

**Pigs and a Vision: “a certain glimpse of realities seldom found in textbooks” from the Lives of Madeleine Bourgerie and Anne Baillargeon**

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When I began using the computer for my genealogical research back in the days of dial-up connection to the internet, I joined the French-Canadian section of CompuServe's North American Roots Forum. Although that forum no longer exists, I saved a number of posts from my conversations there. One of these conversations, in 1998 with H el ene Lamarche,<sup>1</sup> mentioned that **Madeleine Bourgerie** (Jean Baptiste and Marie Gendre)<sup>2</sup> and **Anne Baillargeon** (Mathurin and Marie M etayer)<sup>3</sup> had been rescued by the troops of Marquis de Tracy during the Carignan Sali ere Regiment's initiatives against the Iroquois in 1666. She cited *Les Ursulines de Qu ebec*.<sup>4</sup> I have recently read the original source. Here is my translation:

Two young French girls from our countryside, taken by the Indians in their childhood, had been held among a large number of war prisoners<sup>5</sup> beyond Lake Gannentaha (today the State of New York). They were bought back and returned to the country [New France] by the Marquis de Tracy, who had them enrolled in our boarding school. It was with true interest that we [the authors of *Les Ursulines de Qu ebec*] recently discovered their names on the old register of the Monastery [of the Ursulines]. Here are the words in the document. “On 28 May 1666 were enrolled Marie M. Bourgerie, fifteen years old, and Anne Baillargeon, eighteen years old, who had been taken by the Iroquois and returned to our country by our troops. They were left [here] by *Mgr.* de Tracy to be educated. It is this good lord who is to pay for their pension at forty-eight * cus* per year.”<sup>6</sup>

At the arrival of these young girls at the Monastery a very touching incident took place. Upon noticing in the hall of the Community the portrait of Mother [*M ere*] St. Joseph, who died in 1652, Anne Baillargeon cried out, uncontrollably [*toute hors d'elle-m eme*] “Ah! It is she, she is the one who spoke to me; she wore the same habit [the same religious clothing as shown in the portrait]!” Our Mothers [Ursuline nuns], strongly astonished, asked her to explain her words. She told them that, having been made captive at the age of nine years old, she developed such a fondness for living a free and wandering life in the middle of the forest that she had determined to spend the rest of her days among the Indians. When the

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<sup>1</sup> H el ene Lamarche subsequently became the editor of *M emoires de la Soci et  g en alogique canadienne-fran aise* and is currently the editor. My thanks to her for all of the information we have shared these many years.

<sup>2</sup> Ren  Jett , *Dictionnaire g en alogique des familles du Qu ebec des origines   1730* (Montr al: Les Presses de l'Universit  de Montr al: 1983), 152.

<sup>3</sup> Jett , 40

<sup>4</sup> Comment posted on 10/12/1998 by H el ene Lamarche, citing *Les Ursulines de Qu ebec* ( ditions Darveau, 1863).

<sup>5</sup> A passage from the *Jesuit Relations* for 1666 reports: “Finally it was ascertained — from the **prisoners captured in some frontier cabins** which were seized, and from the Commander of a hamlet inhabited by the Dutch of new Holland — that most of the Agnieronnons [Mohawk] and Onneiouthronnons [Oneida] had pushed on still farther, to make war on some other peoples, called “porcelain-makers,” and had left only the children and infirm old men in their villages: And so it was seen to be useless to proceed farther on an expedition [33] which had produced all the effect that had been expected, owing to the alarm it had spread throughout all those Nations, who were haughty and perfidious only because they believed themselves inaccessible to our troops. The latter did not return, however, until they had killed a number of Savages [*Sauvages*] who appeared from time to time on the edge of the woods to skirmish with our forces. *Sieur* d'Aiguemorte and some of our soldiers were also killed in pursuing them.” Could this be a reference to the rescue of Madeleine and Anne among the “prisoners captured”? Chapter III, 33-34. [http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/rerelations/rerelations\\_50.html](http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/rerelations/rerelations_50.html)

<sup>6</sup> One * cu* equaled three *livres*.

French had forced these barbarians to release their prisoners, Anne Baillargeon hid herself in the woods in fear of being forced to leave her Indian family who had adopted her. But at the moment when she felt herself to be in safety there, a religious sister appeared to her and threatened to punish her severely if she did not return with the French. Seized with fear, she left the woods and went to reunite herself with the other captives who were being liberated. *Monsieur* de Tracy found her near the young Madeleine Bourgerie; he adopted both of them and wanted very much to see to their well-being and education.<sup>7</sup>

In their biography of *Mère St. Joseph*, the nuns writing *Les Ursulines de Québec* identify her as Marie de la Troche, born at the château de St. Germain in Anjou on 7 September 1616.<sup>8</sup> In 1639, **Marie Savonnières de La Troche dite Marie de Saint-Joseph**<sup>9</sup> was one of the women who had accompanied **Marie Guyart**,<sup>10</sup> now **Sainte Marie de l'Incarnation**, to New France. Mother St. Joseph was loved by the Huron Indians, who continued to honor her after her death.



