

Rush to judgment?
Part 1 [2014 Version]
Marie Lepage & Étienne Véron Grandmesnil:

An example of misinterpreted evidence

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“Le Page, Marie Therese, daughter of Marie Le Page, widow of the late Bausseron and of sieur Grandmenil, commis du Magazin. Born July 24, 1709. This is the first record of an illegitimate child. It is not profitable to trace the descent of this unfortunate.”

Clarence M. Burton in “Cadillac’s Village”¹

When I first read the above passage, I was shocked to see once again the virulence with which the nineteenth century viewed illegitimacy. Burton writes off this innocent child simply because he disapproves of the behavior of her biological parents, primarily the behavior of her mother. As a protest to Burton’s censure, I decided that it was time to find out more about Marie Lepage and, especially, about what became of her daughter, Marie-Thérèse.

Checking the name Lepage in Burton’s directory, I saw that he identifies Marie Le Page as one granted property at Détroit in 1707:

59 Marie Le Page, March 20, 1707, at 3 livres 12 sols rent and 10 livres for other rights. This is the only record of a conveyance to a woman in the early Detroit. Madam Le Page had a husband living at this time, but subsequent events, as well as this conveyance, lead me to think that he had separated from her--probably with just cause. Her name and a little of her history appears in the directory below.²

The directory—appearing “below” with “a little of her history” showing the “just cause” (as presumed by Burton) and the “subsequent events,”—includes the item given at the beginning of this article: Marie-Thérèse’s birth on 24 July 1709 on the eighth anniversary of the founding of Détroit, said birth occurring more than two years after the conveyance of property.

Burton’s editorial comment is characteristic of what I consider despicable late-nineteenth-century Victorian attitudes toward illegitimacy. Because the child was born of parents not married to each other, she is not worthy of any further attention. Burton does not even indicate that Marie-Thérèse was baptized the day after her birth and given the last name of Marie Lepage’s first husband, at least by the compiler of the **transcript** of the register available on Family History Library microfilm #1026602. My translation:

¹ Clarence M. Burton, “Cadillac’s Village or Detroit Under Cadillac,” with List of Property Owners and A History of the Settlement 1701 To 1710, Compiled by C. M. Burton, Detroit: 1896, p. 29. Words within parentheses are as in the original. My additions appear in brackets.

² “Cadillac’s Village,” p. 11. These details appear to be taken from the Cadillac Papers, “Cadillac Grants Contracts to Detroit Citizens,” (or their source from Vol. 3, p. 362), published on pp. 373-383, in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. 33, 1904. The original is in AC C 11^E, Vol. 15: ff. 3-16. Microfilm #F413, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa [NAC].

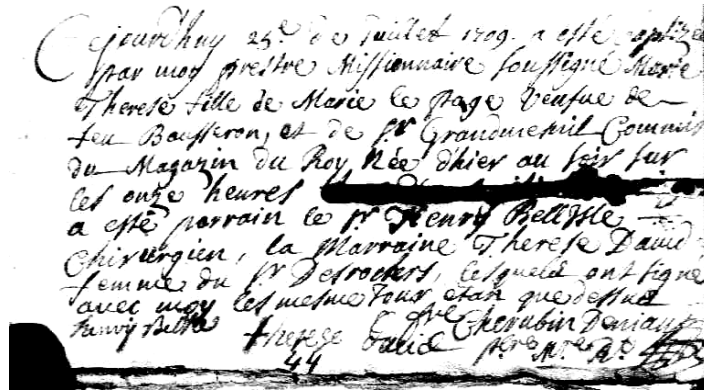


Image of original record from Drouin Collection, Ancestry.ca

Ce jour d'huy 25.^e de Juillet 1709 a esté baptizé
 par moy prestre Missionnaire soussigné Marie
 Therese fille de Marie le page veufve de
 feu Bousseron, et de S.^r Grandmesnil Commis
 du Magazin du Roy, Née d'hier au soir sur
 les onze heures [blotted out line]
 a esté parrain le S.^r Henry Bellisle—
 Chirurgien, la Marraine Therese David
 femme du S.^r Desrochers, les quells on signé
 avec moy les mesme Jour et an que dessus
 [signed] *henry Belile* *f^{re} Cherubin Deniau*
Therese david *pere M.^{re} R.^l* [with paraph]

