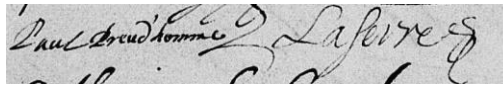


The Marriage of André Jarret de Beaugregard and Marguerite Anthiaume
Part 6
12 January 1676
The Last of the Witnesses: an example of social diversity

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville

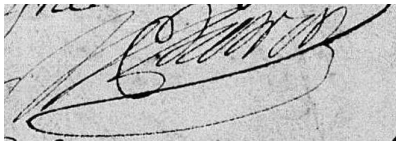
Four members of the influential Le Moyne family and one from the Legardeur family, Catherine, wife of Charles d'Ailleboust, witnessed the Jarret de Beaugregard marriage contract. No fewer than seven of the men present as witnesses at André's marriage contract are specifically described as *escuyers*, or recognized members of the higher social class of New France, and several others were important persons in the colony. Another five, however, who signed the church marriage record and whom I have not yet considered in these articles were of more obscure social status.

Two men, **Paul Prudhomme** and **La Serre**, are not even mentioned in the text of either the contract or the church record, but they did sign the church document.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, likely from a church record. The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored paper. The name 'Paul Prudhomme' is clearly legible on the left, and 'La Serre' is written on the right. The signature is somewhat stylized and appears to be a single continuous stroke.

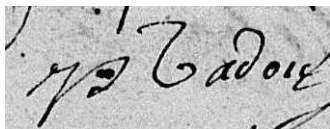
La Serre appears to be Jean La Serre. In the census of 1681, according to Jetté, La Serre was a twenty-five-year-old domestic servant of Jean Baptiste Migeon, *sieur de Branssat*, also present at the marriage. Master and servant thus both joined in the celebration, if this is the right man. Paul Prudhomme, born 27, baptized 28 February 1654 at Montréal, about to be twenty-two in 1676, must be the son of Louis Prudhomme, a brewer and the first militia captain of Montréal. Louis Prudhomme had died in 1671, but André could have come to know the family during the incursions against the Iroquois after his arrival with his company. Paul Prudhomme seems to disappear from the records by the census of 1681, but in 1683 his brother, Pierre Prudhomme, received a concession in fief from Cavalier de La Salle at an Illinois fort, a place that still carries his name.

Two other men present and mentioned in the text held crucially important occupations in a frontier society like New France: as a merchant, as a master locksmith (*serrurier*) and as an arms maker (*armorier* or *arquebusier*). One of the several merchants in attendance, **Jean Jacques Patron**, may have documented his presence in New France for the first time at the Jarret de Beaugregard marriage, according to Jetté. Uncle of the now-famous **Daniel Greysolon Dulhut**, who was also a witness at the contract, Patron may have helped finance Dulhut's early explorations. See my earlier article. Patron would be buried at Montréal, said to be fifty-five, in June of 1688.

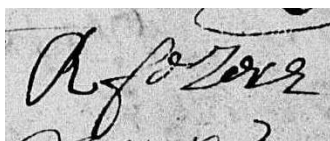
A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, likely from a church record. The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored paper. The name 'Jean Jacques Patron' is clearly legible. The signature is somewhat stylized and appears to be a single continuous stroke.

I have mentioned the arms maker, **Pierre Gadois**, before in these articles, but the infamous trial for sorcery with which he was involved should not overshadow the rest of his life. He was also a member of the militia of Montréal, and it is most likely in this capacity that he met André, who, as a Carignan soldier, was stationed in Montréal. Pierre's skills in making and repairing arms would have been invaluable to André and the soldiers under him. Pierre Gadois became a *marguillier*, church warden, an active member of his guild, and by 1681 was proprietor of a domaine of 30 developed *arpents* of land.

His biographer suggests he was able to “arrange” an advantageous marriage for his daughter, Jeanne-Françoise, who married the merchant **Antoine Hattanville**. Pierre became a respected bourgeois. And his son Jacques Gadois *dit* Mauger, like his father, has an entry in the **Dictionary of Canadian Biography**. Jacques became a silversmith and merchant. Another Gadois daughter, Thérèse, married **Henri-Jules Lefournier, sieur DuVivier**, a lieutenant in the year of his marriage, who would become a *Chevalier de St-Louis* in 1726.

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read 'Jacques Gadois'.

René Fézeret, a master locksmith, also an armorer and gun maker, later became a fur merchant and was in partnership with others in Illinois territory for a while and also elsewhere in the *pays d'en haut*.

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read 'René Fézeret'.

