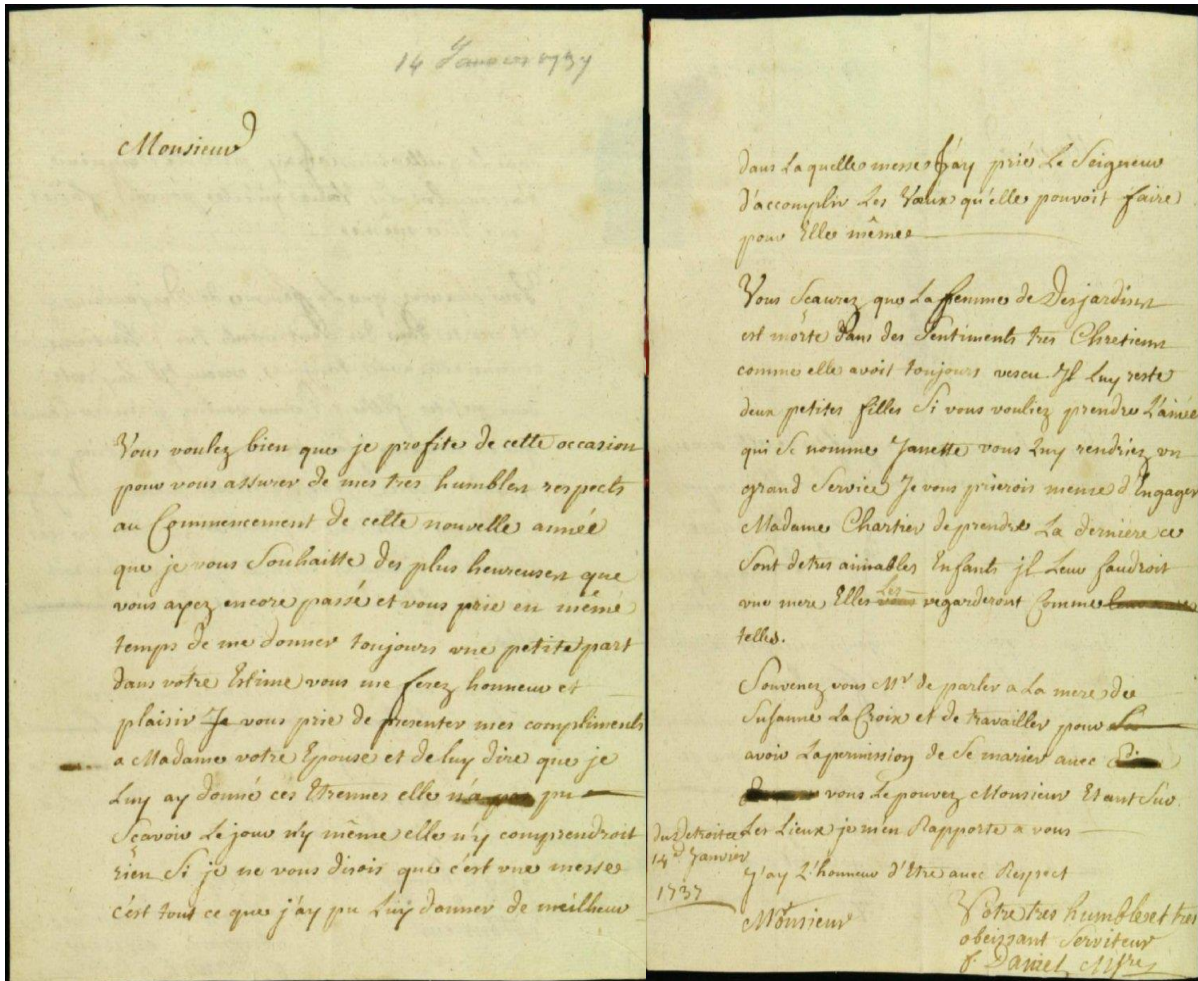


A Letter from Frère Prisque Daniel at Détroit to Charles Dauteüil in Montréal, 14 January 1737

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What a joy it is to find an authentic document that gives hints of the personality of a Récollet priest who served at Ste. Anne de Detroit in the eighteenth century! Until I found his letter, he was only a name to me, and an obscure one at that. George Paré, in *The Catholic Church in Detroit*, mentions **Frère Prisque Daniel** only once, reporting that he signed the register of Ste. Anne de Detroit from 31 August 1735 to 19 June 1738 during the absence of Father Bonaventure.¹ The letter also provides details of life at an eighteenth-century French-Canadian parish and mentions some of its parishioners. My transcription of Frère Daniel's letter is not presented line-by-line but in a modern adaptation. There are three digital images of it available at *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec* (BAnQ): two pages of the letter itself (shown below) and the outside envelope complete with blotches of what appear to be red sealing wax, addressed to *Monsieur Dauteüil* in Montréal. I have had to guess at punctuation.



