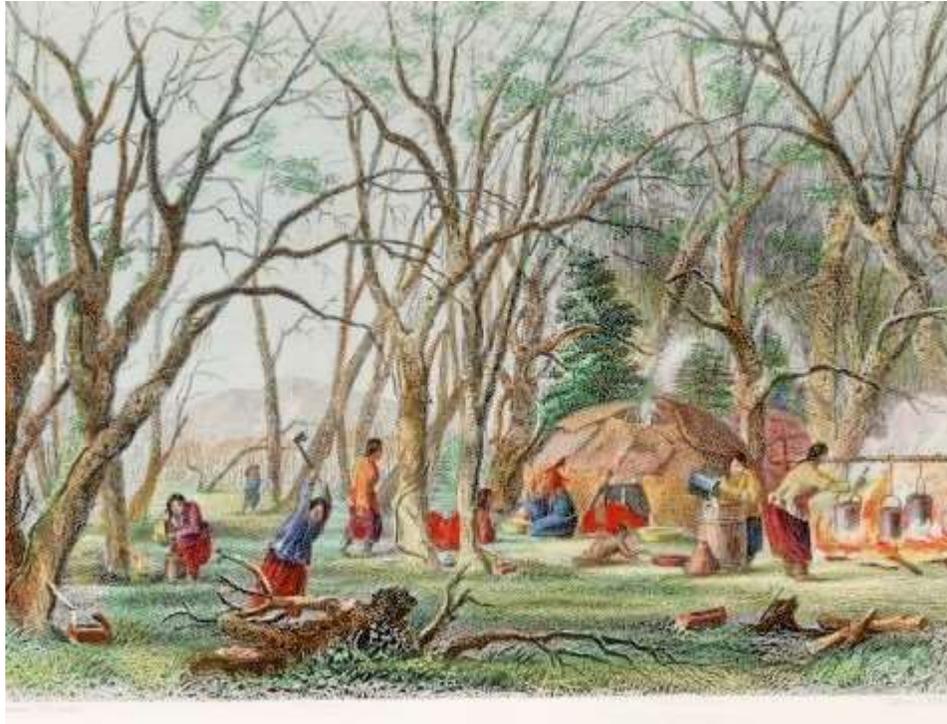


Cultural *Métissage* – Food
Diane Wolford Sheppard, FCHSM Member

Maple and other Sugars and Syrups

In 1634, **Paul Lejeune, S.J.**, described the food and drink of Native Americans who lived in the St. Lawrence settlements. “When they are pressed by famine, they eat the shavings or bark of a certain tree, which they call *Michtan*, which they split in the Spring to get from it a juice, sweet as honey or as sugar; I have been told of this by several, but they do not enjoy much, so scanty is the flow.”¹



Seth Eastman's circa 1850 Illustration – *Indian Sugar Camp* – Courtesy of HathiTrust:
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdl.reflections.umn10273>

In 1661, **Pierre Boucher** described Maple Sugar:²

When gashes are made in these trees [Maple] in the spring, there runs out from them a quantity of water which is sweeter than sugar and water, or at least more pleasant to drink.

By 1706, the **French Canadians** were producing more than 30,000 pounds of maple sugar annually in the Montreal Region.³

Sébastien Râle, S.J., the missionary to the **Abenaki** at Nanrantsouak, described his diet in a letter to his nephew on 15 October 1722.

¹ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, hereafter, *JR*, Vol. 6, p. 273.

² Pierre Boucher, *sieur de Boucherville*, and Edward Louis Montizambert (translator), *True and Genuine Description of New France, commonly called Canada, and of the Manners and Customs and Productions of that Country* (Montréal: George E. Desbaretts and Company, 1883), p. 31.

³ Jacques Rousseau, biography of Michel Sarrazin in the *DCB Online*:
http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/sarrazin_michel_2E.html.

My food is simple and light: I never could relish the meat and smoked fish of the Savages; my only nourishment is pounded Indian corn, of which I make every day a sort of broth; that I cook in water. The only improvement that I can supply it is, to mix with it a little sugar, to relieve its insipidity. There is no lack of sugar in these forests. In the spring the **maple-trees** contain a fluid somewhat resembling that which the canes of the islands contain. The women busy themselves in receiving it into vessels of bark, when it trickles from these trees; they boil it, and obtain from it a fairly good sugar. The first which is obtained is always the best.⁴

In 1724, **Jean François Lafitau, S.J.**,⁵ described how the Native Americans made Maple Sugar; he also noted that French Canadians learned how to make Maple Sugar or Maple Syrup from the Native Americans.

In the month of March when the sun has gained a little strength and the trees began to exude sap, the Indian women make transverse incisions with an axe on the tree trunks from which flows in abundance a liquid which they collect in great bark vessels. Then they boil this liquid over a fire which boils away all of the water and thickens the rest to the consistency of syrup or even of loaf sugar according to the degree and quantity of heat which they wish to give it. There is no other mystery in it. This sugar is very healing, admirable for medicines, but although it is more healthful than that of the cane, it has not its charm or delicacy and almost always has a little burned taste. The French work it a little better than the Indian women from whom they learned to make it, but they have not yet succeeded in whitening and refining it.



Philip John Bainbrigge, circa 1837, *Making Maple Sugar, Lower Canada* – Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Mikan #2834638

⁴ *JR*, Vol. 67, pp. 93, 95.

⁵ Joseph François Lafitau, S.J., William N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore, editors and translators, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times* (Toronto, Ontario: The Champlain Society, 1977), Vol. 11, p. 94.

Pierre Pouchot was a French Officer who lived in New France between 1755 and 1761 during the French and Indian War. Following is **Pierre Pouchot's** description of the syrups or sugars prepared by Native Americans:⁶

When the worst of the cold is over & the ice begins to melt, nature has already begun to renew itself & the trees, which were frozen, contain a fluid between the new bark & the wood which is not yet sap but which precedes it by about a month. When an incision is made, slightly crosswise, in the trees & a knife blade or a little piece of bark is fitted into it, there flows out of this cut a fluid which, on being boiled, leaves a residue of crystals which is bitter or sweet according to the type of tree. The crystals of the **walnut tree** or **cherry tree** are bitter. Almost all trees give off this fluid, which could be of some use, even for medicinal purposes. The **maple** and **plane trees** provide a fluid that is so sweet that makes excellent sugar. It is sweet, refreshing & also very good for the chest. When boiled, it forms crystals or cakes of reddish-brown sugar, which tasted rather like manna. It is very agreeable & one can eat as much of it as one likes without fear of adverse effects, just like cane sugar. The Indians, who in that season can neither hunt nor fish because of the thaw & because the fish are not yet swimming up the rivers, live off this natural food for fifteen days a month.

