

## The Melansons, an Acadian Family

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville

[Note in 2014: as this section was written by 2000 and researched even earlier, any refinements are welcome.]

The Acadian ancestress of my paternal grandmother Paulexine Benoît is **Marie-Anne Menançon** (Melançon, Melanson), who married **Louis Aide-Créquy** (20 June 1762, contract Auger, Québec, Church record not extant).

#340339 Lieu indéterminé (au Québec) 1762-06-20

Rang Nom Âge É.m. Pr. Sexe

01 LOUIS CHRQUI CONJOINT DE 02 Résidence : ST-LOUIS-DE-LOTBINIERE 030 c p m

-----  
02 ANNE MELANCON CONJOINT DE 01 Résidence : ST-LOUIS-DE-LOTBINIERE 020 --- p f

-----  
03 JEAN BAPTISTE CHRQUI PERE DE 01 --- --- --- m

-----  
04 MARIE LOUISE MESERER MERE DE 01 --- --- --- f

-----  
05 PIERRE MELANCON FRERE [Brother] DE 02 --- --- --- p m

-----  
06 AUGER Profession : NOTAIRE --- --- --- p m

-----  
PRDH Online

Daughter of **Jean Melanson (Meunson)** and **Marie Lanoux**, she was born about 1742 at Port-Royal and would have been thirteen in 1755, the year of the Grand Dérangement. I do not know if she was still in Acadia then. [See note below added in 2008.] Sometime before 1762, however, her family made its way to the Lotbinière area where, according to Bona Arsenault, they established themselves.

The story of her father's people, the Melansons, is an interesting one that has evoked much speculation. Jean, the son of Charles and Anne Bourg (Bernard and Françoise Brun), married Marie Lanoux (Pierre and Marie Granger) 15 January 1742 at Port Royal. Six children were born to the couple, the last in 1753, just two years before the deportations. Jean Melanson was the fourth child of eight born to Charles Melanson and Anne Bourg between 1701 and 1731. His father, also a Charles, born 1675, had been the seventh child of thirteen born to Charles Melanson and Marie Dugas (Abraham and Marguerite Doucet?) between 1664 and 1693.

Charles Melanson, also called or *dit* La Ramée, my first ancestor with the Melanson name, and his brother Pierre, who signed his name Mellanson, arrived probably on one of Sir Thomas Temple's vessels in 1657. They abjured Protestantism before their marriages at Port-Royal. A Memoire of **Antoine Laumet dit de Lamothe Cadillac**, dated 1692, mentions “deux Écossais,” living in Acadia, “dont la Mère vivait à Boston,”<sup>1</sup> two Scotsmen whose mother lived in Boston.<sup>2</sup> Cadillac's words notwithstanding, Père Adrien Bergeron, S.S.S., author of *Le Grand Arrangement des Acadiens*, maintains the two Melansons were the

---

<sup>1</sup> Bona Arsenault, *History of the Acadians*, Leméac, 1978, an English translation of *Histoire et Généalogie des Acadiens*, Vol. 2, p. 686.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen White's *Dictionnaire Généalogique des Familles Acadians* (1999) gives as the source of Cadillac's comment (ANF, Col. C11D, vol X, fol 11), p. 1146. Cadillac said he saw the two brothers, whom he calls “Écossais,” aged 60 and 65, in 1685, married to French women. He also claims he saw their mother, aged 90, at Boston in 1692.

children of **Pierre Laverdure**, a Huguenot Frenchman, and **Priscilla Mellanson**, an Englishwoman.<sup>3</sup>

Supporting Bergeron, Father Clarence-J. Entremont supplies the following details from the documents he has examined. He cites a 1720 letter from Captain John Adams, merchant at Annapolis-Royal, in a letter to Honorable Paul Dudley, judge of the Superior Court in Massachusetts, mentioning Pierre Mellanson, of Mines, who he says is “an English gentleman come to the country with Sir Thomas Temple.” To Adams, a contemporary who also arrived in 1657, Pierre was English.

In another article Entremont gives more details:

It would appear that it was a result of the fall of La Rochelle in 1628, when the death-blow was delivered to the Calvinists in France, that Pierre Laverdure went to England, where he married, perhaps around 1630 or 1631, Priscilla. They had at least three sons, all born in England, two of whom were Pierre and Charles Melanson, known historically as Acadians. According to two censuses of Acadia, Pierre was born in 1632 or 1633. Since he had the same name as his father, one could presume that he was the oldest.