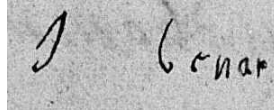
He had married **Marie Carlié**, like Marguerite Anthiaume from Paris. She was present at the marriage contract with her husband. Her name was evidently first omitted in the text, but it appears as a side-bar addition. I can see her insisting that her name be added when the reading aloud of the record was made! She would give birth to her third son in May of 1676. The Fézeret couple could not have known as they attended this marriage that three of their several sons would be killed in *Louisiane* in the service of the king before the end of the century.

René Fézeret is characteristic of so many immigrants to New France. He is described in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* in this way:

Fézeret affords an intriguing example of someone who rose in society. To be a tradesman, then a member of the bourgeoisie, and finally a seigneur whose daughter married into the nobility of the long robe (she married François-Gabriel de Thiersant), required adroitness, tact, and perseverance; Fézeret lacked none of these qualities. He was, moreover, greatly helped by his wife, Marie Carlié, whom he married in Montreal on 11 Nov. 1670; a stubbornly litigious person, she kept the jurisdiction of Montreal and the Conseil Souverain busy. <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/index.html>

Although this biographer calls Fézeret’s wife a “stubbornly litigious person,” Marie Carlié was certainly not alone of her gender to request, even demand, justice in the courts of her day in New France, as she was entitled to do. I am always amazed to see modern commentators call the pursuit of justice “stubborn,” especially when the pursuit is conducted by a woman. But they are all male historians!

The society of New France was not nearly as stratified along gender or social lines as some historians have made it out to have been. Those present at André’s and Marguerite’s wedding demonstrate undeniably that men and women of all walks of life joined to counsel the new couple, to sign as witnesses, and to celebrate with them. Pierre Gadois’s name may be the last listed among the men who witnessed the marriage contract, and his wife, Jeanne Bénard, last to sign among the women who signed the church document;



but these “ordinary” people were apparently as welcome as the more notable ones. I have seen this mixture of social classes on many other marriage records.

It may have been a case of *noblesse oblige* for the leaders of the colony, male and female, to act as godparents and give their names to recently-arrived immigrants, demobilized soldiers, and *Filles du Roi*, or to Native American converts, and even to formerly-enemy English prisoners taken in war raids in the American colonies. The leaders’ presence at the marriages of these individuals is also striking, and evidence exists some even furnished *dots*, dowries, for the brides, and provided shelter for the young prisoners. Whether it was *noblesse oblige* or a genuine concern, the “newcomers” must have felt welcomed and supported by the men and women who took time to attend the formal rituals of marriage and baptism.

The wedding celebration concluded, André and Marguerite traveled from Montréal across Rivière Saint-Laurent to André’s home in Verchères. Did they voyage in a *carriole*, a horse-drawn sleigh, gliding over the frozen river?



Habitant en carriole, Cornelius Krieghoff, Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, C-04666. Online MIKAN no. 2896003

The Carignan Regiment had, after all, brought the first horses to New France. Several generations later, and in the same cold month of January, one of the Jarret de Beaugard descendants, my mother, and her new husband, Jean Boivin, would repeat this journey on their *voyage de nocés*, their wedding trip, traveling even farther than André and Marguerite on their way to visit my widowed and almost-blind grandfather. My parents snuggled together under heavy furs for the about forty-mile journey to St. Guillaume d’Upton, with their feet on bricks that had been heated in a fire and a flask of brandy to warm them. It always sounded so romantic to me when Mom told and retold this story as I was growing up! I wish I had researched her ancestors in time to have told her that they made a similar wedding voyage.

The 1676 newly-married couple arrived in Verchères in time for Marguerite to serve as godmother of a child who had been born there on Christmas Day, *Toussaint Geaufriau*. This son of Pierre Geoffrion and Marie Priault, as I’ve already mentioned, was baptized at Verchères in the home of *M[onsieur] Jared* by visiting priest Father Pierre de Caumont of Boucherville on 14 January 1676, just two days after

Marguerite married André in Montréal. Godfather was Toussaint Lucas, a demobilized Carignan soldier who gave the baby his first name, *Toussaint*, All Saints. The act was recorded in the registers of Boucherville and, as presented by PRDH, identifies Marguerite as wife of André.¹ Toussaint Lucas's wife, Marguerite Charpentier, had declared her parish of residence as Saint-Étienne-du-Mont in Paris, at their marriage 11 June 1669, so Marguerite began her married life with an older woman, a *Parisienne* like Marguerite, close by. This is not the only time the Lucas couple would be documented together with the Jarret de Beauregard couple.

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville
March 2005, revised and images added, 2013 version

¹ The original on microfilm is almost unreadable. All factual details for this article taken from Jetté, PRDH, or DCB. Digital images from FamilySearch site.