These trees render an abundant quantity of the fluid, which only flows if there has been frost during the night & sunshine the next day. If the sky is overcast or there is rain, the fluid does not flow from the trees. Naturalists would find this a curious fact. The sap is collected in a copper pot or small wooden trough once or twice a day. It can be kept for some time. It is boiled up in large copper pots and the crystals produced are the sugar. It is excellent for colds. Very good syrup is made from **ferns**, although it has the taste of burnt paper. It is good for all sorts of jams, gives an added flavor to chocolate & blends well with either milk or coffee which however, it causes to taste like unpleasant medicine. There is no doubt that the same sort of sugar could be found in Europe, especially after cold winters, if it were sought in trees of some size.

Maple Sugaring at Michilimackinac⁷

Maple sugar was produced from prehistoric times by Anishnabeg women. Families set up camps in stands of maple trees each spring and women collected and boiled the sap into sugar. Men cut wood and kept the fires going. Native American women continued sugaring during the colonial occupation of the fort and were joined by *métis* and French-Canadian women. The basic process remained the same, but the introduction of copper kettles was a major technological improvement.

Jonathan Carver's description of maple sugaring: In the month of April here is commonly a pretty good market for sugar made of maple sap which is often bought of the Indians . . . A pound of this sugar will not do the service equal to the same quantity of West India sugar yet 'tis esteemed much more wholesom and four times as cheap as the other by reason of the long caryage.

⁶ Pierre Pouchot and Brian Leigh Dunnigan, editor, and Michael Cardy, translator, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America between France and England* (Youngstown, New York: Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., 1994), pp. 452-453.

⁷ Lynn L. Morand, *Craft Industries at Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781* (Mackinac Island, Michigan: Archeological Completion Report Series, Number 15, 1994), pp.171-72, quoting Jonathan Carver who spent the winter of 1767-1768 at Michilimackinac; John Porteous a trader who spent several winters at Michilimackinac; and Peter Pond who traded at the post in 1773.

John Porteous: The next I shall mention is the Mapple or sugar tree, being the Stapple manufacture of this place. . . None cultivates its production more than the inhts. Here. The Sugaries here are 6 & 10 miles from the fort. One familie will have 16 or 18 hund. Trees running & if the Spring is Slow, they can make 6, 8, or 10 hund. pounds of Sugar.

Peter Pond: Most of the frenchmens wives are white women. In the Spring they make a Grate Quantity of Maple Suga for the youse of thare families & for sale som of them.



Cornelius Krieghoff, 1852, *Sugar Making in Canada* – Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Mikan #2838045

Alexander Henry’s 1762 Description of Making Maple Sugar

Alexander Henry was a trader who travelled to the Great Lakes starting in 1761. Following is his description of how maple sugar was made:⁸

The season making maple sugar was now at hand, and shortly after my arrival at the Sault [Ste. Marie] I removed with the other inhabitants to the place at which we were to perform the manufacture.

A certain part of the maple woods having been chosen and which was distant about three mile from the fort, a house twenty feet long and fourteen broad was begun in the morning, and before night made fit for the comfortable reception of eight persons and their baggage. It was open at top, had a door at each end, and a fireplace in the middle running the whole length.

The next day was employed in gathering the bark of white birch trees with which to make vessels to catch the wine or sap. The trees were not cut or tapped, and spouts or ducts introduced into the wound. The bark vessels were placed under the ducts; and as they filled, the liquor was taken out in buckets and conveyed into reservoirs or vats of moose skin, each vat containing a hundred gallons. From these we supplied the boilers, of which we had twelve of from twelve to twenty gallons each, with fires constantly under them day and night. While the women collected the sap, boiled it, and completed the sugar, the men were not less busy in cutting wood, making fires, and in hunting and fishing in part of our supply of food.

The earlier part of the spring is that best adapted to making maple sugar. The sap runs only in the day; and it will not run unless there has been a frost the night before. When in the morning there

⁸ Alexander Henry and Milo Milton Quaife, editor, *Alexander Henry's Travels and adventures in the years 1760-1776* (Chicago, R. R. Donnelley & sons company, 1921), pp. 69-70. You can read his biography in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henry_alexander_1739_1824_6E.html.

is a clear sun and the night has left ice of the thickness of a dollar the greatest quantity is produced.

On the twenty-fifth of April our labor ended, and we returned to the fort, carrying with us as we found by the scales, sixteen hundred-weight of sugar. We had besides thirty-six-gallons of syrup; and during our stay in the woods we certainly consumed three hundred-weight. Thought, as I have said, we hunted and fished, yet sugar was our principal food during the whole month of April. I have known Indians to live wholly upon the same and become fat.

René Ménard's 1661 Description of Wild Rice

On 28 August 1660, René Ménard, S.J., left New France with Charles Albanel, S.J., Jean Guérin, Claude David, Sébastien Hodiau *dit* Laflèche, Adrien Jolliet, François LePoutrel, *sieur* des Coulombiers; Pierre Levasseur *dit* Lespérance, Antoine Trottier, *sieur* DesRuisseaux,⁹ and a group of Ottawa. Following is Ménard's description of Wild Rice:¹⁰

There is in that country a certain plant, four feet or thereabout in height, which grows in marshy places. A little before it ears, the Savages go in their Canoes and bind the stalks of these plants in clusters, which they separate from one another by as much space as is needed for the passage of a Canoe when they return to gather the grain. Harvest time having come, they guide their Canoes through the little alleys which they have opened across this grain-field, and bending down the clustered masses over their boats, strip them of their grain. As often as a Canoe is full, they go and empty it on the shore into a ditch dug at the water's edge. Then they tread the grain and stir it about long enough to free it entirely of hulls; after which they dry it, and finally put it into bark chests for keeping. This grain much resembles Oats, when it is raw; but, on being cooked in water, it swells more than any European grain.



Seth Eastman, *Rice Gatherers*, Sarah E. Boehme, Christian F. Feest, and Patricia Condon Johnston, *Seth Eastman – A Portfolio of North American Indians* (Afton, Minnesota: Afton Historical Society Press, 1995), p. 27

⁹ Three of his companions were ancestors of some of Detroit's founding families: **Claude David** (father of Thérèse David who married Massé Martin and Jacob de Marsac), **Sébastien Hodiau** (grandfather of Jeanne Cécile Catin who married Jacques Campeau) and **Antoine Trottier** (ancestor of the Cuillerier and Cuillerier *dit* Beaubien family).