¹ George Paré, *The Catholic Church in Detroit* (Detroit: The Gabriel Richard Press, 1951), 191. Paré adds that Daniel is “practically unknown. He is not even mentioned in Tanguay’s *Répertoire*.” His first signature can be seen at Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954, D > Détroit, Ste-Anne; Autres Registres > 1704-1744 > image 137 of 198, and the last at image 156. Special thanks to FCHSM member Al Trudeau for his suggestions about this article.

Father Daniel's letter, BAnQ TL4,S1,D4390²

14 January 1737

Monsieur

You understand that I take advantage of this occasion to assure you of my very humble respect for you at the beginning of this New Year, that I wish you the happiest year of your life; at the same time I beg you to always grant me a small measure of your esteem; it would be an honor and a pleasure for me. I ask you to give my compliments to Madame, your wife [**Thérèse Catin**],³ and to tell her that I have given her this New Year's gift. She could not have known the day I did it nor would she even understand what I am saying if you do not tell her that my gift is a Mass [that I said for her intentions]. It is all that I was able to give her, but it is the best gift. [end p. 1] At this Mass, I prayed the Lord to grant her those requests she might have made for herself.

You will learn that the wife of **Desjardins [Charlotte Catin]**⁴ died in the sentiments of a true Christian, as she had always lived. She has left two young daughters. If you are willing to take the elder, who is named **Janette**,⁵ you would give her a big help. I would even ask you to engage **Madame Chartier [Catherine Catin]**⁶ to take the younger daughter [**Marie Anne**].⁷ They are very lovable children. They have need of a mother and would consider anyone who cared for them as their mother.

Remember to speak to the mother of **Suzanne La Croix**⁸ and work to obtain her permission for Suzanne to marry [two words crossed out, but I can make out *Pierre Reaume*], if you can, Monsieur; since you are at that place [Montréal], I rely on you

From Detroit

14 January

1737 I have the honor to be, with respect,
Monsieur,

Your very humble and very
obedient servant,
f. Daniel Mis^sionary

² *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec*, 6 - Centre d'archives de Montréal de BAnQ, COTE: TL4,S1,D4390, Titre: Lettre du frère [Daniel?], missionnaire à Détroit, adressée à monsieur d'Auteuil au sujet de prise en charge de mineurs - 14 janvier 1737 [... on the subject of arranging for the care of minors"].

³ **Thérèse Catin**, 1st marriage: 19 Mar 1710 Montréal, **Simon Réaume**; 2nd marriage: 27 Sep 1734 Montréal, **Charles Ruette Dauteüil**, *Programme de Recherche en Démographie Historique* (PRDH). Father Daniel's respect and esteem for Thérèse counter-balance the negative perception of her presented by Joseph L. Peysner, who wrote about her and treats her unfairly, as I see it, including calling her a "contentious butcher's daughter," in "The Fall and Rise of Thérèse Catin: A Portrait from Indiana's French and Canadian History," *Indiana Magazine of History* (XCI, December, 1995), 361-377. Peysner accurately reports: "Thérèse Catin became the first woman to make a business investment in what is now the state of Indiana. On 11 June 1735, the commandant of Fort Miami [now Fort Wayne, Indiana], Philippe Damours de La Morandière, signed an agreement" with her that transferred to her the Miami post. This is where Pierre Roy & Marguerite OuabanKiKoué, formerly of Fort Pontchartrain, had established their family by 1720. See my articles in *MHH* about this Roy family. {Also on FCHSM website}

⁴ **Jean Baptiste Verger dit Desjardins & Charlotte Catin** m. 15 May 1713 Montréal, PRDH Marriage #48100. She was buried 19 Dec 1736. Ancestry.ca, Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954, D > Détroit, Ste-Anne; Autres Registres > 1704-1744, image 147 of 198.

⁵ **Marie Jeanne Verger dite Desjardins**, b. 29 Apr 1729, Ste. Anne de Detroit, PRDH Family #11481.

⁶ **Catherine Catin & Pierre Chartier** m. 27 Nov 1717 Montréal, PRDH Marriage #48222. She is the sister of Charlotte and Thérèse Catin and also **Jeanne Cécile Catin** m. **Jacques Campeau** 1 Dec 1699 Montréal, PRDH Marriage #47776.

⁷ **Marie Anne Verger dite Desjardins**, b. 16 Nov 1733 Montréal, PRDH Family #11481.

⁸ **Suzanne LaCroix**, born 8, baptized 9 Aug 1709 Montréal; m. **Pierre Réaume** 20 Jan 1738 at Ste. Anne de Detroit, PRDH Family #8387. Suzanne's parents are **Louis Hubert dit La Croix & Marie Madeleine Trottier**. Pierre's parents are **Robert Réaume & Élisabeth Brunet dite Belhumeur**, my ancestors.

