

**The following is an exchange of comments from the Quebec-Research Rootsweb list in November 2012. The original dialog can still be read in the archives of this Rootsweb list.**

*From:* "Desjardins Bertrand" <[bertrand.desjardins@umontreal.ca](mailto:bertrand.desjardins@umontreal.ca)>  
*Subject:* [Q-R] RE : Agathe Lacelle and descent from Native Americans  
*Date:* Sun, 25 Nov 2012 09:27:27 -0500  
*References:* <1353844728.36043.YahooMailClassic@web182206.mail.bf1.yahoo.com>

Excellent post, Suzanne. Thank you.

> From someone who regularly has to answer inquiries about presumed and highly desired Native American ancestry...

Bertrand Desjardins  
PRDH

----- Message d'origine-----

De: [quebec-research-bounces@rootsweb.com](mailto:quebec-research-bounces@rootsweb.com) de la part de Suzanne Sommerville

Date: dim. 2012-11-25 06:58

À: [quebec-research@rootsweb.com](mailto:quebec-research@rootsweb.com)

Objet : Re: [Q-R] Agathe Lacelle and descent from Native Americans

The web and some published books (even by historians who should know better) are filled with allegations of Native American descent for French Canadians who actually have documented ancestry back to France. These are opinions based on ignorance, guesses, the "oral" tradition and a desire to have an Indian ancestor, and an inability (or laziness or unwillingness) to read the French documents accurately. When asked for proof, those unconvinced by documents say they just know they are right because it has to be that way since the descendants had such close ties with Native Americans, even being given names that are Native American.

What they do not have is any substantive awareness of the history of New France. They tend to transfer the prejudice and discrimination Native Americans experienced under the British and Americans back into the French period and maintain such descendants had to "hide" their origins and everyone was in on the deception, including the priests who entered baptisms and marriages with falsehoods. A strong anti-Catholic prejudice also tends to run through these discussions.

When they are told **New France authorities encouraged marriages between Frenchmen and converted Indian women** {my addition of bold text}, even offering those women dowries if they married, they refuse to believe it, although the source documents are provided. In New France, it was more important to be Catholic than to be of any ethnic or national group (a different kind of discrimination, I grant you). No society is perfect. Not many Native women accepted the plan even with a dowry, so the program was phased out by the late 1680s, but it was offered. Here are a few references from the colonial correspondence:

Digital images of these handwritten documents can be found at Library and Archives Canada on the web. I give my translations of the summaries provided by LAC that use the more modern word "Indiennes" for female plural "sauvageses".

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1681, novembre, 13 / Québec

Lettre de Duchesneau au ministre

Proposes to give some small presents to the domiciled Indians to attract them in greater number, and to allot a small fund to give dowries to female Indians who leave the Ursulines {an order of nuns who taught

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<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/index/QUEBEC-RESEARCH/2012-11>

Indians as well as French} in order to allow them to marry

1684, avril, 10

Lettre du roi à La Barre

le fonds des mariages des Indiennes pourra servir aux mariages des Françaises: préférence à accorder aux Indiennes;

The fund for marriages of female Indians could be used for marriages of French women; **preference is to give them to the Indian women.**

1685, février / Versailles

"Extrait des réponses aux lettres reçues de Canada" folio 191v

A fund established of 1000 livres for those who show female Indians how to work; encourage marriages between these women and Frenchmen

1686, mai, 20

"Extrait des réponses du ministre aux lettres reçues du Canada pendant la présente année 1686"

Gift of 300 livres to allow six female Indians to marry

I'm sure there are other references because I have read them.

As I said, this current wave of allegations is a syndrome that rational discussion will not cure because these people have already made up their minds that there was deep-seated prejudice against French and Native Americans marrying or having children. They do not know that the child of a French person and a Native American became a citizen of the French nation (or they object to this fact, believing that Native Americans should have preserved their own culture and religion and never chosen anything else). As French citizens these descendants were entitled to inherit from the parents. I can cite many examples of the documents demonstrating this, including those for a daughter of my one Algonquin ancestress, Marie Mitéamegké, who married Pierre Couc dit Lafleur de Cognac at Trois-Rivières in 1657.

If I may be permitted to refer to a modern political example, this current inability by some to accept documentary evidence resembles the "birthers" in the President Obama birth certificate controversy.

Suzanne

**[Original request:]**

Message: 12

Date: Sat, 24 Nov 2012 18:24:26 -0500

From: Fran LaChance <[singer.35@hotmail.com](mailto:singer.35@hotmail.com)>

Subject: [Q-R] Agathe Lacelle

To: QUEBEC-RESEARCH-L <[QUEBEC-RESEARCH-L@rootsweb.com](mailto:QUEBEC-RESEARCH-L@rootsweb.com)>

Message-ID: <[BLU0-SMTP118624FB9163548080BFA1DE3590@phx.gbl](mailto:BLU0-SMTP118624FB9163548080BFA1DE3590@phx.gbl)>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="ISO-8859-1"; format=flowed

Hi All,

Need help with this person. Agathe Lacelle d/o Jacques Lacelle & Angélique Gibeau dit Poitevin was baptised 31 Mar 1709 at Montreal. He was a voyageur who made several journeys in the Detroit River Region. I have seen websites who name her as a Metis of 1/2 Iroquois blood. She married Hyacinthe Reaume in Montreal and they moved to the Detroit River area in the 1700's, where she died in 1778. I'm pretty sure I have followed all lines back to France so am curious if anyone else has seen documentation on proof of her Metis ancestry.