¹⁰ JR, Vol. 48, pp. 121, 123.

Jacques Marquette, S.J.'s, 1673 Description of Wild Rice

In 1673, when the Marquette – Jolliet party visited the Native Villages, Jacques Marquette, S.J., described wild rice.¹¹

The first nation that we came to was that of the *Folle Avoine* [Menominee]. . . . The wild oat, whose name they bear because it is found in their country, is a sort of grass, which grows naturally in the small rivers with muddy bottoms, and in swampy places. It greatly resemble the wild oats that grow amid our wheat. The ears grow upon hollow stems, jointed at intervals; they emerge from the water about the month of June, and continue growing until they rise about two feet above it. The grain is not larger than that of our oats, but is it twice as long, and the meal therefrom is much more abundant. The savages gather and prepare it for food as follows. In the month of September, which is the suitable time for the harvest, they go in canoe through these fields of wild oats; they shake its ears into the canoe, on both sides, as they pass through. The grain falls out easily, if it be ripe, and they obtain their supply in a short time. But, in order to clean it from the straw, and to remove it from a husk in which it is enclosed, they dry it in the smoke, upon a grating, under which they maintain a slow fire for some days. When the oats are thoroughly dry, they put them in a skin made into a bag, thrust it into a hole dug in the ground for this purpose, and tread it with their feet – so long and so vigorously that the grain separates from the straw, and is very easily winnowed. After this, they pound it to reduce it to flour, or even, without pounding it, they boil it in water, and season it with fat. Cooked in this fashion, the wild oats have almost as delicate a taste as rice has when no better seasoning is added.

Fruits, Berries, Herbs, and Nuts

Although some individuals have claimed or implied that gathering and eating wild berries or fruits was a cultural characteristic exclusive to *métis* families and descendants, it is clear from the following 17th and 18th centuries' memoirs from that gathering wild fruits, berries, and nuts was not learned from Native Americans; in fact, it is a universal cultural practice for all continents except Antarctica. The Native Americans would, however, have taught French Canadians about the fruits, berries, and nuts that are found exclusively in North America.

Circa 1660, **Pierre Esprit Radisson** wrote a narrative of his voyage to the Great Lakes.¹²

In the fields we have gathered severall fruits, as goosberyes, blackberrys, that in an heure we gathered above a bushel of such sorte, although not as yet ripe.

In 1661, **Pierre Boucher** described many of the fruits, berries, and nuts found in New France:¹³

As for the **chestnut trees**, they about there [Iroquois country] and produce as good fruit as those in France. . . .

There are also in these parts abundance of **hazel trees**, which bear plenty of nuts; **elder**, **hawthorn**, producing haws larger than those in France and much better tasted, and **plum trees**, bearing red plums the size of damsons, that have a pretty good taste, but yet not so good as that of those in France.

¹¹ Jacques Marquette, S.J., quoted in Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph.D., editor, *Early Narratives of the Northwest* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, reprinted 1959 by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin), pp. 230-231.

¹² Pierre Esprit Radisson, "Radisson's Account of His Third Journey, 1658-1660" quoted in Kellogg, Ph.D., Louise Phelps, editor, *Early Narratives of the Northwest* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, reprinted 1959 by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin), p. 41.

¹³ Pierre Boucher, pp. 33-35.

Gooseberry bushes are to be found here that bear gooseberries of two kinds, one like those in France, the other full of prickles.

There are also **red currant bushes**.

There are also trees that we call **wild cherry** or bird cherry trees, bearing two or three sorts of small fruits; their taste is not disagreeable. . . .

As I am on the subject of fruit bearing plants, I must not omit to tell you of the **raspberry and strawberry plants** that are to be found in incredible abundance all over this country; the ground is quite covered with them, and they grow up in spite of your and they produce so great a quantity of fruit that in the season the supply of it is inexhaustible. The berries grow larger and taste better than in France.

Small fruit of another sort of the size of large peas, is found here; it is called **blueberry**, and has a very good taste; the bushes on which it grows are not more than a foot high; they do not grow everywhere, but there are places in there a good quantities of them.

The **blackberry bushes** of this country produce fruit that is almost as well tasted as our blackberries in France, but it is not so large.

There are also plenty of wild vines that bear **grapes**. The grapes are not so large as those on our vines in France, nor are the bunches so full of them; but I think if they were cultivated they would not differ from them in any respect. The juice of these grapes is rather tart, and makes a coarse wine that stains very much, and is generally better after than it is during the year in which it is made.

In 1669, **François Dollier de Casson and René Bréhant de Galinée** embarked on a missionary voyage to the Great Lakes via Lake Ontario. While they were on Lake Ontario, they met Adrien de Jolliet who had rescued an Iroquois prisoner at Sault Ste. Marie and who travelled through Lakes Huron and Lake Erie to reach Lake Ontario. Jolliet told Dollier de Casson and Bréhant de Galinée about the route he had taken. The two missionaries decided to visit Sault Ste. Marie and follow the route and rough map that Jolliet had drawn for them. While they were on Lake Erie is the spot that they camped for the winter, they made a note of the **nuts and fruits** they gathered to supplement the meat that they dried after hunting:¹⁴

and making good provision of walnuts and chestnuts, which were there in great quantities. We had indeed in our granary 23 or 24 minots [a minot was about a bushel and a quarter] of these fruits, besides apples, plums, and grapes, and allizes [cranberries] of which we had an abundance during the autumn.

I will tell you, by the way, that the vine grows here only in sand, on the banks of lakes and rivers, but although it has no cultivation it does not fail to produce grapes in great quantities as large and as sweet as the finest of France. We even made wine of them, with which M. Dollier said holy mass all winter, and it was as good as vin de Grave. It is a heavy, dark wine like the latter. Only red grapes are seen here, but in so great quantities, that we found places where one could easily have made 25 or 30 hogsheads of wine.

¹⁴ René Bréhant de Galinée, “The Journey of Dollier and Galinée” in Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph.D., editor, *Early Narratives of the Northwest* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1917, reprinted 1959 by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin), p. 196.