In the spring of 1657, the family embarked from England on board the vessel *Satisfaction*, under command of Captain Peter Butler, forming part of the “company” which Thomas Temple was transporting to Acadia, over which he had been named as Governor after its capture by the English. Having first stopped at Boston, where on the 6th of July (o.s.), Thomas Temple presented his letters of appointment, Captain Butler next went to the fort on the St. John River, where a group of his passengers disembarked, and finally to Port Royal, where the others were to be settled. It appears that the Melanson family stopped at Fort St. John.<sup>4</sup>

Entremont adds that after the Treaty of Breda in 1667 ceding Acadia to France, the father and mother of the Melansons, “who up until then had lived, it seems, at Saint-Jean River, sought refuge with the protestant government in Boston, taking with them their son John.”<sup>5</sup>

#### A Pirate in the Family

This John, in 1675 and 1676, became a pirate terrorizing the coast of Maine and Cap Sable. He had “gone towards the end of winter 1676 or at the beginning of spring with Henry Lawton to Cape Sable where by trickery they attracted on board their vessel a certain number of Indians whom they sold as slaves in the Azores, on Fayal Island.”<sup>6</sup> He and his companions were apprehended, bail was fixed, and John took flight, forfeiting the bail put forth by Samuel Sendall, “whom the mother Priscilla calls her landlord.”<sup>7</sup> John's mother then appealed to the Governor of Massachusetts and his council. (Archives of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, for the county of Suffolk, volume 18, f. 1592.) Entremont quotes the petition:

The humble petition of Priscilla Leverdure [sic], desolated widow of the deceased Peter

---

<sup>3</sup> Clarence-J. D'Entremont, ptre., "Les Melançon n'ont rien d'Écossais," *Mémoires de la Société Généalogique Canadienne Française*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4, Décembre 1984, p. 272.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Clarence J. D'Entremont, "The Melansons of Acadia Had a French Father and an English Mother," *French Canadian and Acadian Genealogical Review*, Vol. VI, No. 1, Spring 1978, p. 53. The abbreviation o.s. refers to Old Style.

<sup>5</sup> Entremont, "Les Melançon," p. 273.

<sup>6</sup> Entremont, "The Melansons," p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> Entremont, "The Melansons," p. 54.

Laverdure.

Your petitioner is an Englishwoman, widow of the said Peter Leverdure, French and protestant, who, having lost everything he had and having lived in great poverty, is come to place herself under the government to remove herself from the wrath of her papist neighbors at the fort of [the river of] Saint Jean and its neighborhood. The unhappy affair concerning her son John weighs heavily on her heart, driving her to her [other] son, who lives in the region, hoping to find him with his brothers and to force him to see reason. But to her great disappointment, having heard nothing of him, not having seen him, and knowing nothing about what has happened to him, he who had been the mainstay of her old age, and who alone had supported her with his work, she being very old, all of this has struck her to the heart, leaving your humble petitioner a widow, poor, and pitiable.<sup>8</sup>

Entremont believes Pierre Laverdure died

during the winter of 1676-77, or at least between August 1676 and May 1677, when, on the 3d of this month (o.s.), the widow Laverdure asked the authorities of Boston to reimburse, at least in part, her landlord for the money which he had posted for her son, so that he would not seize the little that remained to her. This plea however was refused by a decision of the magistrates, dated the 29th of the same month.<sup>9</sup>

A John **Melleson**, who married Sarah and had five children, the first born 20 December 1681 (o.s.), appears in Boston records and may be the pirate who skipped bail. His companions were acquitted.<sup>10</sup>

Entremont explains the variation in surnames by saying that during the English rule in Acadia, and certainly in Boston, the French name Laverdure would have been suspect; he hypothesizes that the young men took their mother's more-English-sounding name: Mellanson and affirms that Mallinsons can be found in the English county of Yorkshire during Priscilla's time. Mellanson eventually became Frenchified into **Melançon** and even **Menançon** in French records.

The *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* states:

MELANSON, CHARLES, ploughman, settler; b. 1643; d. some time before 1700.

Historians agree neither on his ethnic origin nor on the date of his arrival in Canada. Undeniably, he "came from Scotland"; but, as a notarial contract designated him "Sieur de La Ramée," and as his brother Pierre was nicknamed "La Verdure," Placide Gaudet concluded that the family might have been of French origin, and that, because it was Huguenot, it might have emigrated to Scotland, whence it went to Acadia. Some writers claim that the Melansons belonged to the settlement founded by sir William Alexander, the younger. According to Placide Gaudet, the family arrived in the colony in 1657 with Governor Temple; it settled at Port-Royal; later it is thought to have emigrated to Boston, leaving in Acadia Pierre and Charles, the only members of the family whose names have been preserved in history.

