

“But I read it...”: When and where were the two “Catherine Viens” buried?

(Fill in the blank: _____)

- A. in Tanguay; B. in Jetté; C. in Denissen, D. on PRDH; E. on the Internet;
F. in more than one of the above; G. in none of the above; **H. in Michigan's Habitant Heritage**
Suzanne Boivin Sommerville, FCHSM member (s.sommerville@sbcglobal.net)

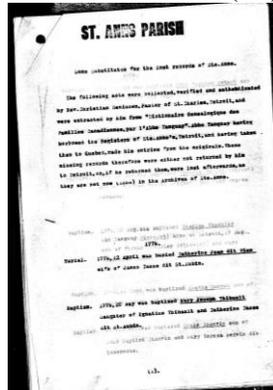
The following transcription of the burial of a woman named *Catherine Vien* appeared in *Michigan's Habitant Heritage* in January 2011. Gail Moreau-DesHarnais's “People Buried from Ste. Anne de Detroit (1776-1787): Part IV” includes a burial record for:

***Catherine Vien, wife of Jacque Casse dit St. Aubin [no further information is given]¹**

It was preceded by an explanation concerning the source document, the original register of Ste. Anne de Detroit, which, at this point in the sequence of entries, Gail reports, has

... seven acts that have only the names of the baptized or deceased given. The last date written is 11 May 1778 [1779?]; the next date written is 20 May 1779. [An asterisk is in front of each entry for which only the name was written.]

The first entry following this explanation was, as indicated above: “*Catherine Vien, wife of Jacque Casse dit St. Aubin [no further information is given]” and I emphasize, **no further information** is given on the original record. Footnote 12 for this item added these details: “1779, 12 April was buried Catherine Jean dit Vien, wife of James {sic} [Jacques] Casse dit St. Aubin.” This latter sentence is not on the original register but in a typewritten entry (there were no typewriters in 1779!) that can be viewed on the same digital version of the Drouin microfilm of the Ste. Anne de Detroit original registers. It is identified by Ancestry.ca as Early US Catholic French Church Records (Drouin Collection) Detroit, Ste-Anne, **1702-1780** (sic), image 3 of 238, with the label **ST. ANN'S** (sic) **PARISH** stamped on the paper.



¹ *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*, 32:1, Jan 2011, 17. Footnote 12 added these details:

“1779, 12 April was buried Catherine Jean dit Vien, wife of James [Jacques] Casse dit St. Aubin.” {Typewritten message} “{Heading} Some substitutes for the lost records of Ste. Anne. {Body of the message} The following acts were collected, verified and authenticated by **Rev. Christian Denissen**, Pastor of St. Charles, Detroit, and were extracted by him from ‘Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes, par l’Abbe Tanguay.’ Abbe Tanguay having borrowed the Registers of Ste. Anne’s, Detroit, and having taken them to Quebec, made his entries from the originals. These missing records therefore were either not returned by him to Detroit, or, if he returned them, were lost afterwards, as they are not now (**1898**) in the Archives of Ste. Anne.” [www.ancestry.com, Early US Catholic French Church Records (Drouin Collection) Detroit, Ste-Anne, 1702-1780, image 3 of 238.

{Author’s comment: Words in bold and items in curly brackets added by the present author. The use of the English name James instead of French *Jacques* is characteristic of Fr. Denissen and his associate, Clarence Burton.}

I reproduce the image of the page here to demonstrate that it is, indeed typewritten, but see footnote 1 of this article for the message that comes before the note dating the burial of this Catherine Vien on "1779, 12 April," a precise day not found on the original record. This note is the first of a series of entries typed on this page and the following pages, continuing to image 15 on the digital version.