Any help appreciated

Fran L

[One reply to original request:]

Message: 14

Date: Sat, 24 Nov 2012 20:34:10 -0500

From: "Renee Cummings" <[rcummi1123@rogers.com](mailto:rcummi1123@rogers.com)>

Subject: Re: [Q-R] Agathe Lacelle

To: <[singer.35@hotmail.com](mailto:singer.35@hotmail.com)>, "QUEBEC-RESEARCH-L"

<[QUEBEC-RESEARCH-L@rootsweb.com](mailto:QUEBEC-RESEARCH-L@rootsweb.com)>

Message-ID: <[8F0BFAE81C2949748714CBFA0218D9B8@reneePC](mailto:8F0BFAE81C2949748714CBFA0218D9B8@reneePC)>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

Hi Fran

Jacques Lacelle & Angelique Gibeau are my 5th Great grandparents. I have the line back to France and didn't find any Iroquois blood in it.

Here is what I have on Agathe

RAB du PRDH Baptism No. 43470

Montr?al1709-03-31Birth : 1709-03-31

RankNameAgeMSPGender

01AGATHE DELASELLE--SPF

02JACQUES DELASELLE Father of 01 Spouse of 03 Occupation : MENUISIER--MPM

03ANGELIQUE GIBBAU Mother of 01 Spouse of 02--MPF

04JACQUES LEBER DESENEVILLE Occupation : ECUYER----PM

05MARIE CATHERINE LEGARDEUR DEREPIENTIGNY----PF

06PRIAT Occupation : VICAIRES--SPM

[Note: this next item appears to be taken from the work of Gail Moreau-DesHarnais's series of articles entitled "People Buried from Ste. Anne de Detroit" Published in *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*, Vol. 32, #1, January 2011.]

buried in church Agathe Laselle, daughter of Jacques Lacelle, master joiner from the parish of Notre Dame in the city of Montreal, and of Agathe [Ang?lique] Gibault, widow of Hyacinthe Reyaume, a former church warden of this parish, a bourgeois merchant of this city, lived on the rue Saint Louis; [no age given], 19 July 1778, buried in church in Detroit

Union 1727-11-17 Montr?al REAUME HYACINTHE & LASELLE AGATHE PRDH

RAB du PRDH Marriage No.48581

Montr?al1727-11-17

RankNameAgeMSPGender

01HYACINTHE REAUME 23 yearsSPM

02AGATHE LASELLE 18 yearsSPF

03ROBERT REAUME Father of 01 ----M

04ELISABETH BRUNET Mother of 01 ----F

05JACQUES LASELLE Father of 02 ----PM

06ANGELIQUE GIBEAUX Mother of 02 ----PF

07JACQUES LASELLE Brother of 02 ----PM

08JEAN BAPTISTE LACHAPELLE----PM

09J G DULESCOAT Occupation : PRETRE DU SEMINAIRE ST-SULPICE,

FAISANT LES FONCTIONS CURIALES Residence : VILLE-MARIE--SPM

DISPENSE DE DEUX BANS

Good luck  
Renee  
End of this part of the thread =====

PRDH stands for *Programme de recherche en démographie historique de l'Université de Montréal online* (Program of research in historical demographie) at [www.genealogy.umontreal.ca](http://www.genealogy.umontreal.ca).

The above is copied as it currently appears on the archives of the Quebec-Research Rootsweb list, complete with a few typos but with bolding and my additions in curly brackets { }. Although the examples from the colonial correspondence I cited are from the period shortly after the recruitment of the *Filles du Roi* / Daughters of the King that ended in 1673, I know of no document from the 1663-1673, period when the *Filles du Roi* agreed to take part in this program, that even remotely suggests that they descended from female Indians from North America who had been “kidnapped,” or otherwise transported, to France at an earlier time. Those who declare that the absence of parents’ names for some of these women must indicate a Native American origin just do not understand how fortunate researchers in New France genealogy are to have such an abundance of surviving documents and that even some of these have been lost by fire, flood, war, and even insect damage. It is a rarity in the world that so many HAVE survived. What is more, since many of the *Filles du Roi* had lost one or both of their parents, most likely at an early age, and were living in orphanages at the time of their departure from France, it is not surprising that they may have had little or no knowledge of their parents’ names. The destruction of records, particularly in Paris, from which a number of these women traveled, means these facts will most likely never be known.

As for the issue of mtDNA, I am confident that this scientific investigation of the deep origins in time of maternal ancestry are just that: **deep origins** that go back tens of thousands of years and not to the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, or 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville  
7 January 2014  
for the French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan Facebook