a house for Guillaume Couillard; with Noël Langlois, he provided planks and boards to the Compagnie des Cent-Associés. He agreed by contract to build a house for Zacharie Maheu. He also agreed to build the frame of a house for Mathieu Hubou dit Deslongchamps. All the while, he cleared and cultivated the land of his fief¹¹.

THE BACK FIEF LA CLOUSTERIE¹²

This back fief was a piece of land measuring 693 square arpents (237 hectares), that is 5.5 arpents in front (322 m) by 126 arpents in length (7.4 km), located between the land of the Widow of Jean Côté and the back fief Dubuisson of Jean Guyon. A transfer tax in accordance with the Vexin-le-François Custom had to be paid to the Seigneur de Beauport with the additional charge of 50 sols of gold. The owner Zacharie Cloutier retained the whole fief for his use. The limits of the fief were the north shore of the St. Lawrence River to the south and the Montmorency River to the north. See the map XXXXX.

⁹ We know that sea water cannot be used for drinking or even washing clothing.

¹⁰ DOUVILLE R. et CASANOVA J.-D., *La vie quotidienne en Nouvelle-France*, page 19.

¹¹ There were two kinds of « seigneurs »: the noble seigneurs and the bourgeois seigneurs. Both had the same duties and privileges, By receiving a back fief, Zacharie Cloutier became a seigneur but a bourgeois seigneur, as he was not a noble. In fact his was common people all his life although the King did confer nobility to some bourgeois seigneurs. “Seigneurs not noble carrying on bourgeois activities (public service, commerce, land revenues, trade mastership) number 30, of which 20 live in Canada; together they own 1866041.5 arpents [638186.2 hectares] or 15.7 % of the seigneries belonging to individuals [in 1663]. Among these individuals, there has been a slow but constant increase: in 1645, land belonging to bourgeois seigneurs comprised 5.7 %; eighteen years later, it was 15.7 %. The noble monopoly was seriously dented; seigneurie land ownership was no longer exclusive to the people of quality. See TRUDEL Marcel, *Les débuts du régime seigneurial au Canada*, Fides, 1974, page 61.

¹² Ibid., page 97.

HOME FOR THE RETIREMENT YEARS

In 1670, Zachary Cloutier having reached old age, sold his back fief to Nicholas Dupont. His wife and him went to live with one of their sons in Château-Richer.¹³

Zacharie died on September 17th, 1677 and was buried the next day at Château-Richer. He was 87 years old. His wife Sainte Dupont died on July 13th, 1680 at the age of about 84 years and she was buried the next day at the same place.

LIVING CONDITIONS AND LIFESTYLE

Life in many aspects was completely different in New France from what the immigrants were used to in their former country. Voltaire has written about this country of almost perpetual snow and ice. Rabelais has mentioned colds that would freeze the words at the mouth of the sailors, words that would only be heard in the spring when they would thaw out... These well-known and imaginative authors had unfortunately not come to see for themselves. More seriously, the Jesuit missionary Father Vimont wrote that the Canadian cold was healthier and more bearable than France's humidity. Also, Denis-Joseph Ruelle, Sieur d'Auteuil who lived in Québec city for about 20 years praised the economic usefulness of the snow and the ice for forest exploitation and for communications. In winter, the ice provides bridges on rivers and lakes and the snow allows an ox or a horse to pull loads four times larger than in summer. Still, the French settlers had to make important changes to their ways and habits to adjust to their new country.

The houses

The houses resembled those of France, but the slope of the roofs was increased to avoid snow accumulation in winter. The craftsmen could do well using wood but stone, in spite of its higher cost was mostly used because of fire danger from ever-present fireplaces, oil lamps and candles. Insulation was improved.

The furniture

The first settlers "brought only clothes in a trunk. It was impossible except for persons of quality to bring the furniture they owned in France. However, the Governors, the Church people, high-ranking civil servants and the ladies founders of hospitals and of convents

¹³ There is a house in Château-Richer known today as the Cloutier Ancestral House even if it seems that Zacharie never resided in it. This house was built in 1642 and was occupied continuously by Cloutiers from 1676 to 1965. It is located at 8910 Avenue-Royale. It is in beautiful shape after a meticulous and authentic restoration. When we visited it in 1981, it was superbly furnished with antique furniture. See CLOUTHIER, Raoul, *L'ancêtre Zacharie Cloutier (1590-1677) natif de Mortagne-au-Perche, France et la lignée canadienne de Raoul Clouthier*, 1973, pages 132 à 136.

brought furniture, such as chests and liturgical objects that could not be built here because of lack of qualified craftsmen or because they were too busy building houses.”¹⁴ The first furniture built here was very practical, simple and made of local wood. They were mostly trunks, chests, cupboards, sideboards, dressers, breadboxes, kneading troughs, pantries, beds, seats of all kind, tables, desks, chests of drawers, etc, in other words, furniture of first necessity.

