

Madeleine de Verchères and Marguerite Anthiaume Truth or Fiction ?

It always amazes me when I learn that my ancestors and relatives from different lines knew each other, little realizing that one of their descendants would write about them many years later. In another article, I reported that **Madeleine de Verchères**, an ancestral cousin of mine, served as godmother for Jean Leroy, son of one of my sixth great-grandmothers, Simone Baudet, and her second husband, François Leroy.¹ Madeleine de Verchères also knew **Marguerite Anthiaume**, who was, in fact, Madeleine's aunt-by-marriage, as well as one of my seventh great-grandmothers.

Madeleine Jarret de Verchère's "exploits" at her father's fort in 1692 have assumed legendary proportions, in part because of her own testimony, but, equally importantly, because of what historians and writers of historical fiction have done with her story, not to mention tourist bureaus. One of the most recent articles about this phenomenon was written by Marcel Trudel, "Madeleine de Verchères, créatrice de sa propre légende" (Madeleine de Verchères, creator of her own legend), in *Mythes et réalités dans l'histoire du Québec*.² The primary source for Madeleine's story has survived in two different versions, one written by her in 1699, when she was 21, seven years after the event recorded, and only 270 words long, and another, about 1900 words long, dated by 1732, forty years after, when she was 54. Two contemporaries also wrote versions, La Potherie in 1700 and Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix in 1721, probably using La Potherie as his source.³ Trudel analyzes the differences between the two versions attributed to Madeleine and also discusses the "embellishments" made to the story in more recent years.

Madeleine's mother, Marie Perrault, had "held down the fort" two years prior to the 1692 event. Some critics wonder whether Madeleine, when the second account was written, combined details from the two different sieges.⁴ The first version, dated 15 October 1699 (ten days after Marguerite's burial!), was a letter to the Countess de Maurepas requesting that Madeleine's brother be made an *enseigne* and asking for a pension for her impoverished father, who would die in February of 1700. A pension was granted to Madeleine, to be used for her mother's benefit, and her brother received the military promotion. The second version, the much more dramatic one, can be dated no later than 1732, some say 1722, but it was published only in 1901. The second account is said to have been commissioned by order of Monsieur de Beauharnois, then governor of Canada,⁵ and it launched the modern-day legend after its publication.

I was initially attracted to the story as it appears in secondary sources because of its sheer romance, but then I learned that Madeleine mentions by name one of my seventh great-grandmothers, Marguerite Anthiaume, wife of André Jarret de Beauregard in her first marriage in 1676, and of Pierre Fontaine *dit* Bienvenue in her second marriage. She was the wife of *sieur* Fontaine when the events Madeleine de Verchères narrates occurred.

This specific reference to Marguerite Anthiaume, not often mentioned in the secondary sources, has survived because during the Iroquois attack of the fort at Verchères in October, 1692, Marguerite attracted the attention of Madeleine de Verchères, her niece, daughter of François Jarret de Verchères, half-brother of André Jarret de Beauregard. Because I am committed to resurrecting the stories of those ordinary people who, for the most part, did not make it into the main stream historical or legendary record, I commemorated the encounter between Marguerite and Madeleine in a prose poem,⁶ one I wrote many years ago. Here is my most recent version of the poem.

In Memory of Marguerite

My grandmother Marguerite Anthiaume
—eight generations ago—was "chicken"
or was so accused by
Madeleine de Verchères,
her then fourteen-year-old niece,
who later received a pension
from Louis XIV, King of France,
for her version of the event,
now a French-Canadian legend:

At eight in the morning
on October 22, 1692,
at the fort of Verchères,
Nouvelle France,
Madeleine,
surprised by 45 Iroquois marauders,
bullets whistling past her ears,
raced for the fort,
thwarting an Indian whose hand
snatched
her kerchief from her neck.

With twenty colonists taken prisoner, and wives wailing the loss of their husbands,
Madeleine,
her parents being absent,
quickly took charge and
singlehandedly,
except for two soldiers,
a man of eighty,
a servant named La Violette,
and her two brothers
(ages twelve and ten),
defended the fort,
a man's hat on her head,
tricking the attackers into believing
dozens of soldiers held guard.

"TO ARMS!"
she cried.

She fired the canon, alerting neighbors, and
then rescued my grandmother Marguerite Anthiaume, widow of André Jarret de Beauregard,
along with her second husband, Pierre Fontaine,
and her Jarret de Beauregard children,
who, arriving by canoe,
were trapped near the river.
In full sight of the Iroquois,
Madeleine led the frightened family safely inside.