After reading the transcribed burial entry, FCHSM member Patricia Lafayette sent me the following e-mail message on 14 April 2011:

Page 17 of Vol. 32 #1 Jan. 2011 The wife of Jacques Sauvage is the daughter of Vivien Jean dit Vien and Catherine Gateau. The wife of Jacques Casse dit St. Aubin is her niece, also named Marie Catherine Jean dite Vien, but she is the daughter of Ignace, the son of Vivian, and his wife Angelique Dandonneau.²

Thus, Patricia Lafayette reminds us that there were two women known as *Catherine Vien* who lived and died in Detroit. Last October, in Part III of Gail Moreau-DesHarnais's series of articles on the burials from Ste. Anne de Detroit, Gail had included the following entry for the burial, in 1767, of the other "Catherine Vien":

Catherine Vien, widow of Jacques Sauvage, in a first marriage; **widow of Pierre Godefroy**, *sieur de Vieux Point Roctailade*, in a second marriage; daughter of ... [left blank by priest]; [no day given] **June 1767**, buried in the church, *Chapelle de Sainte Antoine*³

Gail then included a footnote that added information not provided in the details recorded in the actual burial entry: "Catherine Vien was the daughter of Vivien Jean *dit* Vien and Catherine Gateau [Jetté, 595] [PRDH #3839]." Gail has been careful to begin each installment of her extractions of burials with this statement:

Names are as written in the original parish register. Additional material, in brackets, is the transcriber's comments. The dates given are burial dates. In several of the following records, the information recorded by the presiding priest is incorrect. For several of these entries, corrections and additional information are noted in a footnote. [Underlining by this author.]

This is exactly what she did for the 1767 burial record of Catherine Vien, wife of *Jacques Sauvage*, in Part III. The original Ste. Anne de Detroit burial record did not include the names of this Catherine's parents, only the names of her two husbands. Readers of this series of articles must understand that, far too often, transcribers add details in such a way that it appears the source document contains that precise information.⁴ Gail did not, however, provide additional details in Part IV for the 1779 burial record of Catherine Vien, wife of *Jacque Casse dit St. Aubin*. What is at issue here is not an error but an omission

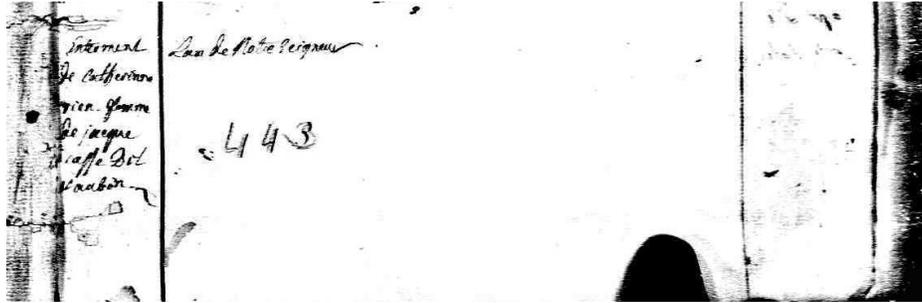
² E-mail from "Patricia Lafayette" plafayette@webtv.net To: "Suzanne Sommerville" s.sommerville@sbcglobal.net 4/14/2011, as written.

³ *MHH*, 31:4, Oct 2010, 208 and footnote 8. Bolding and underlining added by me. PRDH also records this burial date at Ste. Anne de Detroit, Individual #24733, and gives her the names MARIE CATHERINE JEAN VIENS.

⁴ For example, see Marthe Faribault-Beauregard, *La population des forts français d'Amérique* (XVIII^e siècle). Montréal: Éditions Bergeron. Tome 1, 1982; Tome 2, 1984. This French-language compilation of data organizes the baptisms, marriages, and burials in alphabetical order under each of these categories for each "fort" and standardizes some spellings. The sequence of events is thus lost. Note: she admits in her introduction that she enhanced the original records by adding her interpretation of the identity of some individuals, based on her research, but she does not indicate when she does this and she does not cite her sources. She is nevertheless a valuable secondary resource.