The clothing

The settlers rapidly changed their choice of clothing to integrate what they learned from the Indians. Because of the rigors of winter, the European clothes were ill suited and also uneconomical. In fact, it was much cheaper to make clothes here with local products than to bring them in from overseas. Mittens and mocassins were adopted by the *coureurs des bois* and soon the settlers did the same. This way, the settlers adopted deer, moose, and bear or caribou leather. They also wove linen and hemp when local wool was rare. During the summers, the French getups were ridiculously hot especially during heat waves. The farmers and even their wives learned to work in the fields in their undershirts much to the despair of certain good souls easily shocked.

The food

The first French explorers tried to survive through winters eating biscuits and peas¹⁵. The ravages of scurvy convinced them that more appropriate food was needed along with clothing and heating to face the long cold. The first settlers discovered caribous, deers, porcupines, rabbits and beavers. And the fowls and the fish. They appreciated the cucumbers as a dessert. Potatoes were avoided however and were eaten only during shortages because they “were not food fit for human consumption.”¹⁶ Potatoes only became popular with the consumers and the growers with the help of the British after 1760. Added to that were all the local fruits of the forests and the meadows. Almost each home came to have a vegetable garden to provide diversified fresh food for the family. The woman of the house was the master of the vegetable garden.¹⁷

¹⁴ PALARDY, Jean, *Les meubles anciens du Canada Français*, Pierre Tisseyre, Montréal, 1963, page 16.

¹⁵ At that time, biscuits and peas were the main foods served on ships for long trips at sea. The lack of vitamins provided only by fresh food contributed to sickness including scurvy.

¹⁶ In a letter by Mother Marie Duplessis de Sainte-Hélène, Mother Superior of L'Hôtel-Dieu of Québec, October 17th, 1737.

¹⁷ PROVENCHER, Jean, *Les quatre saisons dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent*, Éditions du Boréal, Montréal, 1988, page 115.

The alcoholic drinks

At the beginning, brandy, wine and liqueurs were imported. But soon, local beer was produced and “bouillon” made from wheat or corn.

Lent

The new Canadians lived by the Church rules¹⁸. They abstained from meat and milk derivatives each and every Friday and Saturday of the year, plus during the forty days of Lent and during nine other fasting days preceding certain religious feasts. And they did not have much choice. For instance, Louis Gaboury a farmer living on Île d'Orléans was denounced by a neighbor (Étienne Beaufile) for not having obeyed the rules of Lent. Without further proof, the seigniorial tribunal condemned him to “pay one cow and a year's production of it to his denouncer; further, to be tied to a public post during three hours and then, to be taken in front of the parish chapel where kneeling, joined hands, bare headed, to ask forgiveness from God, the King and Justice for having eaten meat during Lent without obtaining first permission of the Church; on top of that, to pay a fine of 20 livres given to the charities of the Parish and to incur the costs.”^{19 and 20} Food for thoughts!

The neighbors

As in some regions of France, here in the countryside of the colony, the neighbor was almost like family. There was exchange of help regularly; tools, carts and horses were lent. A man would go to get the parish priest with his best horse for a dying neighbor. At a wedding, the two adjoining neighbor families were invited, as were the relatives. And of course, many marriages were between neighbors. When bread was baked, one loaf was put aside as “the neighbor's loaf”.²¹

ORIGIN OF THE DUPONT FAMILY

Little is known of Sainte Dupont and nothing of her family, only that she was a widow when she married our ancestor Zacharie Cloutier and that she was from Mortagne. Her first husband was Michel Lermusier from Feing in Perche (Orne).

¹⁸ The non-Catholics who landed to stay had to immediately abjure their religion and become Catholic. If not, they had to return on the next ship leaving. Many newcomers have thus lived through an “instantaneous conversion”.

¹⁹ DOUVILLE, R. et CASANOVA, J.-D, *La vie quotidienne en Nouvelle-France*, pages 70 et 71.

²⁰ PROVENCHER Jean, *Les quatre saisons dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent*, Boréal, 1988, page 478.