The elder, Pierre, dit La Verdure, a tailor, husband of Marie-Marguerite Mius d'Entremont, was one of the founders of Grand-Pré. Charles, a "*laboureur*"

---

<sup>8</sup> Entremont, "Les Melançon," pp. 273-74.

<sup>9</sup> Entremont, "The Melansons," p. 54.

<sup>10</sup> Entremont, "The Melansons," p. 54.

(ploughman), according to the 1671 census, worked the paternal estate and became prosperous; in 1664, after renouncing Protestantism, he married Marie Dugas, by whom he had several children. Their descendants have been numerous.<sup>11</sup>

The author of another article suggests that being called English at the time could include Scots, Irish, or, may I add, even Welsh?<sup>12</sup> Cadillac told a number of lies in his time, but was he in error to call the Melanson brothers Scots? Twice in declarations made at Belle-Isle-en-Mer, Melanson descendants averred being of Scottish ancestry, “although in the same declarations, seven times, the descendants says [*sic*] that their ancestors Pierre and Charles Melanson are definitely 'from England', and 'who better than they could tell us where their ancestors came from?’”<sup>13</sup>

While I certainly cannot decide who is right, I can add that Marie Granger, the mother of Jean Melanson's wife Marie Lanoue, descended from an Englishman from Plymouth, England, Laurent Granger, who also may have arrived with Sir Thomas Templeton. Were these descendants “keeping it in the family?”

### The Lanoue Family

The addition of a pirate to my forebears, while it is interesting enough in itself, cannot surpass the presence of Marie Lanoue, wife of Jean Melanson, in the family tree. Born in 1720 the daughter of Pierre Lanoue<sup>14</sup> (Lanneau, La Noue, Lanoux) and Marie Granger, who had married at Port Royal, 21 November 1702, she had a brother René, born 1710, who married Marguerite Richard (Michel and Agnès Bourgeois) on 8 January 1732 at Port-Royal. René died in Port-Royal in 1751. His wife was deported to South Carolina with four of her seven sons: Jean-Baptiste (b. 1738), Grégoire (b. 1741), **Basile** (b. 1746), and François (b. 1750). She and François died of smallpox at Mr. Vanderhost's plantation in South Carolina where they were set to work alongside the slaves. Basile Lanoue was brought up a protestant after working on the Vanderhost plantation, and improved his lot such that in 1796, 1798, and 1802, he was elected a deputy in the Legislature and became a very influential citizen in Charleston.<sup>15</sup> He married twice:

first to Suzanne Frizelle or Thomas, a French Huguenot who emigrated to Charleston from England in 1764. Basile married secondly 1796 at Charleston to Anne Vinyard, also known as Hannah, born 1768 of German extraction, the daughter of John Vinyard

---

<sup>11</sup> Clément Cormier, "Melanson, Charles," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volume I, University of Toronto Press, 1979, pp. 499-500.

<sup>12</sup> Michel Thibault, "Les 'Anglais' ne sont pas toujours Anglais, exemple des Melançon," *MSGCF*, Vol XXXV, No. 3, Septembre 1984, pp. 204-05.

<sup>13</sup> Entremont, "The Melansons," p. 55.

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Lanoue was the son of Pierre, who married Jeanne Gauterot about 1681 at Port-Royal. Jeanne's parents were François Gauterot, born about 1613 at Martaizé, Loudun, Vienne, according to Massignon, and Edmée Lejeune. They arrived about 1636 and had eleven children between 1636 and 1668, according to Arsenault, Volume 2, p. 566. Jeanne Gauterot was their tenth child. Marie Lanoue was thus both a third and fourth generation Acadian. **{Note 2014: I have not yet checked these references with Stephen White's extensive and wonderful refinements of the Acadian records.}**

<sup>15</sup> Cited by François Lanoue, ptre., "La Famille Lanoue en Acadie et dans Joliette-Lanaudière," *MSGCF*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, Mars 1983, pp. 24-34, from J. Chapman, *Exile without an end*, Milling, 1943. Dates and names cited by Bona Arsenault, *Histoire et Généalogie des Acadiens*, Volume 2, Port-Royal, Carleton, Quebec: Television de la Baie des Chaleurs, 1988, p. 632.