René Ménard, S.J.'s 1660-1661 Description of a winter/spring diet on Lake Superior

In the same 1660-1661 letter that described wild rice, **René Ménard, S.J.**, described their food during their first winter and spring on Lake Superior:¹⁵

The food was scarcely better, as they commonly had for their only dish one paltry fish, cooked in clear water and to be divided among the four or five of their party; and this, too, was a charitable offering made by the Savages, some one of the Frenchmen awaiting, at the water's edge, the return of the fishermen's Canoes, as poor beggars wait for alms at Church doors. A kind of moss growing on the rocks often served them in place of a good meal. They would put a handful of it into their kettle, which would thicken the water ever so little, forming a kind of foam or slime, like that of snails, and feeding their imaginations more than their bodies. Fish-bones, which are carefully saved as long as fish are found in plenty, also served to beguile their hunger in time of need. There was nothing, even to pounded bones, which those poor starvelings did not turn to some account. Many kinds of wood, too, furnished them food. The bark of the Oak, Birch, Linden or white-wood, and that of other trees, when well cooked and pounded, and then put into the water in which fish had been boiled, or else mixed with fish oil, made them some excellent stews. They ate acorns with more relish and greater pleasure than attend the eating of chestnuts in Europe; yet even of those they did not have their fill. Thus passed the first Winter.

In the Spring and Summer, thanks to some little game, they eked out a living with less difficulty, killing from time to time Ducks, Bustards, or Pigeons, which furnished them delightful banquets; while Raspberries and other similar small fruits served them as choice refreshments. Corn and bread are entirely unknown in those countries.

Peter Kalm's 1749 Description of Food

Following is Peter Kalm's 1749 Description of Indian Food:¹⁶

Indian Food. I have made inquiry among the French, who travel far into the country, concerning the food of the Indians. Those who live far north I am told cannot plant anything on account of the great cold. They have, therefore, no bread, and do not live on vegetables; meat and fish are their only food, and chiefly the flesh of beavers, bears, reindeers, elks, hares, and several kinds of birds. Those Indians who lived far southward eat the following things. Of vegetables, they plant corn, wild kidney beans . . . of several kinds, pumpkins of different sorts, squashes, a kind of gourd, watermelons and melons All these plants have been cultivated by the Indians long before the arrival of the Europeans. They likewise eat various fruits which grow in their woods. And they like chiefly the flesh of wild cattle, roe-bucks, stags, bears, beavers, and some other quadrupeds. Among their dainty dishes they reckon the water taregrass (*Zizania aquatica*, L.), and which the French call *folle avoine*, and which grows plentifully in their lakes, in stagnant waters, and sometimes in rivers which flow slowly. They gather its seeds in October, and prepare them in different ways, and chiefly as groats, which taste almost as good as rice. They also make a delicious meal of the several kinds of walnuts, chestnuts, mulberries, acime. . . , chinquapins. . . , hazel nuts, peaches, wild prunes, grapes, whortleberries of several sorts, various kinds of medlars, blackberries and other fruit and roots.

Peter Kalm's 1749 Description of *Voyageur's* Food

¹⁵ *JR*, Vol. 48, pp. 117, 119.

¹⁶ Peter Kalm and Adolph B. Benson, editor and translator, *The America of 1750 – Peter Kalm's Travels in North America – the English Version of 1770* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., unknown date, two volumes), p. 533.

Following is Peter Kalm's description of the food eaten by *voyageurs*:¹⁷

A Traveler's Food. The French when making their journeys far up into the country to visit the Indians have as a rule during that long period of from one half to three years nothing else to live on than the hulled corn . . . , the fat of various animals which they mix with the corn and boil, and the game which they shoot in the forest. This is actually all the food they live on for such a long period, and still during this time they are making the most difficult and tiresome journeys of all. Yet they are in spite of it happy and merry, good-natured and healthy. It was on this account that the people of Canada considered corn a kind of grain which is highly prized.

Peter Kalm's 1749 Description of Fruits in Canada

Following is Peter Kalm's description of fruits in Canada:¹⁸

Our *common raspberries* are so plentiful here on the hills near grain fields, rivers and brooks, that the branches look quite red on account of the number of berries on them. They are ripe about this time [August] and eaten as a dessert after dinner. They are served either with or without fresh milk and powdered sugar. Sometimes they are kept through the winter in glass jars with syrup.

The wild grapevines . . . grow quite plentifully in the woods [on Île-d'Orléans]. In all other parts of Canada they plant them in the gardens, near arbors and summer houses. The latter are made entirely of laths, over which the vines climb with their tendrils, and cover them entirely with their foliage so as to shelter them entirely from the heat of the sun. They are very refreshing and cool in summer.

Peter Kalm's 1749 Description of the Meals Eaten by the French

Peter Kalm described the meals eaten in various parts of New France:

Peter Kalm's description of the meal eaten at a cloistered convent near Québec:¹⁹

The dishes were all prepared by nuns, and as numerous and various as on the tables of great men. There were likewise several sorts of wine and among the many dainties served at the end of a meal were these: white Canadian walnuts coated with sugar, pears and apples with syrup, apples preserved in spirits of wine, small sugared lemons from the West Indies, strawberry preserves and angelica roots.

Peter Kalm's descriptions of the meals eaten in New France:²⁰

Food. The meals here are in many respects different from those in the English provinces. This depends upon the difference of custom, taste, and religion between the two nations. French Canadians eat three meals a day, *viz.* breakfast, dinner, and supper.

They **breakfast** commonly between seven and eight, for the French here rise very early. . . . Some of the men dip a piece of bread in brandy and eat it; others take a dram of brandy and eat a piece of bread after it. Chocolate is likewise very common for breakfast, and many of the ladies drink coffee. Some eat no breakfast at all. I have never seen tea used here, perhaps because they can get coffee and chocolate from the French provinces in America, in the southern part, but must get tea from China. They consider it is not worth their while to send the money out of their country for it. I never saw them have bread and butter for breakfast.

¹⁷ Peter Kalm, pp. 574-575.

¹⁸ Peter Kalm, pp. 455 (raspberries); 481 (wild grapevines)

¹⁹ Peter Kalm, p. 455,

²⁰ Peter Kalm, pp. 473-475.

Lunch is served exactly at noon. People of quality have a great many dishes and the rest follow their example, when they invite strangers. The loaves are oval and baked of wheat flour. For each person they put a plate, napkin, spoon and fork. (In the English colonies a napkin is seldom or never used). Sometimes they also provide knives, but they are generally omitted, all the ladies and gentlemen being provided with their own knives. The spoons and forks are of silver, and the plates of Delft ware. The meal begins with a soup with a good deal of bread in it. Then follow fresh meats of various kinds boiled and roasted, poultry, or game, fricassees, ragouts, etc. of several sorts, together with different kinds of salads. They commonly drink red claret at dinner, either mixed with water or clear; and spruce beer is likewise much in use. The ladies drink water and sometimes wine. Each one has his own glass and drink as much as he wishes, for the bottles are put on the table. Butter is seldom served, and if it is, it is chiefly for the guest present who likes it. But it is so fresh that one has to salt it at the table. The salt is white and finely powdered, though now and then a gray salt is used. After the main course is finished the table is always cleared. Finally, the fruit and sweetmeats are served, which are of many different kinds, *viz.* walnuts from France or Canada, either ripe or pickled; almonds, raisins; hazel-nuts; several kinds of berries which are ripe in the summer season, such as currants, red and black, and cranberries which are preserved in treacle; many preserves in sugar, as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and mossberries. Cheese is likewise a part of the dessert, and so is milk which they drink last of all with water.

