

Estienne “sando dit major” at Hôtel-Dieu, the Hospital in Québec City
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Christian Palvadeau, in his article translated in this issue of *MHH*, reports:

Étienne Bontron was still in Franche-Comté in June of 1700; but, between 30 November 1702 and 10 October 1703, he was hospitalized several times at l’Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. At that time he borrowed the name of his mother because we find him called Étienne Sando [*sic*].¹ His entry into Hôtel-Dieu clearly coincided with an important outbreak of smallpox in Québec City. His departure from France must have taken place between June of 1700 and September of 1702.

Because of my commitment to examine original sources whenever I can, I decided to view Family History Library microfilm #1287129, which begins with *Hôtel-Dieu* hospital records for 1698, to see the actual entries.

This document records both the days of service for hospital employees and the length of time each patient stayed at *Hôtel-Dieu* in each month. The accounting, summarized for each month of the year, was necessary for the hospital to be reimbursed by the government of France, which subsidized the medical care. All entries begin with the day of the month on which an employee or patient “entered” the hospital for that month; then the name of the individual is given, and, for patients, their ages (most of the time) and their places of origin, not their current residences.² Thus, all of the patients who had been born or baptized outside of Québec City, even if they were currently residing there, were identified with their places of origin. Sometimes a line entry includes the fact that an employee left or a patient died. Other information is often given, for example, a woman identified by her maiden name is stated to be the wife or daughter of a named person. Each line entry then concludes with the number of days [*jours*] to be charged to the government. The entries in this section are all written by the same hand.

For 1702, references to what appear to be many men with origins in France start in September on the 25th. Troops deployed to the colony often arrived in that month, and Étienne Bontron *dit* Major could have been one of them. The entries for the month of September counted five individuals who died while at the hospital, with 1600 days [*jours*] of service offered by the hospital. October had no deaths but 1800 days [*jours*] of service, an increase of 200 days.

¹ Palvadeau cites information sent by PRÉFEN (Programme de Recherche sur l’Émigration des Français en Nouvelle-France) at Caen. [Footnote 32]

² I have verified that the “origin” given on a hospital entry is truly the place of birth of an individual, not his or her current residence. Present at the hospital in August of 1728: “le 5e **Jean vermet** de lile Dorleans paroisse de la Ste famille agé de 42 ans sorti le 11e jdem (6) p. 163.” Jean Vermet was born 16 and baptized 17 June 1685 at Ste.-Famille, Isle d’Orléans, thus his “origin” for this hospital record was the parish of his birth, not his current residence, which was Québec City in 1728, nor the places at which he had recently lived, Montréal or Boucherville, where his children had been baptized. Another entry for 1728 records: “le 16e **Marie Therese vermet** de Montreal agée de 14 ans sortie le 21e (5).” This is Jean Vermet’s daughter, baptized 1 June 1714 Montréal. Once again the origin given is her birth / baptism place. Yet another striking example of the meaning of the place name on the hospital entries is the recording at the hospital, in May of 1725, of Paris as “origin” for Agnès Olivier, 67, wife of “Civadier” (p. 79). She had married Louis Sivadier fifty-six years earlier in 1669 at Ste-Famille, Ile-d’Orléans, yet Paris is still the place cited on the hospital record. FHL #1287130 and René Jetté, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec*, Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1983.

Although the hospital entries do not identify the reasons for the care given to patients or the causes of deaths, smallpox is documented as one reason for much illness and many deaths in the colony in 1702-1703.³

Among those who were admitted to the hospital in 1702 and 1703, as indicated by Christian Palvadeau, was an *estienne sando dit major*, most probably Étienne Bontron *dit* Major, recently arrived as a soldier from France and using his mother's maiden name. The eight entries for this name are not, however, unambiguously clear, as an examination of them reveals. Did the original scribe, or the transcriber at a later date, err in recording the information now extant on the surviving document? Or, were there two "estiennes" from different origins in France? As with so many questions based on possibly flawed extant documents, we may never know with certainty. There seems to be no doubt, however, that one of these men is Étienne Bontron *dit* Major. See for yourself:

Date of entry	Number of days
November 1702	
In this month, 5 died, 1200 days [<i>journées</i>] of service	
30 <i>pierre estienne sando dit major agé de 25 ans de lion</i> [<i>sic</i> , Lyon] [entered on the 30 th , released on the 31 st]	1
December 1702	
In this month, 4 died, 1800 days [<i>journées</i>] of service	
5 <i>Estienne sando dit major agé de 35</i> [<i>sic</i>] <i>agé de 25 ans</i> [<i>sic</i>] de lion [<i>sic</i>]	22
[entered on the 5 th , 22 days, released on the 26 th]	
12 <i>Estienne sando dit major agé de 25 ans de Besanson</i> [<i>sic</i> , Besançon]	15
[entered on the 12 th , released on the 26 th]	
31 <i>Estienne sando agé de 19</i> [<i>sic</i>] <i>ans de Besanson</i> [<i>sic</i>]	1
[entered on the 31 st , stayed one day]	

For the months of November and December 1702, it appears as if at least two men with the name *Estienne Sando* received care at the hospital. This conclusion was reached because of (1) the discrepancies in their places of origin, Lyon and Besançon; (2) the overlap in the days they are recorded as present; and (3) their different ages at admission, although there is an obvious correction for the twenty-five-year-old man who entered the hospital on the 5th of December.

³ Demographic aspects of the 1702-1703 smallpox epidemic in the St-Lawrence valley (p. 49-67) Data compiled by the "Programme de recherche en démographie historique" of the Université de Montréal were used to number and characterize deaths within the population of European extraction from the 1702-1703 smallpox epidemic in the St-Lawrence valley. Between 6% and 6.5% of the settled population in the late fall of 1702 was eliminated by the disease; adding the death of an extra 25% of newborns, the epidemic's toll reached some 1,300. A significant proportion of adults died among the Canadian-born [emphasis mine] population, surpassing 10% for women of childbearing ages in particular. This proves that contrary to what most observers have written, smallpox was not prevalent among the non-native population during the 18th century. (CANADA, HISTORICAL DEMOGRAPHY, MORTALITY, SMALLPOX)

http://www.cicred.ined.fr/rdr/rdr_f/revues/revue89-90/08-89-90_a.html

Bertrand DESJARDINS, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Qué. (Canada) Thanks to Libby Quanstrom of the Quebec-Research Rootsweb list for calling my attention to this source.

January 1703

In this month 9 died, 2900 days [*journées*] of service, apparently the worst month at the hospital during the outbreak of smallpox, although no causes for death or illness are given. There is no further mention of *Estienne Sando* until:

April 1703

In this month, 4 died, 1100 days [*journées*] of service

25 *Estienne sando dit St Vincent* *agé de 25 de Besanson* [*sic*] 9 [*sic*]

[but the line above, for April 24, has

vincent acor dit St Vincent *agé de 20 ans*

de Normandie mort le 14 juin, died 14 June, and could be a copying error]

This patient appears to be the same man, age 25, from Besançon, with a possible error made by the writer, who seems to have made a mistake in the *dit* name.

May 1703

3 died, 1300 [*journées*]

22 *Estienne sando dit major* *agé de 25 ans de toulouse* [*sic*] 7

August 1703

5 died, 1600 [*journées*]

30 *Estienne sando dit major* *25 ans de lion* [*sic*] 2

October 1703

1 died, 1300 [*journées*]

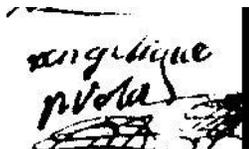
10 *Estienne sando dit major* *agé de 25 ans de Besanson* [*sic*] 20

Once again, this appears to be the same patient as the twenty-five-year-old recorded for December and April.

The origins of *Estienne sando dit major*, if he is the same man, change from Lyon to Besançon to Toulouse, and back to Besançon. Did more than one man use this name? Was conflicting information provided by one man using this name? Or did the person who made the entries or assembled the document as it now exists make mistakes? I repeat: As with so many questions based on possibly flawed extant documents, we may never know with certainty.

There seems to be no doubt, however, that one of these men could be Étienne Bontron *dit* Major, from Montussaint, Doubs, in the archdiocese of Besançon.

Not quite three years later, on 3 May 1706, at Québec City, he married Angélique Proteau⁴ after having a marriage contract drawn up the day before.⁵ Both Étienne and Angélique signed the contract.

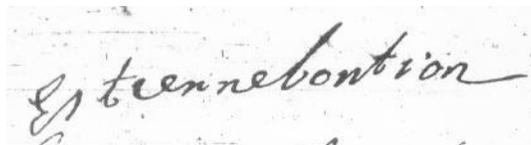


One month later, they joined Lamothe Cadillac's large convoy that left the mother colony in late June of 1706 and arrived at Fort Pontchartrain early in August. On 21 November 1706, on a baptismal record that

⁴ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique* (PRDH) Online and photocopy of the marriage.