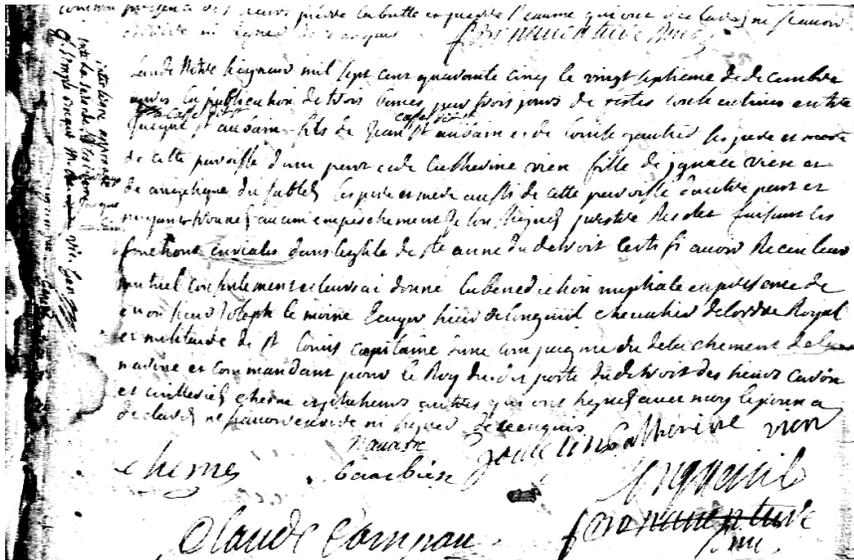
of details that can be found only in other sources. Thanks to Patricia Lafayette's reminder, the details to further identify this "Catherine Vien" are given here and are, in fact, a part of Gail's master list of the burials from Ste. Anne de Detroit.

The "Catherine Vien" buried from Ste. Anne de Detroit in 1779 is identified only as the wife of *Jacque Casse dit St. Aubin* in the incomplete register entry reproduced here:



Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954 D > Détroit, Ste-Anne > 1702-1780 >⁵
Image 232 of 238. Margin: *Enterment de catherine vien femme de jacque casse Dit st aubin.*
Main entry area contains only « Lan de Notre seigneur » (In the year of Our Lord), and the number 443.

Although this entry does not record a precise date for the burial or names for the parents of the wife of Jacques Casse *dit St. Aubin*, their marriage is recorded at Ste. Anne de Detroit:



Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954 D > Détroit, Ste-Anne > 1702-1780,
image 22 of 238, p. 10 of original register, 27 December 1745 marriage of
Jacques S' aubain and catherine vien, daughter of ignace vien and of angelique du sables

⁵ Image from Ancestry.ca. The portion identified as Détroit, Ste-Anne > 1702-1780 has original images from 1744 to 1779 despite its misleading title of 1702-1780. The early images of this reel of Drouin microfilms include the typewritten pages of the records mentioned in footnote 1 above, the so-called "additions" Fr. Denissen made based on Tanguay's dictionary for "missing" records allegedly carried off by Tanguay. These typewritten pages end at image 15, with image 16 an original record from 1744, not 1702. Why the editors of the Drouin microfilms dated this segment 1702 to 1780 will never be known.

This *angelique du sables* is Angélique Dandonneau dite Dusables. And her second husband, identified here as *ignace vien*, descends from Vivien **Jean**, dit Viens and dit Vivien. This is how PRDH presents the information for the original colonist:

VIVIEN **JEAN** VIENS VIVIEN⁶ [**JEAN** is the original last name. *Viens*, *Vivien*, and, at Ste. Anne de Detroit, *Vien*, are other names used by the family.] Status(es) : Immigrant

Father: VIVIEN JEAN

Mother: SUZANNE HERAULT

Baptism: 1648-10-18 st-vivien d'ecoyeux, ev. saintes, saintonge (ar. saintes, charente-maritime)

Burial: 1703-08-06 Québec

First marriage: 1671-11-29 Québec

with

CATHERINE GATEAU

Father : ODART OUDART GATEAU

Mother : GENEVIEVE DOUCET

[Family] VIVIEN **JEAN** VIENS VIVIEN⁷

and CATHERINE GATEAU

Burial: 1726-04-21 Champlain

Father: ODART OUDART GATEAU

Mother: GENEVIEVE DOUCET

Marriage: 1671-11-29 Québec

Children married before 1800: [Only the two children who lived in Detroit are included here]

Sex Date of marriage First name of the child

Place of marriage Name of the spouse

m 1710-02-02 **IGNACE IGNACE**

[**Jean** was the original last name, but **this Ignace Jean** married as *Ignace Ignace*.]

