

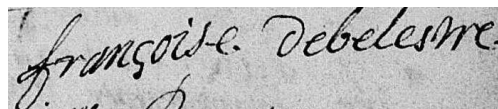
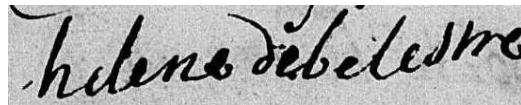
More Witnesses at the Marriage of Marguerite Anthiaume and André Jarret de Beauregard

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville

Nine women signed the church register as witnesses for the marriage of André Jarret de Beauregard and Marguerite Anthiaume. The last signature on the official record is that of *j benar*. In the previous article, I suggested that "j benar," who is not mentioned in the text of the entry, could be **Jeanne Bénard**, wife of Pierre Gadois, also in attendance and signing. I have been able to confirm that it was indeed this Jeanne who attended. On the microfilm of her marriage record, I found her signature that matches this one.

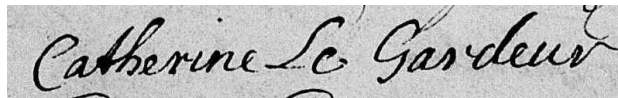
I can now add Michel Langlois's summary of a notarial document Jeanne filed on 1 July 1716. Her husband had died in 1714, and "being of an advanced age" anticipating her death, she urged her surviving children—Thérèse, Marguerite, and Jacques Gadois—to maintain peace in the family, to share and share alike the inheritance they would receive when she died. She even stipulated they should draw lots to determine who would be granted which property. Since the house on *rue Notre-Dame*, another on *rue Saint-Paul*, and two properties on the outskirts of Montréal were of unequal value, the one who received the most valuable was to reimburse the others. She survived until 1724, dying at about eighty-four years old.¹

To continue my presentation of the witnesses at the Church marriage on 12 January 1676, I will focus in this article on the single women present and signing specifically for Marguerite Anthiaume, in addition to the two mentioned in the previous article, *Damoiselles* Hélène de Belestre and Françoise de Belestre, both born in France, daughters of Pierre and Marie Par, his wife.



No article I have read about the Jarret de Beauregard family pays any attention to these women, but their lives reveal what to me are interesting insights about the society of New France, and, by presumption, about Marguerite.

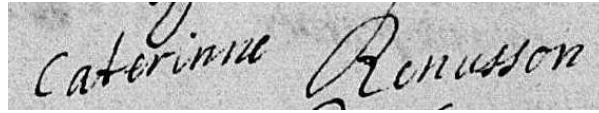
Catherine Le Gardeur, who was present at the contract, and her husband, Charles d'Ailleboust, *escuyer*, *Sieur des Muceaux*, Baillif, Civil and Criminal Judge for the Isle of Montréal, later governor of Montréal, signed the register.



They were the parents of **Barbe d'Ailleboust**, born in Québec City and baptized 11 December 1653, Barbe was a contemporary of Marguerite, twenty-three years old, perhaps the same age as Marguerite. The first of fourteen children, she never married, dying *sans alliance*, as Jetté records, and buried 3 August 1716 at the age of sixty-two.² At this time, I have no further information about her, but four of her sisters entered religious orders: Isabelle / Élisabeth becoming an Ursuline nun called *Mère de la Croix*; Madeleine, *Soeur de l'Incarnation* of the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame*; Marguerite, a *hospitalière* in Montréal, assigned to the hospital; and Louise-Angélique, *Mère de St.-Raphaël*, a *hospitalière* in Québec City. Her brothers led distinguished lives in the military; and one, Pierre d'Ailleboust, *sieur*

d'Argenteuil, played a role in re-establishing peace among the Indians at Detroit in 1707.

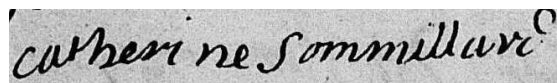
The other single ladies in attendance at the church as witnesses for Marguerite were **Catherine Sommillard** and **Jeanne Le Ber**, who was to become a celebrated religious recluse, and also **Catherine Renusson**, who is given the honorific title of "damoiselle" on the marriage contract the same day. She signed the church record "Caterinne Renusson" in very clear handwriting.



Daughter of a "greffier et procureur," clerk and legal official, of Vire in Normandie, **Catherine Renusson** was about twenty-four years old. She married later in 1676, on 23 September, to Vincent Chamaillard *dit* Lafontaine, by whom she had seven children. Michel Langlois's entry for her is brief, but in his entry for her husband, Vincent, he reveals that Vincent was associated with Nicolas Toutan to sell liquor, meat, and other foods before January of 1674; with Nicolas Baron by December of 1674; and, in 1684, with Nicolas Marion.³ The family settled at Lachine, an important staging point for the fur trade, by the birth in 1682 of their fourth child, also named Vincent. Catherine's husband, a Carignan soldier like André, arrived with the company of Lafredière on *l'Aigle d'or*, apparently the same ship that brought André. Vincent died on 13, buried on 15 November of 1688 at Lachine.