Friday and Saturday, the “lean” days, they eat no meat according to the Roman Catholic rites; but they well know how to guard against hunger. On those days they boil all sorts of vegetables like peas, beans and cabbage, and fruit, fish, eggs, and milk are prepared in various ways. They cut cucumbers into slices and eat them with cream, which is a very good dish. Sometimes they put whole cucumbers on the table and everybody that likes them takes one, peels and slices it, and dips the slices into salt, eating them like radishes. Melons abound here and are always eaten without sugar. In brief, they live here just as well on Fridays and Saturdays, and I who am not a particular lover of meats would willingly have had all the days so-called lean days. There is always salt and pepper on the table. They never put any sugar into wine or brandy, and upon the whole they and the English do not use half as much sugar as we do in Sweden, though both nations have large sugar plantations in their West Indian possessions. They say no grace before or after their meals, but only cross themselves, a custom which is likewise omitted by some. Immediately after dinner they drink coffee without cream.

Supper is commonly at seven o’clock, or between seven and eight at night, and the dishes the same as at dinner. Pudding is not seen here and neither is punch, the favorite drink of the Englishmen, though the Canadians know what it is.

Peter Kalm’s description of Canadian beverages:²¹

Canadian Beverages. Canadians never used malt in brewing. The common man’s drink was water. The better class, who had the means, used French wine, mostly red though sometimes white. Some made a drink from the spruce as described above. Cider was made occasionally by a person of rank just out of curiosity. Blow they thoroughly despised and laughed at the English who made it. They said that they scarcely wished to taste it, although they had been in the English provinces several times. At mealtimes and whenever they ate, they drank frequently. Each one had his glass, which was filled. Between meals they seldom or never drank. The women drank much water, but also wine and wine mixed with water. The French drink much wine mixed with water or other meals. When one of them visited another between meals, the

²¹ Peter Kalm, p. 575.

guest was never offered any refreshments except in the case of a close relative; the conversation furnished the only entertainment. Between the noonday and evening meals they sometimes would eat some fruit or sweetmeat, and they call that a collation.

Harvesting of Nuts by Native Americans

Pierre Pouchot was a French Officer who lived in New France between 1755 and 1761 during the French and Indian War. Following is his description of how Native Americans harvested nuts and their uses:²²

In the fall, the Indians eat nuts, including chestnuts, but as the trunks of the trees which bear them are generally 60 to 90 feet tall and without branches, & it would be very difficult to climb them, they cut them down to harvest the fruit. They boil up the kernels in their copper pots and extract the oil for their needs.

Herbs

Following is **Pierre Pouchot's** description of herbs and their uses.²³

In the forest, in the months of May & June, one can find chervil, very good small onions and wild garlic that is milder & larger than ours. The cloves are pear-shaped, & the Europeans use them successfully as a cure for scurvy, which the Indians never suffer from, gout, or rheumatism, although they are constantly lying down on the ground in the rain & damp.

Residents of Detroit who Supplied Food Related Items during the Period from 1739 – 1750 – *Métissage*

From 1738 to 1750, residents of Détroit were asked to supply goods or services “for the benefit of the King” to the Native American Allies who participated in military campaigns against the Chickasaw as well as for other purposes. See the Military Page on the FCHSM website for a timeline for this period as well as a list of all of the residents who supplied good or services during this period: http://www.habitantheritage.org/french-canadian_resources/military.

The following list is limited to those who supplied food related items the Native Americans, the garrison, or the residents. In addition to the name, dates, and items provided, the list also includes the Mikan # that can be used at the Library and Archives Canada website [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/search/arch_adv] to retrieve a copy of the request for reimbursement for these items.

The Mikan # refers to the number used by Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to identify documents that are online. You can download the original images of these documents by using the advanced search form at LAC, choosing Mikan # from the drop down box, and entering the number into the blank space. The LAC advanced search page is located at: http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/search/arch_adv

Occupations have been added if known.

d’Ailleboust de Mantet – probably a reference to Pierre Joseph d’Ailleboust de Mantet or Nicolas Marie d’Ailleboust

- 18 September 1747 – *Sieur* Mantet provided bulls and cows for the troops that were returning to Montréal – Mikan # 3074882

²² Pierre Pouchot and Brian Leigh Dunnigan, editor, and Michael Cardy, translator, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America between France and England* (Youngstown, New York: Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., 1994), p. 456.

²³ Pierre Pouchot, p. 456.

- 23 July 1748 – over the previous year, Mantet’s contributions included Indian corn that was given to multiple Indians – Mikan # 3075028
- 28 June 1749 – Mantet supplied Indian corn – Mikan # 3075257

Jean Baptiste Bénard dit Carignan – Jean Baptiste Bénard was a merchant who hired *voyageurs* to make a voyage to Detroit in 1746 and 1747²⁴

- 10 October 1747 – Carignan supplied six bulls – Mikan # 3074832
- 2 August 1749 – Carignan’s contributions included Indian corn – Mikan # 3075029

Sieur Bernard – probably a reference to Guillaume Bernard; by 1761, he was a merchant

- 4 July 1750 – *Sieur Bernard* provided 10 bushels of Indian corn and five deer for the subsistence of the militia and their families – Mikan # 3075247

Louis Bienvenu dit Delisle

- 17 August 1750 – Louis Bienvenu *dit Delisle* supplied a pair of bulls and a cow – Mikan # 3075282
- 17 August 1750 – The goods that Louis Bienvenu *dit Delisle* supplied included grease, lard, and beef – Mikan # 3075284
- 30 August 1750 – The goods that Louis Bienvenu *dit Delisle* supplied included sixteen cows – Mikan # 3075285
- 3 September 1750 – Louis Bienvenu *dit Delisle* supplied a bushel of peas and leased two houses, one house was for the lodging of an Indian – Mikan # 3075283

Jean Bineau

- 29 June 1748 – Jean Claude Bineau supplied 41 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075022
- 29 June 1749 – Jean Bineau supplied a bull that was used for a feast for the Ottawa – Mikan # 3075042

