

André Jarret de Beaugard and Marguerite Anthiaume
Some Witnesses from Paris
Part 4

The persons present at the marriage of André and Marguerite were there as mutual friends of the couple. One of them, **Pierre Picoté, Sieur de Belestre**, as I indicated in the previous installment, came forward to serve in place of Marguerite's deceased father, Michel. Pierre had lived in Montréal for many years. In 1660, he chose not to accompany **Dollard des Ormeaux** and his companions in their now-famous – and fatal – expedition up the Ottawa River. Pierre argued that the group should not leave until after spring planting could take place. Had Pierre followed his initial inclination to join the convoy, he and his then-unborn children would not now be part of the history of New France. Dollard, fifteen of his companions, and an uncertain number of allied Huron and Algonquin were massacred or taken prisoner by the Iroquois at the Battle of the Long Sault. Only one of the original group of seventeen Frenchmen who set out from Montréal was said to have escaped from captivity, although some Natives managed to journey to the colony to report the events.¹

Six years later, in 1666, Pierre Picoté de Belestre took part in Prouville de Tracy's expedition against the Iroquois in New York as lieutenant of the troops raised at Montréal.² Since André's Carignan company was stationed at Montréal, it is highly probable that the two men met during this perilous winter foray or while André served in Montréal. There were no barracks for the soldiers at this time, and not for many more years. Instead, the soldiers lived with local *habitant* families.

Pierre's wife, Marie Par, born about 1638, like her husband was also originally from Paris, where they had married and where two of their daughters, Hélène (1656) and Françoise (1659), had been born. The young girls accompanied their mother in her voyage from France to rejoin her husband in 1663. Marie Par and these two daughters attended the 1676 Jarret de Beaugard wedding and signed the church document. I wonder whether Marie Par had known Marguerite or her family in France. Marie had maintained ties with her family in France, as she is documented as having been mentioned in her sister Sebile's will, drawn up before Notary Lebrun de Lyon on 23 September 1672.³

Perhaps in connection with this legacy but certainly on some important business, Marie's husband Pierre Picoté de Belestre traveled to France in 1674-75, because Marie Par concluded an agreement in her and her husband's name with Jean Quenet. Michel Langlois reports the document written by Notary Basset on 10 March 1675 indicates her husband was "absent in France".⁴ Jean Quenet and Pierre were involved in the fur trade together. Pierre Picoté de Belestre was also associated with Jean-Philippe Hautmesnil, Charles Lemoyne, Jacques LeBer, and J. B. Migeon in the fur trade; all but Hautmesnil were also present at the Jarret de Beaugard marriage.⁵

¹ See the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, hereafter DCB, for a biography of Dollard, and a critique of the many versions that have been written about his exploits. The church register for Montréal records the information that one of the captive Frenchmen escaped from captivity in Iroquoia.

² DCB

³ See Michel Langlois, Tome 4.

⁴ Michel Langlois, Tome 4.

⁵ Michel Langlois reports that in 1671 these men joined in a complaint against the illegal fur-trading practices of Governor Perrot, also present at the Jarret de Beaugard wedding. I would love to know what these men talked about as they assembled in 1676, five years later.

Marie Par's husband returned to New France by the fall of 1675. Could he and Marguerite Anthiaume have traversed the Atlantic together? Was he at all involved in recruiting Marguerite to come to the New World? And was she resident with the Picoté de Belestre family in Montréal after her arrival? These are perfectly legitimate questions, although we may never know with certainty. The presence of the family at the marriage tends to support this speculation.⁶

Another woman present at the Jarret de Beauregard marriage is associated with Marguerite's Parisian origin: **Catherine Gauchet de Belleville** (or *dite Belleville* in Langlois), daughter of Claude & Suzanne Dufeu of the parish of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. She was the wife of Jean-Baptiste Migeon de Branssat. Like him she signed the 1676 marriage contract as witness for André. Catherine had married on 26 November 1665, at Montréal. She brought with her a *dot* of personal goods and 800 *livres*, for which her husband gave her quittance, meaning she remained the owner. Langlois says she had planned to be a religious when she traveled to New France but instead married and, in time, gave birth to ten children.

Her husband, a prosperous merchant, died in 1693. Catherine Gauchet, Widow Migeon de Branssat, then became an important business woman in her own right. Langlois lists about sixty-four notarial records in her name, including many through which she advanced money or merchandise to voyageurs in the fur trade. She herself obtained a *congé* (permission) to trade in 1694. After providing, in 1707, for her children's inheritance of her several properties and other possessions, she became a religious at Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, thus fulfilling her original intent, and died there 14 March 1721, about 77 years old. She is one of the many New France women who led active lives, both as mothers and as participants in the commerce of their time. (Their collective story has not yet been written.) She provided employment⁷ and loaned funds or merchandise to enable dozens of individuals to make a living and also saw to the welfare and legal rights of her children.

Catherine Gauchet *dite* de Belleville presented a good role model for her fellow Parisienne, Marguerite Anthiaume, who would also take charge of business affairs after the death of André and even during her second marriage, to Pierre Fontaine dit Bienvenue, as she concerned herself with protecting the inheritance due her children.

Yet another woman signing the church record of the Jarret de Beauregard marriage is said to be from Paris, at least if I have read the signature correctly. I believe the person who signed "j benar" is **Jeanne Bénard**, the second wife of Pierre Gadois. She was a *Fille du Roi* who, on 20 April 1665, married Pierre Gadois, alleged victim of the now-infamous alleged sorcerer, René Bénard dit Bourjoli.⁸ No family connection is known between René and Jeanne Bénard. Jeanne's husband, Pierre Gadois, arms-maker, was definitely present and signing. If "j benar" is Jeanne, she had given birth to five children already,

⁶ After her husband's death in 1679, Marie Par survived until 1684. Her daughter Marie-Anne married Alphonse Tonty five years later in 1689, and, in the fall of 1701, Marie-Anne, with an undisclosed number of her then-living children, traveled with Marie-Thérèse Guyon, Madame Cadillac, to join their husbands at newly-founded Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit du Lac Érié. Marie-Anne's brother François traveled with his sister, and the family would later play an important role at Fort Pontchartrain.

⁷ One of the men she hired in 1701 (Notary Adhémar) from her house on *rue* Saint-Paul is the then-sixteen-year-old Jacques Morriseau, who would travel to Fort Pontchartrain in 1706. He continued for many years to work in the fur trade and as an interpreter for the king in the Iroquois language. See my comments about him in my articles on the Couc / Montour family.

⁸ The story of Pierre Gadois and Marie Pontonnier and the alleged sorcery of René Benard dit Bourjoly has been told many times. See the DCB biography of Pierre Gadois. Suffice to say, René himself denied any supernatural intervention on his part!

and she was pregnant with son Antoine, who would be born in April.⁹ I have often wished I could time-travel to eavesdrop on the conversations as our ancestors gathered to celebrate a marriage!

The next installment will identify some of the other men and women present at the marriage of André Jarret de Beauregard and Marguerite Anthiaume.

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⁹ Jetté.