For all that night,
in snow and wind and hail,
and for another full week
of constant alarms,
(one account alleges)
the valiant group survived the siege.

Madeleine herself swore
she did not eat or sleep for forty-eight hours.

Then the French equivalent of the cavalry
arrived with forty (or a hundred?) men.

Roused from dozing
with her head on a table,
her gun across her arms,
Madeleine de Verchères
(as she much later reported),
saluted Lieutenant La Monnerie,
and said:

"Monsieur, I surrender my arms to you."

He gallantly replied:

"Mademoiselle, they are in good hands."

"Better than you think!" she retorted with spunk.

But Madeleine, what did you think of your Aunt Marguerite?

You alleged,
(and I quote)
that confined to the blockhouse with the other women, my grandmother

"Mademoiselle Marguerite Anthiaume, the wife
of the Sieur de Fontaine,
being extremely nervous,
like all the women of this
country who have come from Paris,
insisted on being transported to another fort."

You report that her husband, Pierre Fontaine, gallantly said, in reply:
"I will never abandon this fort while Mademoiselle Madelon [Madeleine] is here."

Marguerite was "extremely nervous,"
a Parisian girl, not born
in *Nouvelle France*, like you,
but she was better than you thought

She was so "nervous" that she had

left her home in Paris before you were even born;
endured a treacherous voyage across the Atlantic;
married, at age twenty-three, on January 12, 1676,
André Jarret de Beauregard,
eleven years her senior, officer and veteran of the wars against the Iroquois.
She bore him seven children;
mourned the death of a daughter;
mourned his death,
a massacre
by the Iroquois with his corpse never found;
carried her husband's posthumous child, Vincent, to a safe delivery;
remarried, on April 13, 1692,
six months
before the attack at Verchères,
Pierre Fontaine.
She bore four children for him,
one of whom, Marie-Thérèse Fontaine,
she carried under her heart
on the day of the attack in 1692;
died after giving life to her last Fontaine child,
October 4, 1699,
at about age forty-six.

Yet to fourteen-year-old Madeleine de Verchères,
Marguerite Anthiaume was "chicken".

She was better than you thought, Madeleine.
Better than you thought. . .

Madeleine de Verchères

And what was the destiny of Madeleine de Verchères? In 1706 at Verchères, age twenty-eight, she married Pierre-Thomas Tarieu, *sieur* de La Nouguère and de La Pérade, son of Thomas, an ensign in the Company of St-Ours in the Carignan Regiment, and Marguerite-Renée Denis. Her husband had inherited the family's *seigneurie* of La Pérade and was granted an adjacent *seigneurie*, called Tarieu, in 1700. She bore him five children, two girls and three boys, one of whom died at birth. She was involved in much litigation and at one time proclaimed that "she had never shed a tear,"⁷ but this later part of her long life (she was 69 when she died) is relatively unknown; what most people know about Madeleine is the legend, in part of her own creation, that has evolved about the siege of Verchères in 1692.

Writing in 1908, Charles W. Colby has the following comment:

[The] conversation with La Monnerie shows that the heroine of Verchères not only knew how to do a brave deed, but knew how to do it in good style. "Playing the game" with all the spirit which a lively Celtic disposition could impart, she remains a bright, alluring figure, perennially young, like the maidens on Keats's Grecian Urn.⁸

The Statue of Madeleine de Verchères

Madeleine's physical image was not recorded for posterity on a Grecian Urn or otherwise. The twenty-foot bronze statue erected in her memory on the riverbank at Verchères is far less fragile than a Grecian Urn. It is imposing and dramatic. The work of Louis-Philippe Hébert, this Madeleine stands atop a stone pedestal at least twice her height.



She stares out over the St. Lawrence River, a sentinel, her long hair in a braid, a man's hat on her head, a gun held across her body with her right elbow cocked. She looks older than fourteen. The folds of bronze reveal her outer skirt swept back as if she had just taken a decisive step forward. The skirt is shorter than might be expected by those who do not know that seventeenth-century ladies had adopted Indian fashion for its greater maneuverability; her feet are clad in sturdy men's shoes: frontier style. The purloined kerchief has been (miraculously?) returned to her neck. Her chin thrust up and forward, she challenges any aggressor.⁹

To Keats, as he contemplated his Grecian Urn, “beauty is truth and truth beauty”. However much at odds with the factual truth or however much it has been mythologized, Madeleine's tale is a parable expressing the truth of youthful courage, even at great odds, and of the invulnerability of an unlikely champion. The need for parables like this has played itself out time and again, in recent years especially in the stories told and told again about soldier Jessica Lynch and the passengers of the hijacked plane that crashed into the ground in Pennsylvania on 9/11/2001.