Montréal [Couple] **ANGELIQUE DANDONNEAU DUSABLE LAJEUNESSE**

f 1690-01-10 **MARIE CATHERINE** [Catherine married under the last name Jean.]

Champlain [Couple] **JACQUES SAUVAGE**

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Catherine, the daughter of Ignace Jean dit Ignace (& dit Viens, etc.) and Angélique Dandonneau dite Dusable (& dite Du Sablé, etc.), is listed by Jetté⁸ but does not, however, appear on PRDH, which shows only their son **Constant** Vien and his 1738 marriage in Lachine to Marie Angélique Riberville.

[Family] of **IGNACE IGNACE JEAN VIENS VIVIEN**⁹

Father: VIVIEN JEAN VIENS VIVIEN

Mother: CATHERINE GATEAU

and **ANGELIQUE DANDONNEAU DUSABLE LAJEUNESSE** [Dandonneau was the original last name, another example of an individual known by more than one *dit* name, with the original last name disappearing entirely at Detroit!]

Father: LOUIS DANDONNEAU DUSABLE LAJEUNESSE

Mother: MARIE MARGUERITE JEANNE LENOIR

Previous marriage with CHARLES CHABOYER

Marriage: 1710-02-02 Montréal

Children married before 1800:

Sex Date of marriage First name of the child

Place of marriage Name of the spouse

m 1738-04-14 **CONSTANT**

Lachine [Couple] **MARIE ANGELIQUE RIBERVILLE**

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⁶ PRDH Individual #35046.

⁷ PRDH Couple #3839.

⁸ René Jetté, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec* (Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal: 1983) 596, 9th child: "Catherine Angélique, b 05-06-1726 Michillimakinac." As Jetté does not include records after 1730, he could not have included the marriages of Constant and of Catherine.

⁹ PRDH Couple #10580.

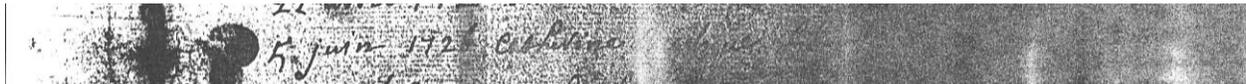
Constant married with the last name Vien, and is identified on his 1738 marriage record as being from the *poste de Michillimackinac*.¹⁰ He was indeed baptized there; and, it seems, his sister *Catherine* was also, but under the name ***Catherine Angelique***. Both are documented in the surviving partial transcription of baptisms from another, older register that no longer exists. Ancestry presents these records in two separate transcriptions:

- 1) Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954 M > Makinac, Ste-Anne; Copie Wisconsin Historical > 1695-1821, the published English language transcription; and
- 2) M > Makinac, Ste-Anne > 1695-1799 >, a handwritten transcription in French.

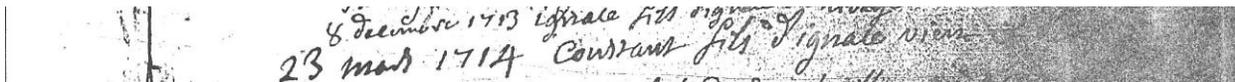
At image 2 of the Wisconsin Historical Society publication, the transcriber wrote: “23 March 1714 coussant [*sic*], son of ignace vieu [*sic*] and angélique du Sable,” and “5 June 1726 Catherine Angelique daughter of Ignace vieu [*sic*] etc.” It is common for transcribers to see a /u/ when it is really an /n/.