Antoine Bousquet

- 7 June 1740 – Antoine Bousquet supplied 55 pounds of grease to the detachment that was returning from war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067492

J. Campeau – probably a reference to Jacques Campeau or Jean Baptiste Campeau

- 25 May 1740 – Campeau supplied Indian Corn to the Indians from Sault-Saint-Louis who were returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3068815

Jacques Campeau – probably a reference to Jacques Campeau, *père*. He was a merchant who initially came to Detroit in 1703 as a blacksmith

- 6 September 1742 – Jacques Campeau supplied four cows and sixty-five bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3069214
- 29 August 1746 – Jacques Campeau supplied seven bushels of Indian corn to the Indians who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074821
- 30 September 1747 – Jacques Campeau supplied thirty-five bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3074844

Jean Louis Campeau – he is usually referred to as Louis Campeau. Jean Louis Campeau was a merchant

- 22 October 1747 – Louis Campeau supplied three cows – Mikan # 3074845
- 14 July 1748 – On 15 November 1747, Louis Campeau supplied 100 bushels of wheat for the subsistence of the garrison. On 23 March 1748, Louis Campeau supplied 92 bushels of wheat for the subsistence of the garrison – Mikan # 3074979

²⁴ *Rapport de L’archiviste de la Province de Québec pour 1930-1931* (Québec: Rédempti Paradis, 1930), *passim*

- 29 June 1749 – On 20 April 1749, Louis Campeau supplied 11 bushels of wheat. On 22 April 1749, Louis Campeau supplied six bushels of wheat. On 2 May 1749, Louis Campeau supplied six bushels of wheat. On 4 June 1749, Louis Campeau supplied 20 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075015
- 19 June 1750, Louis Campeau contribution included 74 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075273

Jacques Cardinal – Jacques Cardinal was a merchant

- 17 July 1748 – Jacques Cardinal’s contribution included a bull for the garrison – Mikan # 3074989

Jean Baptiste Chapoton – Jean Baptiste Chapoton was a surgeon

- September – October 1748 – Jean Baptiste Chapoton supplied seven bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075249
- 4 August 1750 – Jean Baptiste Chapoton supplied seven bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075249

Chesne – the references to a Chesne without a first name could refer to Charles Chesne or to Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte, his younger brother. I have noted how the individual or Company is referred to in the LAC document.

- 23 May 1740 – The *Sieurs* Chesne paid for the subsistence of 18 Abenaki who were going to war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067482
- 28 July 1743 – Over the previous year, Chesne and Company’s contributions included tobacco, *eau de vie*, *mitasses*, *porcelain*, shirts, wheat, and vermillion – Mikan # 3069293 – Chesne and Company
- 24 July 1747 – *Sieur* Chesne supplied a bull that was used for a feast for the Huron, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Chippewa/Ojibwa – Mikan # 3074823

Charles Chesne – Charles Chesne was a merchant

- 19 June 1750 – Charles Chesne’s contribution included 110 bushels of wheat and 48 bushels of Indian Corn – Mikan # 3075248

Pierre Chesne dit Labutte – Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte was a merchant and an interpreter; his first wife was *métis*

- 6 October 1749 – *Sieurs* Moison and Labutte provided 32 bushels of wheat for the subsistence of the garrison – Mikan # 3075289 Moison and Labutte
- 6 July 1750 – Over the previous year, Labutte and Company’s contribution included 60 deer, a barrel of *eau de vie*, 70 bushels of wheat, and eight bushels of corn – Mikan # 3075269

François Chevalier

- 13 July 1748 – François Chevalier supplied ten bushels of Indian corn and a canoe to the Sac who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074916

Zacharie Cicot/Sicot – Zacharie Cicot was a merchant

- 1 July 1749 – Over the previous year, Zacharie Cicot’s contributions included 49 deer for the subsistence of the garrison – Mikan # 3075005

Pierre Cosme dit Saint-Cosme – Pierre Cosme *dit* Saint Cosme was a merchant

- 8 July 1748 – Over the previous year Pierre Cosme’s contributions included two cows, 100 bushels of wheat, and 78 bushels of corn – Mikan # 3074880
- 14 July 1748 – Pierre Cosme provided grease and 11 bushels of corn for the garrison – Mikan # 3074879
- 4 August 1750 – Over the previous year, Pierre Cosme supplied grease, eight bushels of Indian corn, and 58 bushels of wheat, and leased a house for a year – Mikan # 3075268

René de Couagne – René de Couagne was a Montréal merchant who supplied goods to Detroit, and, in particular, to the Huron Mission

- 19 June 1750 – René de Couagne supplied 32 bushels of wheat for the subsistence of the families and militia in Detroit – Mikan # 3075287

Charles Courtois

- 22 August 1747 – Charles Courtois supplied 350 pounds of flour for the Miami while they were in Détroit – Mikan # 3074619
- 22 August 1747 – Over the previous year, Charles Courtois' contributions included eight cows, 3300 grains of porcelain, flour, 53 bushels of Indian corn, and 100 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3074618
- 1 July 1748 – *Sieur* Courtois supplied 30 bushels wheat for the subsistence of the garrison at the Miami fort – Mikan # 3074975
- 14 July 1748 – Charles Courtois supplied two cows that was used for a feast for the Ottawa – Mikan # 3074977
- 6 July 1750 – Charles Courtois' contributions included 20 pairs of moccasins, grease, four pounds of deer meat, and 68 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075244

Antoine Cuillerier – the references below without a first name probably refer to Antoine Cuillerier, although his brother Jean Baptiste Cuillerier also lived in Detroit. Jean Baptiste Cuillerier was usually referred to as Jean Baptiste Cuillerier *dit* Beaubien; he was a merchant. Antoine Cuillerier was an interpreter and a merchant. In his role as a merchant, he acted as a *commis* [agent] for Jacques Charly.