⁵ 2 May 1706, Notary LaCetière

has no name entered for either the parents or the child (identified only as *filis*, a son), the godparents were Louis Normand, who signed, and my ancestress Angélique Proteau, who marked the record with a cross. For the baptism of their daughter Marie-Angélique the following year, on 5 July 1707, Étienne Bontron *dit* Major is identified as a *cy devant soldat*, former soldier, in the company of *La Forest*. He signed the record *Estienne bontron*.⁶



Thus, Étienne Bontron *dit* Major and his wife, Angélique Proteau, are definitely documented at Fort Pontchartrain in 1706 and 1707 and in other years. Their daughter Marguerite was baptized on 16 September 1709. They had intended at that time to become settlers, and Étienne had been granted a large parcel of land outside the fort in March of 1707. As things turned out, they decided to return to the mother colony, at the latest, in 1710,⁷ with two infant daughters. Étienne Bontron and Angélique Proteau had left Fort Pontchartrain by the date of their purchase of a habitation at St. Sulpice (Raimbault, père, 25 February 1711) from Martial Molineuf, cadet in the Troops of the Marine, who had served as a witness at the marriages of soldiers going to Detroit in 1706. The rest of their lives would be spent in the Montréal area, with an additional nine children born to them in the Montréal area (not ten, as Palvadeau says⁸). I descend from two of their children, Marguerite and Jean Baptiste.

However ill he may have been in 1702-03, Étienne Bontron *Major* survived another forty years. He was buried on 26 April 1743 in the *cimetière des pauvres* in Montréal, said to be 71. His burial in the paupers' cemetery should not be taken as a comment on his financial status, as some individuals chose to be buried there as an act of humility. According to PRDH, a **Marie Major**, most certainly Marie-Angélique Proteau, said to be 84, was buried on 6 June 1767, at Sault-au-Récollet, which is part of the island of Montréal on which her children had settled. Her descendants in Sault-au-Récollet also consistently used the name Major.⁹

Ah, what stories all of them might have told us of their experiences.

⁶ Registers of Ste-Anne de Détroit, microfilm of the originals, film #1252, reel #1, in the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, Main Branch, pages 9, 16, and 46, photocopies. See my articles on the women who traveled to Fort Pontchartrain between 1701 and 1706 in *MHH*, Oct., 2001; Jan. & Jul., 2002; Jan. & Apr., 2003. PRDH does not show daughter Marie Angélique Bontron in its list of Boutron [*sic*] children because, as Bertrand Desjardins explained: "In the site data base, we normally only list people who were the subject, parent of a subject or spouse of a subject of a B. M. or S. record." (Personal e-mail, 1 May 2006) Although Angélique Bontron does not fit these categories in the records of the mother colony, she definitely survived her birth at Fort Pontchartrain. She was present at her sister Marguerite's first marriage, to Denis Hardouin on 29 January 1732 (PRDH #110265), and also at her brother Joseph's marriage on 2 February 1733 (PRDH #119277), both events in St-Laurent on the island of Montréal. Her death record appears not to have survived.

⁷ All of the soldiers, except a few who deserted, and many of the habitants left the fort in 1710. Cadillac himself was assigned to serve in *Louisiane*, although he did not leave the fort to go to the mother colony until early to mid-1711.

⁸ L'Abbé Cyprian Tanguay, *Dictionnaire Généalogique des Familles Canadiennes*, Éditions Élysée, 1975 reprint in seven volumes, originally published **1871-1890**. Tanguay's Volume 2, p. 489, adds a child, Elie, to the *Boutron* family, with no baptism date, and marries him to Françoise Sedilot, with no marriage date. PRDH reports that an **Elie Major** is given as the deceased second husband of Marie Sedilote Montreuil [*sic*] at her marriage to Michel Cheneau on 16 May 1768 in Québec City. (PRDH #212169) It has no other data concerning Elie. Without any further documentation for an *Elie Bontron dit Major*, Tanguay's guess must be rejected, as must be his guess, also p. 489, about a remarriage for Angélique Proteau to a Pierre Germain in Québec City.

⁹ PRDH #152642, #368222, #84181, and photocopies of the relevant acts.