Unlike Burton, the Catholic Church of New France did not discriminate against children born out of wedlock. It welcomed them into the fold, not attributing to them any presumed sins of their parents. At times, as in this case in the **transcribed** version, such a child was given the name of a known husband, especially when it was possible the husband could have been the father, so this may be why the transcriber of the FHL Ste. Anne de Detroit record decided to give the widow's deceased husband's name to the child in the margin. Years after writing this article, I was able to view another transcription of the Ste. Anne records, what I call the Drouin transcription, because it is available now in the Drouin Collection digital images on Ancestry.ca. This is how that transcriber recorded the baptism:

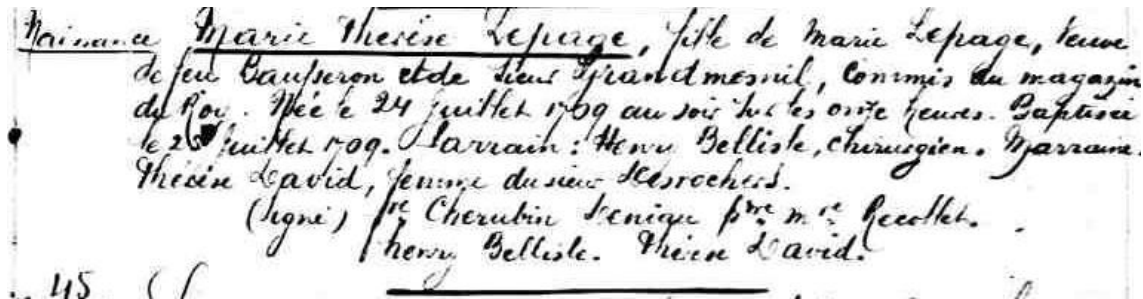


Image of transcription from Drouin Collection, Ancestry.ca

Here the mother's birth last name, Lepage, is given to the baby, although this does not appear in the original record. *Caveat emptor!* Transcriptions must always be treated with caution.

According to the original 25 July 1709 baptism entry (and Burton's own note), Marie Lepage was then a widow, *veuve*. No death record exists for her husband. Burton nevertheless implies that her husband "separated" from her because of infidelity on her part at some unspecified time, possibly before March of

1707, when she was granted property, or between March of 1707 and July of 1709. Yet an entry in the Registers of Ste. Anne de Détroit for 7 November 1707 (the same day as the *conseil de guerre* / court-martial “judgement” of Berthelamy Pichon) states:

baptism of Jacques, son of Jacques de Marsac de Cobtrou [*sic*], **cy devant sergent**, and his wife Thérèse David. Godparents: François de Gantier de la Vallé, Lieutenant, and Marie Lepage, femme du nommé Beausseron, habitant du fort Pontchartrain. De Rané signed.⁵

It would appear Marie Lepage’s husband was still alive in November of 1707, eight months after the conveyance of property to Marie. In fact, Cadillac had granted him a large parcel of land outside the fort in March of 1707. Burton lists 31 “farm” grants made by Cadillac, one of them to:

Bosseron, Francois. (Tanguay spells the name Beauceron.) Farmer.⁶ He was the husband of Marie Le Page (which name see.)⁷

The entry for the property Marie Lepage received reads, in the version in the Michigan Pioneer Collection:

59. [Sites within the fort] Of the 20th of March 1707. To Marie Le Page a site of twenty-four feet in St. Antoine street and 22 wide, adjoining one side on St. Louis street and, the other, on the Square and us [Lamothe Cadillac?], at three livres twelve sols, and 10# for other rights; sold to Joseph Seneval [*sic*]⁸ p. 378.

This appears to be building #59 on Burton’s “creation” of a map of Detroit in 1708.⁹

Yet, in a document “Given at Quebec this 4th of November, 1721,” and entitled “Cadillac Again Petitions to Be Put in Possession of Detroit,” Governor General Vaudreuil’s annotation reads:

In this stretch of land to the northeast of the fort [are, in 1720-21,] . . . four [original] concessions granted by M. de La Mothe to the (persons) named Delorme, Desrochers, M. Aubin and the widow Beausseron” but all “the houses [are] within the fort.”¹⁰