I have not been able to determine whether Marguerite and Catherine continued to know each other, but it is intriguing to me that Marguerite's and André's last child, born posthumously by February of 1692 (about three months old in April), was named Vincent. No baptism record survives to determine whether his godfather was another man named Vincent, but the name was not among the most common ones for men at that time. The feast of St. Vincent, a martyr of the fourth century, was celebrated on 22 January, so it is possible the fatherless Vincent was born that day and named for this patron saint. Or could Vincent Jarret de Beauregard have been named for the deceased husband of Marguerite's friend Catherine? Catherine herself, like Marguerite, remarried after the death of her first husband. In fact, she remarried twice, surviving until 22 November 1719.

The other Catherine present at the wedding, **Catherine Sommillard**, offers another interesting conjecture.



With her sisters **Marguerite** and **Louise**, and accompanying their aunt, **Marguerite Bourgeoys**, they arrived in Montréal 12 August 1672. Marguerite Bourgeoys, sister of their mother, Marie Bourgeoys, was beatified in 1950 and declared a saint by the Catholic Church in 1982. It is certainly not possible to tell all of her story here. See the **Dictionary of Canadian Biography** on-line for more details. <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/>

She arrived in Ville Marie in 1653. In 1658 Marguerite Bourgeoys opened the first school in Montréal, in an abandoned stable near what is now the church of Notre-Dame de Bon Secours. In the next year, she founded a community of uncloistered women dedicated to education and charitable works. This was at a time when women who entered religious orders were not generally given the freedom to leave the cloistered life and work in the secular world. The order Marguerite established eventually became known as the **Congrégation de Notre-Dame de Montréal** (C.N.D.).

Three hundred years after Marguerite set up her school in a lowly stable, I was graduated from a small

high school in Detroit, taught by a community of women who were very definitely active in the secular world, the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (I.H.M. Sisters). At that time the name Marguerite Bourgeoys was not unknown to me. I had heard it often, whenever my father unrolled the bundle of drawings he had made during his school days many years before. Dad had based his pencil versions on illustrations he had seen. Periodically, Dad would show me these yellowing sheets of about 18 by 12 inches in size and tell me the stories he had learned about several of the important persons of New France and Canada. Marguerite Bourgeoys – with her compassion and her commitment to free education for all, male and female, European or Native, of whatever social level – thus became a role-model for me. I still have this precious roll of drawings, now close to ninety-years old.⁴

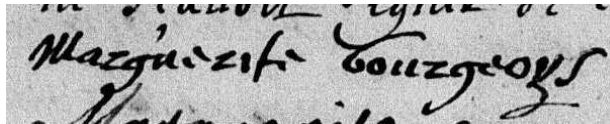
On returning from a visit to Montréal in 1995, I was delighted to show several people the photos I had taken, including one of a statue of Marguerite Bourgeoys erected in Old Montréal on Rue Notre-Dame Est, between Blvd. St-Laurent and Place Vauquelin. She is depicted as a teacher with two of her students. As my **Access**[®] guide to the city describes it, the lawn and fountain dedicated to Ste. Marguerite de Bourgeoys Square “separates the new courthouse [Palais de Justice] from the old one. ... The bronze sculpture-fountain unveiled in 1988 portrays [her] helping two children over stepping stones across the basin of the fountain.”⁵ Marguerite looks directly at the children, her right arm and fingers pointing towards the new *Palais de Justice*, while at the same time she reaches out her left hand to a boy who is stretching his right arm towards her over the water. Behind the boy on a higher rock, a girl extends her left foot forward, as if ready to jump onto the lower rock the boy is about to leave. When I saw the memorial, I smiled.



An in-law who saw my photograph of the memorial cynically commented: “They put up a statue to honor a teacher?” Suddenly realizing he was saying this to someone who had spent thirty-one years as a teacher, he quickly, and sheepishly, retracted his words. All I could do was smile once again and add that perhaps the fact Marguerite was now Sainte Marguerite Bourgeoys would impress him more.

Sainte Marguerite Bourgeoys’s recent biographer, Patricia Simpson, maintains, though, that one of Marguerite’s most important contributions to posterity was her acting out of her belief “that people, and therefore society, can be changed if only they can be enabled ‘to understand,’ an object of all education.”⁶

The presence of Catherine Sommillard at my ancestress Marguerite Anthiaume’s wedding brings Marguerite Bourgeoys that much closer to me. I even learned recently in researching the Sommillard sisters that Marguerite Bourgeoys attended her niece Louise Sommillard’s marriage to Francois Fortin *dit* Plermel on 9 July 1674 and signed the record, a photocopy of which I have now added to my collection.

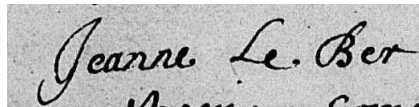
A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored paper. The signature reads "Marguerite Bourgeoys" in a cursive script. The name "Marguerite" is written on the top line, and "Bourgeoys" is written on the line below it. The ink is slightly faded and the paper shows some texture.