- 11 August 1745 – Cuillerier, as *commis* for Jacques Charly, supplied two barrels of *eau-de-vie* – Mikan # 3069450
- 25 July 1746 – Antoine Cuillerier supplied 400 pounds of tobacco, ten barrels of *eau-de-vie*, eight pounds of vermillion, trade toile to make a large flag for the pavilion, and 250 bullets – Mikan # 3074828
- 11 July 1747 – Antoine Cuillerier's contribution included equipment for a canoe and three bushels of Indian corn – Mikan # 3074613
- 2 October 1747 – *Sieur* Cuillerier as *commis* for the deceased Jacques Charly supplied the following for the Miami – two canoes, 30 *livres* pay for an interpreter, 50 pounds of tobacco, *eau-de-vie*, one pair of *mitasses* for a chief, one two-point blanket, and a shirt – Mikan # 3074592
- 22 October 17- 47 – *Sieur* Cuillerier as *commis* for the deceased Jacques Charly supplied five cows – Mikan # 3074612
- 29 July 1748 – Antoine Cuillerier supplied ten bushels of wheat and 65 pounds of gum to repair the bark canoes that were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074992
- 6 June 1749 – Antoine Cuillerier's contribution included flour – Mikan # 3075026
- 27 July 1749 – *Sieur* Cuillerier supplied calf's milk for the officer's table – Mikan # 3075016 – Cuillerier

Dagneau

- 7 June 1740 – Dagneau supplied a canoe and 171 pounds of grease to the detachment that was going to the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067490

Guillaume Dagneau dit Douville and Lamothe

- 6 June 1750 – Guillaume Dagneau supplied 30 bushels of Indian corn for the Miami Fort and *eau de vie* for the Indians – Mikan # 3075259

Louis Césaire Dagneau dit Dequindre – Louis Césaire Dagneau *dit* Dequindre was a merchant who lived at Fort St. Joseph and at Michilimackinac prior to moving to Detroit.

- 6 June 1750 – Louis Césaire Dagneau *dit* Dequindre's contributions included 60 bushels of Indian Corn – Mikan # 3075262

Delpeteau

- 3 June 1750 – Delpeteau's, clerk for Deschambault, contributions included 25 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075277

Douaire dit Bondy

- 28 October 1739 – Bondy's contributions included ½ pound of Indian corn, a sponge, 12 pounds of iron, three pounds of powder, 30 pounds of grease, and one bushel of wheat – Mikan # 3068809
- 28 July 1747 – Bondy's contributions included fabric, eight pounds of vermilion, 37 pots of *eau de vie*, one musket, 70 pounds of grease, 200 pounds of flour, two pounds of powder, and ten bushels of Indian corn for the Miami who were in Détroit – Mikan # 3074626
- 28 July 1747 – Bondy's contributions included eight white blankets, 80 pounds of tobacco, eight pounds of vermilion, 43 pots of *eau de vie*, one musket, 70 pounds of grease, molton fabric, ten men's shirts, six women's shirts, 200 pounds of flour, 24 pounds of flour for the Miami who were in Détroit – Mikan # 3074872
- 12 July 1748 – Bondy's contributions included blankets and Indian corn – Mikan # 3074816

Jean Baptiste Douaire dit Bondy

- 31 July 1745 – Jean Baptiste Douaire *dit* Bondy supplied two cows for the feast that was given for the Indians in Détroit – Mikan # 3069387

Claude Dupont dit Leblond

- 13 August 1750 – Claude Leblond supplied grease and lard for the garrison and the families of Détroit – Mikan # 3075261

Pierre Forville

- 17 July 1748 – Pierre Forville supplied one bull for the subsistence of the garrison in Détroit – Mikan # 3074927

Laurent Eustache Gamelin – he was referred to as Eustache Gamelin; he was a merchant

- 25 July 1747 – Eustache Gamelin's contribution included fabric, one pound of powder, one bull, two pairs of *mitasses*, two men's shirts, one pound of vermilion, and two bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3074595
- 15 October 1747 – Eustache Gamelin supplied one bull – Mikan # 3074581
- 31 July 1749 – Eustache Gamelin supplied 20 bushels Indian corn and provided cartage services – Mikan # 3075023
- 12 April 1750 – Eustache Gamelin supplied ten bushels of Indian corn, two toques, two cotton shirts, and 15 bushels of wheat to the convoy that was going to Niagara – Mikan # 3075265
- 26 August 1750 – Eustache Gamelin's contributions included ten barrels of *eau de vie*, 100 bushels of wheat, and ten pounds of grease – Mikan # 3075293
- 26 August 1750 – Eustache Gamelin's contributions included 60 pounds of grease, 30 bushels of Indian corn, two calumets, one pair of culottes, one cotton shirts, and six pairs of moccasins – Mikan # 3075260

Michel Gamelin

- 7 June 1740 – Michel Gamelin supplied 24 pots of bear oil to the detachment that was returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067488
- 7 June 1740 – Michel Gamelin's contributions included ten bushels of Indian corn and three and one third pounds of lard to the was returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067509
- 15 October 1747 – Michel Gamelin supplied four barrels of *eau de vie* and a bull – Mikan # 3074839

Gauché / Gauchet

- 18 June 1748 – Gauché supplied 19 bushels of wheat and a six-place canoe that Kikimek would use to travel to Montréal for its defense – Mikan # 3974964

Simon Gendron dit Poitevin – Simon Gendron came to Detroit as a soldier; he later became a merchant

- 24 July 1749 – Simon Gendron *dit* Poitevin baked for the King's service – Mikan # 3075019
- 1 August 1750 – Simon Gendron *dit* Poitevin baked for the King's service – Mikan # 3075276

Louis Gervais – Louis Gervais was a baker

- 11 July 1748 – Over the previous year, Gervais supplied flour and biscuits – Mikan # 3074585

Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont was a merchant

- 10 June 1748 – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont's contributions included eau de vie, tobacco, vermilion, powder, musket parts, lead, and wheat – Mikan # 3074590
- 19 June 1750 – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont's contributions included grease, wheat, Indian corn, and deerskins – Mikan # 3075267

Claude Gouin – Claude Gouin was a merchant

- 1739 – Claude Gouin's contributions included Indian corn, powder, tobacco, Siamese knives, blankets, *mitasses*, and grease that was given to the Huron, Iroquois, Ottawa, and Potawatomi who were going to war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3068762
- 16 December 1747 – Claude Gouin's contributions included 100 pounds of biscuits, one bushel of Indian corn, and 50 pounds of lard for François Marie Picoté de Belestre's voyage to Fort St. Joseph – Mikan # 3074883
- 14 July 1748 – Claude Gouin supplied 20 bushels of Indian corn, six barrels of eau-de-vie, six barrels of red wine, 1,100 pounds of flour, two barrels of grease, two barrels of lard, and 300 pounds of sweetbreads for the subsistence of the garrison at the Miami and Wea post – Mikan # 4074957
- 14 July 1748 – Claude Gouin's contributions included ten bushels of wheat that was supplied for the subsistence of the garrison – Mikan # 3074961

Pierre Hubert dit Lacroix

- 7 June 1740 – Pierre Hubert *dit* Lacroix's contribution included grease and equipment for a canoe for some of the individuals who were returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067486