Vaudreuil then adds “There are no Frenchmen [still occupying conceded land in 1720-1721] except the four named above, each of whom has two *arpents* frontage [by 20 *arpents* deep].”¹¹ An *arpent* was

⁵ FHL #1026602

⁶ The original word is *habitant* and is another example of a Burton mistranslation. A *habitant* in 17th and 18th century New France was a permanent settler who was no longer bound by a contract he had signed either before or when he arrived, nor was he a soldier. He may or may not have been a farmer. See Marcel Trudel, perhaps the foremost authority on the early history of Canada, in *La Population du Canada en 1666* (1995) In presenting his reconstitution of the census of 1666, Trudel reproduced the term used to describe the profession (“fonction” or “état”) of a colonist as it was actually written on the document. As for the term *habitant*, he explains: “It is the characteristic / status, without agricultural connotations, of one who has established himself as capable of being or becoming self-employed (who enjoys the privilege of engaging in trade, which is not allowed the person under contract or the immigrant.)” My translation. Burton translates the French *habitant* as farmer. At his marriage in 1706, Beausseron was “soldat de la compagnie de Longueuil.” See footnote 20.

⁷ “Cadillac’s Village,” p. 20.

⁸ Cadillac Papers, “Cadillac Grants Contracts to Detroit Citizens,” p. 378. I read “Senecal” on the original French.

⁹ “Cadillac’s Village,” p. 9.

¹⁰ *MPHC*, 33: 679.

about 191.83 English feet. Cadillac had granted farm land outside the fort to 31 individuals, including François Bosseron, but the owners of these original concessions had abandoned them, “except the four named above.” Each of these four concessions outside the fort was considerably larger (almost 400 English feet) in frontage than the “twenty-four feet in St. Antoine street and 22 wide” (cited above) granted to Marie Lepage. Thus, there were two properties associated with the couple originally, one in the village and one outside. By 1721, the one in the village no longer belonged to Marie Lepage, having been sold to Joseph Senecal, yet she is apparently the owner-of-record for the larger one outside of the fort that had been granted originally to her husband. Burton, in “Cadillac’s Village,” does not specify the details of the farm land Marie Lepage’s husband received, although these details do appear in the Cadillac Papers.

The list of contracts given by Lamothe Cadillac was joined to the letter written by Vaudreuil and Bégon to the Minister in France on 4 November 1721. (Note the date.) According to this list, Bosseron received property #14, measuring two *arpents* in frontage by twenty in depth, between François Fafard and Jean-Baptiste Goriau.¹² The list was, apparently, drawn up during Cadillac’s petition to regain control over his possessions at Détroit, both personal and real property, after his return to France from *Louisiane*. Étienne Véron Grandmesnil, as Cadillac’s agent, was personally involved in these transactions, but not, as will be seen, the Grandmesnil Burton cites in his Village directory entry:

Veron, Etienne, de Grandmeuil [*sic*]. Appointed attorney in fact for Cadillac, July 26. 1709. His name has been mentioned above. He was born in 1649, married Marie Moral, dit Montendre, and died at Three Rivers [*sic*] May 18, 1721. He lived several years at Detroit, and was a man of considerable importance, having charge of the public storehouse and acting as amanuensis for Cadillac.¹³

In addition to being factually inaccurate, Burton’s directory entry for “sieur Grandmeuil” displays distinctly Victorian attitudes. The child Thérèse is “unfortunate,” but Burton praises the man identified in the register as the father of the child and reports that he was appointed to an important position just two days after the birth. Burton reminds the reader that the name “has been mentioned above” but does not refer to Véron as father of a child born out-of-wedlock, nor does he give a date for Véron’s marriage. This would have made it all too obvious that, **if** this Véron indeed fathered Thérèse, he was a 60-year-old adulterer, who had relations with a “widow” 35 years younger than he. Instead, Burton describes him as “a man of considerable importance” and an “amanuensis for Cadillac.” Burton rewards Véron de Grandmesnil with a high-class word derived from Latin, thus giving him an aura of prestige, even though an amanuensis is simply a scribe, “one employed to take dictation or to copy manuscript.”¹⁴

In an article several years later, Burton seems mainly interested in the social ramifications of the illegitimate birth:

In the meantime there occurred one of those social catastrophes that, it seems, even our early colonists were not exempt from. There lived in Detroit a widow, Marie LePage, and this Grandmesnil (whose name was Etienne Veron de Grandmesnil) was accused by the priest of being the father of Marie Therese LePage, a daughter of the widow. Grandmesnil found it convenient to leave Detroit before the entry of the baptism of this

¹¹ *MPHC*, 33: 680. The fort had been changed considerably by the time Tonty became Commandant.