Marguerite's life can be another parable, more mature than Madeleine's in many ways, but no less essential to the survival of an individual or of a nation. As I see her, Marguerite's life is like her name. Like a pearl, the derivation of her name from the Latin, Marguerite had built up layers of nacre, the substance exuded by the oyster to defend itself from the irritating grains of sand caught in its shell, paradoxically creating a beautiful and precious jewel, a fragile jewel, although not as fragile as the daisy, one French meaning of Marguerite's name. It is not surprising to me that, with six young children, she

wished to leave the poorly-defended fort for a safer place, especially since her first husband had died at the hands of the Iroquois, just one of the “irritating grains of sand” in her lifetime. Yet she had moved on by marrying a new husband, seeing to the needs of her Jarret de Beauregard children, and by giving life to more children, three more than she had lost in her first marriage.

Marguerite Anthiaume may not be a well-known name or a magnet for tourists, as is Madeleine de Verchères; but countless others like Marguerite, our maternal ancestors, acknowledged and faced their fears without bravado and without exaggeration, and quietly filled their lives with devotion to that which they held dear. We need both stories. More importantly, we need to know when we are reading one—an embellished version—and not the other. I myself marvel at the beauty in the factual truth about the life of Marguerite.

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville
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Jarret de Beauregard Lineage of Suzanne Boivin Sommerville

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I André Jarret S ^f de Beauregard (Jean Jarret & Pierrette Sermette) ¹⁰	12 Jan 1676 Montréal	Marguerite Anthiaume (Michel & Marie Dubois) ¹¹
II Joseph Jarret de Beauregard	26 Nov 1714 Boucherville	Jeanne Joachim (Bernard & Marguerite Pépin)
III François Marie Jarret de Beauregard	16 Jan 1747 Verchères	Thérèse Charron <i>dite</i> Cabana (Charles & Élizabeth Poupard)
IV François Jarret <i>dit</i> Beauregard	1 Oct 1781 St. Denis	Marie Geneviève Ledoux (François & Marie Maheux)
V François Jarret <i>dit</i> Beauregard	17 Jul 1807 St. Denis	Marie Louise Bergeron (Joseph & Françoise Paquet)
VI Louis Jarret <i>dit</i> Beauregard	30 Aug 1842 St. Charles, Richelieu	Zoë Meunier <i>dite</i> Lapierre (Augustin & Marie Joseph Bussière)
VII Marie Rose Jarret <i>dite</i> Beauregard	20 Feb 1882 St. Hugues de Bagot	Édouard Dupuis (Joseph & Théotiste Vanasse)
VIII Anna Dupuis	25 Dec 1925 Ottawa, Ontario	Jean Boivin (Joseph & Paulexine [Marie Alexine] Benoît)
IX Suzanne Boivin		George Sommerville (Archibald & Jennie Clark Currie)

**Descent from a second son of André Jarret S^r de Beauregard & Marguerite Anthiaume
that Intersects with my Direct Maternal Line**
Suzanne Boivin Sommerville

My *Fille du Roi* in this line, **Marie Grandin**, gave as her home parish St-Eubert, Orléans, in the Val de Loire, France, not very far north of the area cited as the original home of *Helena* by Sykes, *The Daughters of Eve*.

Marie Le Jeune X Michel Grandin
Loire Valley, France, before 1651

Marie Grandin X Jean Baudet
(Sébastien Baudet and Marie Baudonier of Blanzay near Poitiers)
23 September 1670 Québec City
(marriage contract by notary Becquet on 7 September 1670 at Québec City)

Simone Baudet X Michel Pineau
(remarried to François Roy dit Videbouteille before 27 December 1714)
4 July 1689 Cap Santé

Catherine Pineau X **Vincent Jarret de Beauregard [André Jarret S^r de Beauregard & Marguerite Anthiaume]**
26 April 1716 Boucherville

Madeleine Jarret de Beauregard X Jean-Baptiste Vivier
10 August 1766 Verchères

Marie-Josèph Vivier X Jean-Marie Bussière
21 October 1793 Verchères

Marie-Josèph Bussière X Augustin Meunier dit Lapierre
22 February 1813 Verchères

Zoë Meunier dite LaPierre X Louis Jarret de Beauregard
30 August 1842 St-Charles Richelieu, Québec