Premières religieuses ursulines avec des étudiantes indiennes, à Québec (Vers 1931), Batchelor, Lawrence R., Aquarelle, Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, 1983-45-1 – <http://grandquebec.com/capitale-quebec/hotel-dieu-quebec/>

Marie-Emmanuel Chabot concludes her biography of *Mère St. Thomas* with these words:

To honour her companion and favourite nun, Marie de l'Incarnation composed an obituary in the form of a booklet that is of great interest despite its somewhat conventual tone. This document, most of which was incorporated into the *Relation* for 1652, provides ample proof that Mother Marie de Saint-Joseph was an exceptional woman and one of the glories of the Church in Canada.<sup>11</sup>

Anne Baillargeon's vision is not the only recorded appearance of Mother St. Thomas interceding for the inhabitants of New France after her death. The Jesuit Paul Ragueneau, in this *Relation* of 1652, as quoted by the nuns, reported that, one hour after she had been buried, she appeared to a man who was on his way to perform an act of charity. The same man, caught on the suddenly thin ice of the St. Lawrence River between Québec City and Isle d'Orléans, heard a voice cry out to him, "Stop, there!" Recommending

<sup>7</sup> Mère Sainte-Marie and Mère Saint-Thomas, *Les Ursulines de Québec depuis leur établissement jusqu'à nos jours* [ressource électronique] (Éditions Darveau, 1863), Tome 1: 251-52, read at: <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=aeu.ark:/13960/t4sj27b34;view=1up;seq=10>

<sup>8</sup> *Les Ursulines*, 180.

<sup>9</sup> Marie-Emmanuel Chabot, o.s.u., "SAVONNIÈRES DE LA TROCHE, MARIE DE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 17, 2015, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/savonnières\\_de\\_la\\_troche\\_marie\\_de\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/savonnières_de_la_troche_marie_de_1E.html).

<sup>10</sup> Marie-Emmanuel Chabot o.s.u., "GUYART, MARIE, dite Marie de l'Incarnation," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 17, 2015, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/guyart\\_marie\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/guyart_marie_1E.html).

<sup>11</sup> Chabot, "Savonnières," DCB.

himself to the protection of Mother St. Joseph, he felt a peace overcome him and returned to dry land. Once on solid ground, he realized that he had apparently walked back on top of the water, and he offered thanks for this miracle.<sup>12</sup> Anne Baillargeon, in recalling her vision in the forest of the Iroquois, is thus not the only one to have testified to the influence of Mother St. Joseph in their lives. But what would her future and the future of Madeleine Bourgery be after their rescue from the Iroquois? The nuns report:

One of them, after having spent some time in our classes, tried out the religious life. She spent several months in the novitiate as a converse sister [*soeur converse*, one who did the domestic labor for the community], but since this kind of life did not please her, she resolved to return to the world, where her companion had been advantageously settled for several months.<sup>13</sup>

For the family of Anne Baillargeon, see the article by Gail Moreau-DesHarnais.<sup>14</sup> H  l  ne Lamarche continues the story of Madeleine Bourgery:

Madeleine Bourgery, daughter of Jean Baptiste Bourgery and Marie Gendre, had been baptized in Three-Rivers on July 22, 1652. After a year or so with the Ursulines (thus cutting the expenses of the good lord), she married Jean Beaune,<sup>15</sup> a soldier of the Carignan regiment. The very one, maybe, who had delivered her? At this point this is pure romantic speculation...

Jean Beaune and Madeleine Bourgery were among the early settlers of Lachine, the first parish opened west of Montreal. Which meant that Madeleine wasn't through yet, with the Iroquois...

In 1689, Madeleine Bourgery would again have to deal with an encounter with them; and, once again, it is to nuns, the Congregation Notre-Dame, that H  l  ne Lamarche turned to find out whether any further details might have been preserved. I quote in full the rest of Lamarche's message on CompuServe so many years ago, with only a few minor textual corrections:

Peace with the Iroquois lasted for 15 years or so. Madeleine's husband, Jean Beaune, died January 24 1687; he had been, noted the parish priest Pierre R  my, half-paralyzed for some years. Soon after, war broke out and on August 5, 1689 the parish of Lachine was raided and sacked by the Iroquois.

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<sup>12</sup> *Les Ursulines*, 193-94.

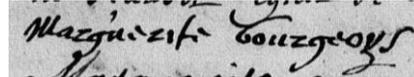
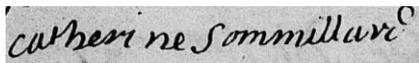
<sup>13</sup> *Les Ursulines*, 252.

<sup>14</sup> Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, "Bocade > Bocage > Baillargeon: Who was David Bocade? [1854 (*sic*) - 1927]: Part 1," *Michigan's Habitant Heritage* (MHH), Vol. 35, #4, October 2014, 173-187.