¹² NAC, Microfilm #F413, AC C 11^E, Vol. 15: ff. 3-15v.

¹³ “Cadillac’s Village,” p. 35.

¹⁴ “[Lat. *amanuensis* < the phrase (*servus*) *a manu* (slave) at handwriting.]” *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Second College Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982, p. 100.

child, July 24 [*sic*], 1709, and went to Montreal, where he was appointed the confidential attorney of Cadillac by letter of Attorney, dated July 26, 1709.¹⁵

The Village directory entry for Marie Le Page, in contrast, bristles with Burton's indignation at her:

It is with the name of Marie Lepage that the first great social scandal of Detroit is connected. The pages of St. Anne's record with glaring plainness the false step of this unfortunate woman. It is impossible to tell, now, the penance that she performed in atonement for her wrong-doing. The church record, possibly, operated to deter others from following in her path. Whether the man lost prestige or not is unknown, but we do know that he left Detroit about the time this affair became public, and returned to Montreal, where he was appointed the trusted agent and attorney for Cadillac, and retained that position as long as Cadillac remained at Detroit.¹⁶

Marie Lepage is, like her daughter, "unfortunate"; Burton expects her to do "penance . . . in atonement for her wrong-doing." In contrast, "the man" may have "lost prestige."¹⁷

I do not agree with Burton that "It is not profitable to trace the descent of this unfortunate." In fact, if Burton had done so he might have learned that Étienne Véron, senior, husband of Marie-Therese Moral, was not the father of Thérèse. Étienne Véron,¹⁸ his son, it appears, fathered the child, and Véron, junior, was not married at the time. Instead of a tale of "social" consequences and a wife's sinful betrayal of her husband, it seems what occurred here was sexual relations between two single people, Véron about 29 and Lepage about 24. And, as will be presented later, Étienne Véron, the son, and his family appear to have taken responsibility for the child to some extent.

Marie Lepage was truly previously married to François Bosseron / Beauceron (Laurent & Anne Dumaine) on 12 June 1706 Montréal¹⁹ and filed a marriage contract the previous day, 11 June 1706.²⁰ This couple was probably part of the large group that arrived in Détroit in the summer of 1706.²¹

¹⁵ In "Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit—1701 to 1710—under Cadillac," MPHS, Vol. XXIX, 1901, pp. 240-317, p. 275, footnote 74. I see no indication on the **original** that the priest "accused" Grandmesnil of anything, unless this is what has been obliterated (and I rather doubt that!). See the next footnote.

¹⁶ "Cadillac's Village," p. 29. Burton's phrase "glaring plainness" confused me at first because I saw no such thing in the version of the record on the FHL microfilm, not even the word illegitimate. A photocopy of the actual entry reveals a half of a line of text blotted out. When was this section obliterated? Did it occur on the day-of-record or after Burton had seen the "glaring plainness" of the entry? Or is it simply an error in writing by the priest that was inked over?

¹⁷ I have to wonder how many women had access to the church registers so that they would be deterred "from following in her path."

¹⁸ In fairness to Burton, he did not have access to the indexes that are currently available. The record as it appears on PRDH Online:

MARIE THERESE VERON GRANDMENIL BOSSERON Status(es): Illegitimate . Immigrant Father : ETIENNE VERON GRANDMENIL Mother : MARIE MARGUERITE LEPAGE Birth: 1709-07-24 Ste. Anne de Détroit ETIENNE VERON GRANDMENIL Father : ETIENNE VERON GRANDMENIL Mother : MARIE THERESE MORAL CANTIN Family Birth: 1679-12-19 Trois-Rivières Death: 1743-04-22 Québec First marriage : 1713-05-28 Montréal with MARIE CATHERINE PICARD Father : JEAN PICARD Mother : MARIE ANNE FORTIN BELLEFONTAINE

¹⁹ Document 47929, PRDH Online and photocopy. Jacques Lepage, father of the bride, and five others witnessed the marriage.