Joseph Illot

- 6 July 1749 – Joseph Illot was paid a salary of 130 *livres* for having distributed food to the garrison in Détroit – Mikan # 3075048

Claude Landry dit Saint-André

- 18 July 1748 – Claude Landry/Andry *dit* Saint-André supplied three bulls – Mikan # 3074953

Claude Lesprit dit Champagne

- 7 August 1744 – Champagne supplied Indian corn and grease – Mikan # 3074699
- 7 August 1744 – Champagne supplied Indian corn and grease – Mikan # 3074679
- 3 July 1749 – Champagne leased a bakery in Détroit – Mikan # 3075031

Marsac, fils

- 26 July 1745 Marsac, *fils*, provided a pair of bulls that were used for a feast, four pounds of vermilion, three pairs of *mitasses*, six men's trade shirts, 500 grains of porcelain, 50 pounds of bread, 25 pounds of lard, a half bushel of peas, and three bushels of Indian corn – Mikan # 3069395

François Marsac – François Marsac was a merchant

- 7 June 1740 – François de Marsac, a merchant, supplied 378 pounds of bread, beef, two large bark canoes, and a smaller canoe – Mikan # 3067497
- 28 September 1747 François de Marsac’s contributions included wheat, grease, a large bark canoe, a sail, a sponge, a sack of flour, bread, and lard – Mikan # 3074680

Pierre Meloche – Pierre Meloche was a carpenter

- 23 May 1740 – Pierre Meloche supplied eight bushels of Indian corn for 18 Abenaki who were returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3068842
- 7 June 1740 – Pierre Meloche supplied sixty pounds of biscuits for the troops that were returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067518

Métivier

- 12 March 1748 – Métivier’s contribution included wheat – Mikan # 3074932
- 17 July 1748 – Métivier’s contribution included wheat supplied for the subsistence of the garrison – Mikan # 3075041
- 17 July 1748 – Métivier supplied Indian corn – Mikan # 3075040
- 8 July 1750 – Métivier supplied wheat and a bark canoe – Mikan # 3075294

Antoine Moison

- 25 April 1746 – Antoine Moison furnished a cow that was used for the feast for the Huron, Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and Ottawa on Bois Blanc – Mikan # 3074825
- 6 October 1749 – *Sieurs* Moison and Labutte provided 32 bushels of wheat for the subsistence of the garrison – Mikan # 3075289 – *Sieurs* Moison and Labutte
- 16 August 1750 – Antoine Moison furnished 12 deerskins and 16 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075292
- 26 August 1750 – Antoine Moison furnished 30 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075290
- 27 August 1750 – Antoine Moison furnished a bull for the sustenance of the troops, families, and militia of Détroit – Mikan # 3075291

Laurent Parent – he was a carpenter

- 22 October 1747 – *sieur* Parent fed two Miami from 27 July to 4 August – Mikan # 3074866

Gilbert Parent – Gilbert Parent was a trader with the Miami – his wife was *métis*

- 21 October 1747 – Gilbert Parent supplied two bulls – Mikan # 3074867

Jacques Pilet – Jacques Pilet was a butcher

- 17 October 1747 – Jacques Pilet supplied 36 bulls – Mikan # 3074629

Joseph Poupard – Joseph Poupard was a merchant and baker

- 19 October 1747 – Over the prior year, Joseph Poupard made biscuits and baked bread – Mikan # 3074847

Pierre Réaume – Pierre Réaume was a merchant

- 11 July 1748 – Pierre Réaume’s contributions included skins, Indian corn, and grease – Mikan # 3074914
- 30 June 1749 – Pierre Réaume’s contributions included deer skins, carting wood, and wheat – Mikan # 3075032
- 13 June 1750 – Pierre Réaume, as *commis* for Claude Marin, supplied a bark canoe and wheat – Mikan # 3075280

- 19 June 1750 – Pierre Réaume’s contributions included deer skins, wheat, and meat – Mikan # 3075279

Saint Eutrope – he was a soldier in the garrison in Détroit

- 29 June 1749 – Saint Eutrope supplied a bull that was used for a feast for the Ottawa – Mikan # 3075021

Saint Louis

- 8 April 1749 – Saint Louis, a soldier in the garrison, supplied five bushels of Indian corn – Mikan # 3075014

Madame Senneville

- 19 July 1750 – *Madame* Senneville supplied eight bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075272

Pierre Vallée

- 24 July 1745 – Pierre Vallée’s contributions included *eau-de-vie*, powder, balls, tobacco, porcelain, vermillion, trade shirts and a blanket – Mikan # 3069383
- 10 July 1748 – Pierre Vallée supplied wheat – Mikan # 3074947
- 30 July 1748 – Pierre Vallée supplied nine bushels of Indian corn – Mikan # 3074948
- 30 June 1749 – Pierre Vallée supplied four barrels of *eau-de-vie* for the Indians in Détroit – Mikan # 3075001
- 26 August 1750 – Pierre Vallée supplied a bull for the sustenance of the troops and the families in Détroit – Mikan # 3075274

Louis Villet

- 19 July 1750 – Louis Villet supplied grease – Mikan # 3075270

Alexander Henry’s 1761 Description of Voyageur’s Food

Alexander Henry was a trader who travelled to the Great Lakes starting in 1761. He described the food that *voyageurs* ate on their voyages to the Great Lakes and beyond.²⁵

The village of L’Arbre Croche supplies, as I have said, the maize, or Indian corn with which the canoes are victualled. This species of gran in prepared for use by boiling it in a strong lye, after which the husk may be easily removed; and it is next mashed and dried. In this state it is soft and friable like rice. The allowance for each man on the voyage is a quart a day; and a bushel with two pounds of prepared fat is reckoned to be a month’s subsistence. No other allowance is made of any kind, not even of salt; and bread is never thought of. The men, nevertheless, are healthy and capable of performing their heavy labor. This method of victualling is essential to the trade, which being pursued at great distances, and in vessels so small as canoes, will not admit of the use of other food. If the men were to be supplied with bread and pork the canoes could not carry a sufficiency for six months; and the ordinary duration of the voyage is not less than fourteen. The difficulty which would belong to an attempt to reconcile any other men than Canadians to this fare seems to secure to them and their employers the monopoly of the fur trade.

²⁵ Alexander Henry and Milo Milton Quaife, editor, *Alexander Henry's Travels and adventures in the years 1760-1776* (Chicago, R. R. Donnelley & sons company, 1921), p. 54. You can read his biography in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henry_alexander_1739_1824_6E.html.