<sup>15</sup> Research by Diane Wolford Sheppard, a descendant of Jean Beaune and Marie Madeleine Bourgery through their daughter Marie Cl  mence Beaune who married L  on Girard, on the Bourgery – Beaune Family: Marie Madeleine Bourgery and Jean Beaune were the parents of eight children; three of their children had ties to Michigan. Albert Beaune was part of the 1703 and 1704 convoys to D  trot. Jacques Campeau hired Albert Beaune to travel to D  trot in 1708. He lived in Fort St. Joseph with his second wife, Marie Anne Ferron; two children were born there in 1720 and 1722 [Jett  , 70; E.Z. Massicotte, "R  pertoire des engagements pour l'ouest conserv  s dans les Archives Judiciaires de Montr  al (1670-1778)," *Rapport de L'archiviste de la Province de Qu  bec pour 1929-1930* (Qu  bec: R  dempti Paradis, 1930), 208, 209, 212]. On 7 July 1708, Cadillac granted lot 54 in Fort Pontchartrain to Antoine Fran  ois Beaune [Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, *Tracking Land Concessions in D  trot and Fort Pontchartrain* ([http://www.habitantheritage.org/french-canadian\\_resources/land\\_and\\_census\\_information](http://www.habitantheritage.org/french-canadian_resources/land_and_census_information)). Marie Anne Beaune, widow of Fran  ois Lory, married Martin Cirier *dit* Argenteuil, son of Nicolas Cirier and Catherine Prevost, 12 June 1710 in Fort Pontchartrain [Jett  , p. 257]. I also descend from Jean Beaune and Madeleine Bourgery.

For years I have been gathering information about that episode and recently, knowing that the nuns of the Congregation Notre-Dame had opened a small school for girls in Lachine *ca.* 1685, I wrote to the archivist of the community, asking if, by any chance, there would be some records pertaining to that period. The early CND archives have suffered many casualties over the centuries, but, luckily, Sister Raymonde Sylvain was able to find one letter in the form of a statement written by Sister Catherine Somillard, who was in Lachine, at the time of the massacre. (again, my translation):

“We undersigned Catherine Somillard and Guyon sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, state to whom it may concern that on the fifth day of the year 1689, while we were staying in Lachine in one of the houses of Fort (Rémy) (...) after the Iroquois had attacked Lachine and burned the houses, several women and girls from the upper part of the parish flew for shelter in the Fort; most were all naked but for their shirt – and one of them was *Magdelenne Bourgerie*, widow of *Jean Bosne dit Lafranchise* – and we took them to our house and treated them as best as we could, providing them with clothes, and we noticed that said widow had only managed to salvage from the fire two old blankets, a medium size pig and a piglet, and so we have signed the present true and authentic statement on this day August 9, 1691. *Catherine Somillard* and *Marguerite Bourgeois* (signing) for Sister *Guyon*.”



The signatures I have added here come from other documents signed by **Catherine Somillard** and **Marguerite Bourgeois** (now Sainte Marguerite Bourgeois) and as they themselves spelled their names.<sup>16</sup> I fully agree with H  l  ne Lamarche’s reaction to reading this long-lost testimony:

Now, why was it necessary for the two sisters to make such a statement – pigs and all – we do not know. We can only be grateful for them to have provided us with a certain glimpse of realities seldom found in textbooks.

Can't you just picture the poor Madeleine in fear of the Iroquois, having left her house on fire, tramping half naked through the fields and the woods (Fort R  my was a good two miles from where she lived), carrying two lively hams-to-be, squeaking and wiggling in their blankets?

Because H  l  ne Lamarche was writing in October of 1998, she concluded, “As for me, on this Thanksgiving Day [in Canada], I think that I'll have ham instead of turkey.” Whatever we ended up eating on our Thanksgiving Days that year, each of us was delighted and thankful to have been given a “certain glimpse of realities seldom found in textbooks.” The good nuns who served in New France preserved these details, one extraordinary and the other down-to-earth, but both adding insight to the lives of our ancestors in perilous times.

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<sup>16</sup> Catherine Somillard, niece of Marguerite Bourgeois, attended the Church wedding of my ancestors **Andr   Jarret, sieur de Beauregard**, and **Marguerite Anthiaume**, 12 January 1676, Notre-Dame-de-Montr  al. Nine women signed the church register as witnesses. Other women were also present there and at the marriage contract. My articles about the Jarret de Beauregard family identify each of them and have full documentation. See [http://habitantheritage.org/filles\\_du\\_roi\\_carignan\\_regiment\\_lineage\\_charts](http://habitantheritage.org/filles_du_roi_carignan_regiment_lineage_charts). Digital image of the signature is from FamilySearch. Marguerite Bourgeois attended her other niece’s, **Louise Somillard**’s, marriage to **Francois Fortin dit Plermel** on 9 July 1674 and signed the record. FamilySearch, Notre-Dame-de-Montr  al, 1667-1680, image 114 of 138.