The handwritten nineteenth-century transcription in French at M > Makinac, Ste-Anne > 1695-1799 >, image 2, records the first name of the *23 mars 1714* entry as ***constant*** and last names of the parents as ***vien*** and ***du sable***; image 3 shows for *5 juin 1726*, “***Catherine Angelique, fille de Ignace vien et***”¹¹

I consulted my copy of the surviving “original” transcription-from-an-earlier-now-missing register, as it appears on the Family History Library microfilm #0865224. The page is very hard to read on the right, but I can make out *5 juin 1726* and the name ***Catherine Angelique fille***.



The record for Constant is somewhat clearer: *23 mars 1714 Constant fils d'ignace vient...*



Gail Moreau-DesHarnais’s work on the burials from Ste. Anne de Detroit is truly valuable scholarship. She has found details about individuals who were believed to have simply dropped off the map. The more attention to records such as these that have generally been neglected, the more we learn about our ancestors’ lives. Filling in those frustrating gaps in information is, however, a continual process, and researchers have to understand the sources for the details provided. Thank you, Gail, for enriching our understanding.

¹⁰ PRDH #115948 Lachine 1738-04-14

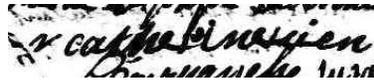
¹¹ The same image 2 includes another member of the family: *17 mai 1721 Louis Therese [sic], fils [son] of ignace vien, mort au detroit 1743* (died at Detroit 1743). From Part I of Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, “People Buried at Ste. Anne de Detroit,” *MHH*, 31:2, Apr 2010, 99: “Louis Vient, 22-½ years, 7 September 1743, buried in cemetery”. This burial can now be updated with Louis’s baptism record. I am delighted to see the precision of his age given on this entry. Far too often, ages provided for burial records are notoriously inaccurate. One more comment on this baptism record copied from another register that no longer exists: This transcription had to have been made in or after May 1743 for the notation of Louis’s death at Detroit to have been recorded. Other records in this same section and in the separate list of early marriages at Michilimackinac have similar additional details that could not have been known at the time of the actual religious act.

The Catherine Vien buried 232 years ago in 1779 was not only wife of Jacques Casse *dit* St. Aubin but also daughter of Ignace Jean *dit* Vien and his wife, Angélique Dandonneau *dite* Dusable, and also niece of an aunt who bore the same name, Catherine Vien, sister of Ignace, wife of Jacques Sauvage (whom she married with the name Catherine Jean)¹² and then wife of *Pierre de Vieux Pont Rocquetaliade*. I close this article by reproducing the 1745¹³ signature of Catherine Vien on the day of her marriage to Jacques Casse *dit* St. Aubin:



Catherine vien

Twenty-one years earlier, in 1724,¹⁴ *Pierre de Vieux Pont Rocquetaliade*, son of *sieur Joseph Vieux pont de Godefroy* (another family with a litany of also-known-as names!) had married the widow of Jacques Sauvage, Catherine Vien, who, like her niece, also signed:



v [for *veuve*, widow?] *catherinevien*:

It is tempting to imagine the aunt teaching her niece how to sign her name; but, we will never know! The miracle is that we can, with patient and careful study, know so much about their lives, even though their adoption and use of multiple names can truly lead us on a sometimes frustrating but also rewarding chase!

¹² Familysearch.org, Quebec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1900, Champlain, Notre-Dame-de-La-Visitation-de-Champlain, 1679-1790, Image 102 of 1059, marriage 10 January 1690 of Jacques Sauvage & Catherine Jean.

¹³ Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954 D > Détroit, Ste-Anne > 1702-1780, image 22 of 238, p. 10 of original register, 27 December 1745 marriage of *Jacques S' aubain* and *catherine vien*, daughter of *ignace vien* and of *angelique du sables*.

¹⁴ Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954 D > Détroit, Ste-Anne; Autres Registres > 1704-1744 > image 95 of 198, 4 August 1724 marriage of Catherine Vien, widow Jacques Sauvage, to Pierre de Vieux Pont Rocquetaliade.