FamilySearch, Notre-Dame de Montréal, 1667-1680, image 114 of 138

Louise Sommillard’s sisters, Catherine and Marguerite, did not marry. Marguerite pronounced her vows as a C.N.D. in the same year as Marguerite Anthiaume’s marriage, 1676, and died tragically on 6 December, buried on the 7th, 1683, as the result of a fire that destroyed the mother house. Catherine also took her vows in 1676, using the name Soeur de la Purification, C.N.D. In the census of 1681, said to be twenty-six, she resided with the sisters, so she would have been about twenty-one when she signed in 1676. She died 16 and was buried 18 August 1699, predeceasing Marguerite Anthiaume by only about two months.

Marguerite Bourgeoys died on 12 January, the anniversary of Marguerite Anthiaume’s marriage, and was buried 13 January 1700, at Montréal. Having been born and baptized in 1620 on 17 April, she was not quite eighty years old.

The last single woman who witnessed the Jarret de Beauregard marriage was fourteen-year-old **Jeanne Le Ber**, whose very rich father also attended.

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored paper. The signature reads "Jeanne Le Ber" in a cursive script. The name "Jeanne" is written on the top line, and "Le Ber" is written on the line below it. The ink is slightly faded and the paper shows some texture.

She must have left the Ursuline convent in Québec City to spend time with her family during the Christmas season, as she is usually documented as being a boarder at the Ursuline convent from April 1674 to 1677. Hers is another most interesting story that you can read in the **Dictionary of Canadian Biography** on-line. In about 1679 she voluntarily shut herself up in a cell attached to the C.N.D. chapel, and devoted herself for the rest of her life to prayer, personal mortifications, making and embroidering gorgeous linens for use in religious services (some of which survive), and supporting, through her inheritance from her wealthy family, many charitable works.

If it is true that the friends we choose say something about us, this cluster of single women with strong, independent characters and devotion to religious and charitable works speaks volumes about Marguerite Anthiaume. Then again, it may simply be that they were the ones who chose to honor Marguerite with their attendance as she began her married life. Either way, the signatures are a window into the society and the values of New France, values which have come down through the years to my family and me.

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville
February 2005, 2013 version

¹ Michel Langlois, Tome I, cited in my previous articles.

² Basic details about the individuals in this article are taken from Jetté, unless otherwise noted.

³ Michel Langlois, Tome I and IV.

⁴ Dad could not have known that the image he saw of Marguerite Bourgeoys had been painted over the original drawn by Pierre Le Ber, brother of Jeanne Le Ber, at the death bed of Sainte Marguerite Bourgeoys. This discovery was made only in more modern times and the original restored in 1962. See Patricia Simpson, CND, **Marguerite Bourgeoys and Montreal**, 1640-1665, McGill-Queens University Press, 1997, paperback reprint 1998.

⁵ **Montréal / Québec City**, Access@ Press, 1994. This same guidebook also reports that just a block or so from the memorial to Marguerite Bourgeoys is a McDonald's restaurant, "the only McDonald's on a landmark site – the former homestead of Antoine Laumet de Lamothe [*sic*], Sieur de Cadillac, founder of Detroit and Governor of Louisiana, according to the plaque on the south wall."



Photo taken by me, 1995. Red sign is McDonald's; spire in the background is Notre-Dame Church.

Like many historical plaques, this one is not totally accurate because it was not erected with full knowledge of the surviving documents, although I was not aware of this when I ate a hamburger there in 1995. It is true that in 1695-96 Cadillac's wife rented rooms on this site, but her husband is documented in Michilimackinac serving as commandant at the time she was to occupy it, and she moved to another rental the following year, 1696. Cadillac did not return to the mother colony until the summer of 1697. It was definitely not Cadillac's "homestead," a particularly United States American word.

See Notary Basset, no. 2253, 25 septembre 1694, *Bail a Loyer par Mons' dela Mothe luciere et Mons' dela Mothe Cadillac*. Although the title establishes the contract between these two men, Madame Cadillac, Marie Thérèse Guyon, was acting with her husband's permission to rent for one year, beginning

1 May next, 1695, property on rue Notre-Dame in a building next to the prison. The rental consisted of one heated room (with a *feu* or fireplace), a basement (*cave*) and a *grenier*, most probably a small attic in this context, not a granary, with use of half of the garden (*jardin*) on the side of the prison and half of the ice box (*glacière*) on the property, but the tenant would have to furnish half of the ice and could draw water from the well on the property. She also had the right to occupy a room the same size as the first when it became available in October of 1695. She was allowed to bake bread on the property during the said year without this affecting her total rent of 200 *livres du pais* (money of New France) for the year, to be paid in installments every three months, beginning 1 August the following year, 1695. She signed the document *Marie therese Guyon*, with *paraphe*. There is no known relationship between Dominique de Lamothe, sieur de Lucière, whom Jetté says arrived as a companion of La Salle in 1678, and Antoine Laumet *dit* de Lamothe Cadillac. The sieur de Lucière signed the document *DlaMotte Dluchiere*, with *paraphe*, as did his wife, Marie Alix dela Feullée, *la feullee*. Photocopy from ANQ. A *paraphe* is a fancy squiggle or design added to a signature and sometimes used in place of a signature on other parts of a document.

⁶ Simpson, p. 18.