Marie-Rose Jarret *dite* Beauregard X Édouard Dupuis {My mother knew the last name only as Beauregard.}
20 February 1882 St-Hugues de Bagot, Québec

Anna Dupuis X Jean Boivin

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville

H3ac

“H3 is the second most common branch of H. Like H1, it is found mainly in Western Europe. However, H3 is not found in significant frequencies in the Near East. It is at its highest frequency in Iberia and Sardinia, and is about 16,000 years old. While some H3 samples have been found in the Near East, they may be present there due to more recent migrations from Europe.” From FamilyTree DNA

Extra Mutations 315.1C, 522.1A, 522.2C, C8410Y, Missing Mutations: none



Marie-Rose Jarret dite Beauregard, wife of Édouard Dupuis

¹ PRDH #8963 La Pérade 1714-12-27.

² Marcel Trudel, "Madeleine de Verchères, créatrice de sa propre légende," *Mythes et réalités dans l'histoire du Québec*, Éditions Hurtubise HMH, Cahiers du Québec. 2001, pp. 139-157. He considers the second version: "Bref, une pièce littéraire, qui réunit les conditions pour satisfaire les amateurs de grandes aventures." In short, a literary piece, which brings together all the conditions (techniques) to satisfy those who love high (exaggerated or heroic) adventures.

³ See André Vachon's biography of Madeleine de Verchères in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. 3, 308-313. He also considers the question of the truth or fiction of the story and decides the second version is closer to fiction than fact. The prisoners taken during the siege were later redeemed by a band of allied Indians who located them near Lake Champlain. Perhaps two people died. See endnote 6.

⁴ André Vachon, *Madeleine de Verchères*, Cahier No. 21, Collection "Nôtre Passé." Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade: Les amis de l'histoire de La Pérade, 1978. See also Francis Parkman, *France and England in North America*, Vol. II, The Library of America, 1983 reprint of 1877 "Count Frontenac and New France, pp. 220-24; and *Nos Racines, L'Histoire vivante des Québécois*, for other versions. There are many, many more, including a very recent historical novel that provides images of the fort drawn as if it were one of the great Medieval fortresses.

⁵ Trudel. The 1722 date must be in error because Beauharnois did not become governor until a year after the death of Governor Vaudreuil in 1725.

⁶ My sources are numerous, including the two versions attributed to Madeleine herself. The French words I translate as "extremely nervous" are actually "extrêmement peureuse", extremely afraid, or "chicken". I chose the word "nervous" to create a series of sibilant sounds in the words *nervous*, *this*, and *Paris* (as it is pronounced in English). I wanted to create the effect of Madeleine "hissing" her disdain for the *Parisiennes*, the women who had emigrated from Paris. Perhaps "timorous" would be a better choice. Marguerite's husband, it is said, actually offered to put her in a canoe armed with a sail, with her two children: *avec vos deux enfants qui savent bien canoter*, who know

well how to paddle a canoe, to take Marguerite to Contrecoeur, three *lieues* (about nine miles) away. Just months earlier, Marguerite had commissioned the inventory of her deceased husband's possessions. On the 12 April 1692 document written by Benigne Bassett, she declares she has five surviving children: Anne, ten; François, six; Louis, four; Joseph, two; and Vincent, about three months. (Photocopy) The two eldest children of October 1692 were thus a girl about ten and a boy, six years old! Amazing!

For the French text of both versions attributed to Madeleine, see Diane Gervais and Serge Lusignan, "De Jeanne d'Arc à Madeleine de Verchères: la femme guerrière dans la société d'Ancien Régime [From Jeanne d'Arc to Madeleine de Verchères: the woman warrior in the society of the *Ancien Régime*]," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*," Vol. 53, no. 2, automne 1999, 171-206.