²⁰ Le Parchemin, 11 Juin 1706 (Mtl), Lepailleur de LaFerté, M. (1701-1732): Contrat de mariage entre François Beausseron, soldat de la compagnie de Longueuil, fils de Laurent Beausseron et de Anne Demain, de la paroisse de St Pierre du Castet, diocèse de Basac en Gascogne; et Marie Lepage (22 ans), fille de Jacques Lepage et de

Two days before the wedding contract, on 9 June 1706, Marie Lepage was present in Montréal as a witness at the marriage contract of Bonaventure Compain and Catherine Badaillac, who would also journey to Fort Pontchartrain. Although Marie Lepage did not sign her own marriage contract, her marriage record, or any of the events she witnessed at Fort Pontchartrain, she did clearly sign as witness on the contract of her friend, Catherine.²²



François Beusseron was present as witness for Bonaventure Compain, although he did not sign.

In her marriage contract Marie Lepage is identified as being from “Manathe” (Manhattan, New York) in the English colonies. The contract was signed in the home of her parents “au Quartier de bonsecours”²³ in Montréal. Françoise Dumouchelle, Marie’s friend, who had been hired as a servant of the Cadillac family to go to Détroit in 1703, was present. Françoise Dumouchelle²⁴ married, also in 1706, on 30 August, Jacques Croquelois *dit* La Violette, *Soldat de La Compagnie de M. Delongueuil*, although it does not appear that she returned to Détroit.²⁵

According to PRDH, one child of the Beauceron marriage survived, Jean-Baptiste, who wed Marie Louise Roy 25 February 1754 at St-Vincent-de-Paul²⁶. Jetté does not record this child.

Marie Lepage apparently left Fort Pontchartrain within a few years of Thérèse’s birth. Her sister, Jeanne-Marguerite Lepage, married Simon GILBERT *dit* Sanspeur or Sanscrainte (without fear), at Montréal 28 February 1713.²⁷ She consistently used the name Marguerite. The church record does not

Madeleine David, de la ville de Manathe en la Nouvelle Flandre. Doc #: 17060611PA018671. Archiv-Histo Online and photocopy ANQ.

²¹ FHL Microfilm #1026602: Marie Lepage “femme du nomme Beusseron,” was at Détroit by at least late 1706 when she was godmother for Étienne, son of Anchez8(?) and a “hurone sa mere,” baptized 26 November 1706 with, as godfather, Jean Legros [Jean-Baptiste Gros or Legros *dit* Laviolette (Antoine & Jacqueline Aubry), an interpreter of the Iroquois language, engagé Ouest 26-05-1702 to 27-12-1718, m Marie Bouet (Alexis & Françoise Bouet) 24-11-1700 Lachine (Jetté, p. 531)]. See *MHH*, October 2000.

²² ANQ Montréal, 9 April 1706, Notary Lepaillieur. My thanks to Gail Moreau for noticing this signature. Marie also wrote her mark, a cross, on 5 July 1707, when she was godmother to Marie Angélique, daughter of Étienne Bontron and Angélique Proteau. François Legantier, Sieur de Lavallée Rané was godfather. Photocopy of original.

²³ ANQ Montréal, 11 June 1706, Notary Lepaillieur, photocopy.

²⁴ FHL Microfilm #1026602: Geneviève Leferrière (Charron *dite* Laferrière) and François Bienvenue *dit* Delisle’s son Joseph was baptized on 5 March 1704 [usually reported in error as 5 May, but the third entry in the original first register of Ste. Anne] with Pierre Tichenet as godfather and Françoise Dumouchelle as godmother. Photocopy of original.

²⁵ PRDH Online and FHL #0375842, Registres de N.-D. Mtl (1713-1737)

²⁶ PRDH Online and photocopy FHL #1018205. The side bar identifies the act as the marriage of “Pierre” Bosseron and Marie Roix, but the text calls him “j.b. Bosseron, fils de pierre bosseron et de marguerite lepage”. [I am not convinced this link to Marie Lepage is accurate and have told PRDH.]