²¹ PROVENCHER Jean, *Les quatre saisons dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent*, Boréal, 1988, page 27.

THE CHILDREN OF ZACHARIE CLOUTIER AND SAINTE DUPONT:

- **Zacharie II:** baptized on August 16th, 1617 in Mortagne. See the details in text “Generation 2”.
- **Jean:** baptized May 13th, 1620 at Mortagne, he married Marie Martin, the daughter of Abraham Martin dit l'Écossais²² and of Marguerite Langlois, on January 21st, 1648 in Québec city. They had fourteen children of which ten married. Jean was a carpenter. He died on October 16th, 1690 at Château-Richer as did his wife on April 25th, 1699.
- **Sainte:** baptized on November 22nd, 1622 in Mortagne, she died in France at age 10.
- **Anne:** baptized on January 19th, 1626 in Mortagne, she was only eleven and a half when she married Robert Drouin on July 12th, 1637 in Québec city. They had signed a marriage contract a year before on July 26th, 1636 in the house of the Seigneur Robert Giffard. Jean Guyon acting as a private notary wrote the contract. Robert Drouin was 28 years old at the time. Living together would be out of question for a while because of Anne's young age. However, eligible women were so rare that Drouin did not want to risk not finding a wife. The contract stipulated that the spouses would spend the first three years of their married life under Zacharie's roof. On the other hand, Zacharie and Sainte agreed to feed them during that time. This was the first notarized act in Canada. Anne carried child six times and gave birth for the first time at age 15; three of her babies were stillborn. She died at age 22 on February 4th, 1648 and was buried the next day in Québec city. Robert Drouin married again with the widow Marie Chapelier on November 29th, 1649 in Québec city and they had eight other children. He died in Château-Richer on June 1st, 1685.
- **Charles:** baptized in Mortagne on May 3rd, 1629, he married Louise Morin, daughter of Noël Morin and of Hélène Desportes on April 20th, 1659 in Québec city. They had thirteen children of which nine married. As his father and brother Jean, he was a carpenter. Charles died on June 5th, 1709 and Louise died on April 28th, 1713, both in Château-Richer.
- **Louise:** baptized on March 18th, 1632 in Mortagne, she was the strong woman of the family. She married three times, first and quite young to François Marguerie, son of François Marguerie and of Marthe Romain of Normandie, on October 26th, 1645. He was one of the first coureurs des bois of the colony, then became an interpreter due to his knowledge of the Indian languages and later was a clerk in Trois-Rivières. He drowned in the St. Lawrence River near Trois-Rivières in June of 1648 and his body was found near Québec city a month later. He left no children. Louise married again on the 10th November of the same year²³, in Québec city to Jean Mignault, son of Nicolas Mignault and of Madeleine de Brie, of Paris.

²² The Plains of Abraham Park in Québec city is named after this Abraham Martin.

²³ At that time, widows remarried very soon because without a husband they often had revenues. Further, there was a high demand for available women because they were very few of them. Therefore, the mourning period was shortened to the minimum acceptable by the proprieties of the time.

Jean was a soldier and a tailor. They had thirteen children including son Jean-Aubin who settled in Acadia where he married Anne Dugas. Many of their descendants ended up in Québec after the 1755 Deportation. Jean died before the 1681 Census. Louise married again in Château-Richer on February 2nd 1684 to widower Jean Mataut. She died on January 22nd, 1699 in Château-Richer and Mataut followed at the same place on February 10th, 1706.

ANECDOTES²⁴

- A Seigneur was required to “pay faith and homage” to the Intendant when he took possession of his fief. And in turn, the Seigneurs of back fiefs were required to pay faith and homage to their Seigneur. However, after taking possession of their back fief in 1637, Zacharie Cloutier and Jean Guyon neglected to do so. On August 29th, 1645, Robert Giffard reminded Cloutier and Guyon of their obligation but it fell on deaf ears. Giffard appealed to the Governor in 1646. Governor Charles Huault de Montmagny ruled in favor of Giffard and the latter enjoined his vassals again. They finally complied “when the Seigneur was absent from his manor”...
- The holders of a fief were also required to present a written “*aveu et dénombrement*”²⁵ about their fief. Cloutier and Guyon were being difficult again in 1659 by refusing to comply. It took another judgment from the Governor for them to carry their duty.

²⁴ TRUDEL Marcel, *Les débuts du régime seigneurial au Canada*, Fides, 1974, pages 42 et 43.