and Ammie Mortimer. They had nine children, five dying young.<sup>16</sup>

By one of the surviving children, Marie Lanoue's nephew became the ancestor of **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** through his mother, Sara Delano, the name Lanoue having undergone this Anglicization. At least Father François Lanoue believes this to be the case. Thus a simple Acadian contributed to the genetic makeup of a distinguished president of the United States, although an online ancestry of Roosevelt does not show this. The author of the article from which I learned of the connection between the Lanoue family and the Delano family also pointed out that his great-aunt Lida Lanoue bore a remarkable resemblance to the Roosevelts. Two of Basile Lanoue's brothers, Amand and Pierre, settled at Grosses-Coques à la baie Sainte-Marie.<sup>17</sup> [Note in 2014: I would love to hear about any further research that has been done to either refute or confirm Father Lanoue's article.]

Unlike her nephew, Marie Lanoue did not, as far as I know, endure exile to a distant land. Her daughter Marie-Anne *Menançon*, after her marriage to Louis Aide-Créquy, lived in the poor parish of Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, where her daughter Marie-Louise Créqui gave birth to at least one apparently-illegitimate child while married to Joseph Chartier and acknowledged this relationship at her daughter's marriage to Olivier Benoît. (See Benoît section.) After her husband's, Louis Créqui's, death, Marie-Anne Menançon remarried to Isidore Tousignant, a widower, on 25 January 1773 at Lotbinière, the site of her parents' refuge from Acadia.

PRDH #222317 Lotbinière 1773-01-25

Rang Nom Âge É.m. Pr. Sexe

01 ISIDORE TOUSIGNANT --- c p m

-----  
02 MARIE MENANCON --- v p f

-----  
03 ANTOINE MICHEL TOUSIGNANT PERE DE 01 --- --- --- m

-----  
04 AGATHE HUBERT MERE DE 01 --- --- d f

-----  
05 LOUIS CRIQUIS CONJOINT DE 02 --- --- d [deceased] m

-----  
• "BAPTISTE AUGÉ, ISIDORE PORTELANCE, BAPTISTE TOUSIGNANT, MICHEL JEAN LOUIS AUGÉ, PARAIN FRÈRE, BEAU-FRÈRE DE L'ÉPOUX" • "FRANÇOIS BELANGE PÈRE, DE PIERRE MAILLOT, FRANÇOIS BELANGE FILS, DE MICHEL LECLAIRE, DE PETIT FILS, BEAUX-FRÈRES, NEVEU ET AMIS DE L'ÉPOUSE"  
PRDH Online

Two more Melançon daughters had married, in 1774 and 1766, at Lotbinière. Perhaps Marie-Anne was comforted to be near the exiled Acadian community. Her children remained in the Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines region. See the Benoît section of this Family History for their story.

### **Addition 2010:**

Message to Susan Colby in 2008 when I was proofreading her article: I enjoyed your account [for *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*], Susan, especially the mention on p. 2 of the Acadians who took over a ship and escaped deportation. The ship was the *Pembroke*, and one of my ancestors, Marie Melanson, daughter of Jean and Marie Josephe Lanoue, is believed to have been on board. Her father and mother and three young siblings died in the smallpox epidemic and were buried in Québec City in 1758. I have located the records since Drouin became available on Ancestry. [These digital images are copied on a flash drive currently, 2014, stored elsewhere.]

---

<sup>16</sup> Janet B. Jehn, *Corrections and Additions to Arsenault's Histoire et Généalogie des Acadiens*, p. 10. (R929.3716, J Mich. Coll, Mt Clemens Library). Citing *Bazile Lanneau of Charleston 1746-1833*, Mowbray & Norwood, Goldsboro, N.C., 1985.

<sup>17</sup> Arsenault, Volume 2, p. 632.

Marie married Louis Créqui (Aide dit Créqui), marriage contract Auger, 20 June 1762, and settled in Ste-Anne-des-Plaines. She later married Isidore Tousignant. Two other sisters also married.

My source is Michael Melanson's 2004 massive genealogy of the Melansons. He cites a 1994 Stephen White article that I have not yet been able to obtain.

The full citation for Michael B. Melanson's book is *Melanson - Melançon, The Genealogy of an Acadian and Cajun Family*, Dracut, Massachusetts: Lanesville Publishing, 2004 (1041 pages), pp. 32-33 and pp. 68-69.

Susan Colby's article "Returning to Acadie," appeared in *MHH*, Vol. 30, #1 – January 2009.