I have not yet been able to locate any Lieutenant "La Monnerie", nor have I seen him identified by anyone else as an actual person. There was a Jacques Maleray, *sieur de La Molerie*, lieutenant in 1691. (Sounds of /l/ and /n/ and /r/ are sometimes confused.) He was killed when the English pirated the ship *La Seine* as it was returning to Canada in 1704, so he definitely would have been deceased at the time of the second version, if he is "La Monnerie". See his interesting story in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. A search of the National Archives of Canada's ArchiviaNet turned up a "La Monnerie", in 1707, but I have not yet found anything else. As for the discrepancy between the 40 men Madeleine's second report says came to her rescue and the 100, no number appears in the first version, but La Potherie reported the figure of 100. Vachon reports: "the alarm was spread with canon from one fort to another as far as Montreal—certainly the same day, since the seige began at eight in the morning; 'scarcely was this known than the Chevalier de Crizafi [Thomas Crisafy? Or his brother?] was sent by water with one hundred men ... while fifty Indians hastened by land. ... Monsieur de Crizafy arrived an hour after the Iroquois had withdrawn, but our Indians [the allied or domiciled Indians] caught up with them at Lake Champlain after a six-day march.'" *DCB*, Vol. 3, 310. Some say Crisafy went to the rescue of Madeleine's mother in 1690. Notice that Madeleine does not report the role played by the Indians allied to the French in saving the captured colonists.

⁷ Vachon, *DCB*, p. 312.

⁸ Charles W. Colby, *Canadian Types of the Old Regime 1608-1698*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1908, pp. 342-43.

⁹ I visited Verchères in September of 1995 and took this photo. For an image that shows the scale of the statue, see http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/cseh-twih/archives2_E.asp?id=289

Google returned more than 800 references to "Madeleine de Verchères" and about 200 for Marguerite Anthiaume, including one in which the author evidently believes Marguerite was a *Fille du Roi*. She probably wasn't, as it seems she emigrated after the program had been discontinued. This author does not understand the "dot" / dowry Marguerite brought with her, and he portrays her as frivolous, even saying

After having surveyed her swarm of suitors, she decided on Antoine de la Jardiere, son of a rich banker and affluent...of hopes. Three weeks of engagement were carried on to the evening everyone was hopeful of a signed contract. But the fiance did not show up there; he was killed on the way by a band of Iroquois.

Mlle. Anthiaume spent six weeks in tears & seclusion. When she reappeared at the fetes, most of the bachelors were no longer single & it was a pain finding a partner for the minuet or the pavane. Only Andre de Beauregard, silent & somber presented himself.

Tired of resisting, seeing her treasure disappearing & judging that she would soon be reduced to placing herself as a servant.. or returning to Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs, Marguerite married him the 12 Jan 1676. [All as copied and pasted.]

PRDH shows no "Antoine de la Jardiere"; nor am I aware any such marriage contract was drawn up, much less canceled; nor is it likely the Iroquois would have been attacking colonists in 1675. <http://www.ilos.net/~lhowland/html-fr/anthiaum.txt>

The above Web site also imagines Marguerite brought with her a 300 *livres* “dowry”. In fact, the marriage contract for Marguerite and André stipulates that Marguerite is bringing 1000 *livres* worth of *meubles, habits, bagues joyeaux* (furniture, clothing, and jewelry) for which André gave her a quit claim. He himself promised her a *douaire préfix* of 1200 *livres tournois*, or, at her choice, the customary *douaire*, widow’s dower, after his death, and she would retain the possessions she brought to the marriage. 12 January 1676, marriage contract between *André Jarret Sieur de beauregard et damoiselle Marguerite hantiaume [sic]*, Notary Bassett, photocopy. These details are cited in the inventory document as well. See my article about the Custom of Paris and the *douaire* offered by the future husband as distinguished from the *dot* brought by the wife.

PRDH shows four Fountain children for Marguerite and Pierre, and seven Jarret de Beauregard, not eight, for Marguerite and André, the “Judith” of the 1681 census apparently now identified by PRDH as the “Anne” born in 1681.

The “precisions” continue. And so it goes . . .

¹⁰ On the marriage records said to be of the parish of Roye, Diocese of Vienne in Dauphiné, France. André Jarret de Beauregard was baptized in Salagnon, France, on 9 August 1642, the baptismal record reading: “son of Jehan Jarret and of Perrette Selmet [*sic*] his mother, godfather Jean Savin of rual Godmother Enarde Patricot.” Marthe F.-Beauregard, “L’origine, en France, d’André Jarret de Beauregard,” *Mémoires de la Société Généalogique Canadienne-Française*, Vol. 37, no. 3, Automne 1986, p. 177. His parents inhabited the Rual de Chapeaucornu near Vignieu: north west of Grenoble; north east of Vienne; east of Lyon; south of the Rhône in Isère. A “rual” is a kind of alley or small path and “Chapeaucornu” means hat with horns. His half-brother François Jarret de Verchères, father of Madeleine de Verchères, had a different mother. Both men arrived with the Carignan Salière regiment.

¹¹ Marguerite is said to be of the parish of St-Nicolas-des-Champs, “rue Martin” in Paris, France.