I do not know when (or even if) **Marie Madeleine Trottier**, the mother of **Suzanne Hubert dite La Croix**, granted her daughter permission to marry, but Suzanne did marry, at the age of 28, **Pierre Réaume** the following year on 20 January 1738.⁹ Father Daniel officiated at the church ceremony. Two daughters of Suzanne La Croix and Pierre Réaume, Charlotte and Suzanne, grew up to marry—within days of each other—distinguished men in the society of eighteenth-century Detroit. Father Daniel may have been happy to know his efforts to obtain permission for Suzanne to marry resulted, indirectly, in these unions: Charlotte with **Pierre Charles Daneau sieur de Muy** at Ste. Anne du Détroit on 4 November 1760, and Suzanne with **Jacques Baby dit Duperron** twenty-two days later on 23 November 1760.¹⁰ Then, on 29 December, **François Marie Picoté de Belestre**, the last French commandant of the fort at Detroit, turned it over to the British.¹¹ Picoté de Belestre had become commandant after the 18 May 1758 death of the former commandant of the fort, Charles's father, **Jacques Pierre Daneau de Muy**. Jacques Baby *dit* Duperron and his wife made Detroit their home and prospered, both financially and in their large family. Dale Miquelon, in his biography of Baby in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, says "11 of their 22 children survived to adulthood."¹²

And what was the fate of the two motherless Desjardins sisters? Jeanne Verger *dite* Desjardins married Jacques Janot *dit* Lachapelle 14 October 1754 at Repentigny. Her sister Marie Anne wed Jean Baptiste Goulet 3 February 1755, also at Repentigny.¹³ I do not know whether their Catin aunts, Thérèse and Catherine, agreed to see to their well being as a result of Father Daniel's request, but I do know that their father, Jean Baptiste Verger *dit* Desjardins, did not remarry until a year and a half after his wife's death, to Anne Marguerite Baudouin, widow of Nicolas Legare, on 9 June 1738, also at Repentigny.¹⁴

A simple two-page letter from a priest who cared about his parishioners may well have influenced history.

⁹ Ancestry.ca, Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954, D > Détroit, Ste-Anne; Autres Registres > 1704-1744, image 155 of 198. Father Daniel also baptized their first child, named **Charlotte Susanne Réaume**, the last act he signed in the register, 19 June 1738, image 156 of 198. Godparents were *Mr. Damours & Madame Desnoyelle*. PRDH does not show the birth or baptism of Charlotte Susanne or of her sister Suzanne, indicating only that "Marie Charlotte" was born "before 1738" and Suzanne "before 1740" in "pays-d'en-Haut," PRDH Family #20621. Suzanne Réaume's baptism 13 Sep 1740 is on image 164 of 198; godparents were *Louis Campeau and therese barrois femme de Pierre la Butte dit Chesne*.

¹⁰ PRDH Family #20621.

¹¹ See *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (DCBO) for biographies of François Marie Picoté de Belestre by Pierre Tousignant and Madeleine Dionne-Tousignant; Jacques Baby *dit* Duperron by Dale Miquelon; and Jacques Pierre Daneau de Muy by Malcolm MacLeod. Jacques Pierre Daneau de Muy m. 30 Jan. 1725 at Montreal to Louise Geneviève Ruelle Dauteüil, sister of Charles Dauteüil, the recipient of Father Daniel's 1737 letter. The Baby and Réaume marriage can be viewed at Ancestry.ca, Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954, D > Détroit, Ste-Anne > 1702-1780, image 96 of 238, and the Daneau de Muy and Réaume marriage on image 97 of 238.

¹² DCBO, Dale Miquelon biography of Jacques Baby *dit* Duperron. PRDH lists only one son, Jacques, born 10 Jul 1761 Montréal. He died 29 Jul 1761, Family #37218. I am sure Baby Creek, where I played as a child at Patton Park in downriver Detroit, was named after him or his family.

¹³ PRDH Family #11481.

¹⁴ PRDH Couple #20765.

Additions 2014:



L' H^{BLE} JACQUES BABY.
Archives de Montréal

The Honorable Jacques Baby (Archives de Montréal)

<http://archivesdemontreal.ica-atom.org/lhble-jacques-baby-18;rad>

Individual

74981

JACQUES **BABY DUPERRON** Status(es) : Died outside of Québec

Father : RAYMOND **BABY**

Mother : MARIE THERESE **LECOMPTE DUPRE**

[Family](#)

Birth : 1731-01-03

Baptism : [1731-01-04](#) [Montréal](#)

Death : 1789-08-02 **Ste-Anne-de-Détroit**

[First marriage](#) : 1760-11-23 Ste-Anne-de-Détroit

with

[SUZANNE REAUME](#)

Father : PIERRE **REAUME**

Mother : SUZANNE **HUBERT LACROIX**

[Family](#)

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