²⁷ Document 48096, PRDH Online. Simon Gilbert *dit* Sanspeur declared not being able to sign; occupation : soldat de la compagnie de Bleinville; origin : paroisse de Levac, évêché d’Angouleme. Marguerite was 19 and also said she could not sign. Like her sister, she was born in the English colonies, about 1692, and baptized 24 August 1700. (Jetté, p. 715) Marcel Fournier in *De la Nouvelle-Angleterre à la Nouvelle-France* (1992) gives her birthplace as either New York or Amboy (today Perth), New Jersey. (p. 160) The GILBERT children and their baptism dates, according to PRDH, were:

record Marie's presence, but the marriage contract does (26 February 1713, LePailleur, photocopy). She was in Montréal the following year, also, for PRDH assigns her two illegitimate children who were baptized at Montréal, the first on 04 July 1714, Jean-Baptiste LEPAGE by an unknown father; and on 04 September 1715, another boy, Pierre RENAULT, son of Pierre Renault *dit* Saint Jean, *soldat de la compagnie de Bleinville*.²⁸ A Pierre Renault was present at Marie Lepage's sister's wedding in 1713. A notarial document written 2 September 1714, before Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, J.-B., at Montréal is a "Quittance de Marie Lepage, veuve de Bausseron, à Simon Jolibert."²⁹ Jolibert is Gilbert, her brother-in-law. She had loaned him six hundred *livres du païs* (money of New France) the previous autumn, and he had repaid her. Three years later, on 17 August 1717, Marie was godmother to her sister Marguerite's son François Gilbert at Montréal. She is identified as widow of deceased François Bosseron.³⁰

According to PRDH online, Marie-Marguerite Lepage (Jacques & Madeleine David) married again, to Joseph Vaudry (Jacques & Jeanne Renaud Arnaud)³¹ sometime before 12 December 1718, the date of their child's death at Détroit. No record of the marriage survives, but records for Ste. Anne de Detroit are missing in this period. Jetté shows a daughter, Marguerite, born in May 1718 and buried at Détroit 12 December 1718 at seven months, and four more children—all of whom were born at Détroit.³² The family was thus in Détroit by 1718. (**But see footnote 33.**) The Vaudry / Lepage couple lived at Détroit at the time of the survey of property taken in 1720,³³ and Simon Gilbert, "Sergent dela garnison" is listed

b 1713-01-24 Montréal d 1713-02-04 Montréal JEAN

b 1714-02-21 Montréal JEAN SIMON

b 1715-07-20 Montréal JEAN BAPTISTE married 1746-05-03 Fort de Chartres MARIE

b 1717-08-17 Montréal FRANCOIS

and ANGELIQUE, who married 1746-07-25 Ste. Anne de Détroit PIERRE FRANCOIS MICHEL RACINE BEAUCHENE (PRDH Online). Jetté also lists a François-Marie 1726 at Détroit; a Catherine 1729 at Détroit; and gives the baptism date for Angélique as 05 June 1730 at Détroit, p. 497.

²⁸ PRDH Online and FHL #0375842, Registres de N.-D. Mtl (1713-1737). The notation on the document identifies the child as Pierre Roy [*sic*] not Pierre Renault as given on PRDH. Godparents were Julien Delierre (Delière or Deslières *dit* Bonvouloir in Jetté) & Catherine Laplante "femme de Bonaventure compain *dit* Lesperance." Catherine "Laplante" is Catherine Badaillac (Louis Badaillac *dit* Laplante & Catherine Lalore) from Sorel in Bonaventure Compain *dit* Lesperance 6 October 1706 Montréal. Marie Lepage witnessed their marriage contract. Two Compain children were born at Détroit, 1707 and 1710. Compain had an illegitimate child, Marie-Anne, at Détroit "mère inconnu" 23 June 1715 before his first wife's death and burial at Montréal 13 September 1715. He remarried 27 October 1715 Montréal Catherine Poupard. (According to Jetté: 266, but this attribution may also be an error. See my "Marie-Anne Magnan dite **Lesperance**, called Hope: A Cautionary "Tale," *MHH*, Vol. 25, #1, Jan 2005. The child is identified as *fille naturelle de **lesperance***, and the father is more likely Antoine Magnan *dit* Lesperance.)

²⁹Archiv-Histo, Online, Doc #: 17140902PA011947, and photocopy, ANQ.

³⁰ PRDH Online, document 44835.

³¹ PRDH Online. Joseph Vaudry was baptized 15 November 1687 at St-François-du-Lac, the first entry in the surviving register, and the family is said to be from Riviere-du-Loup. FHL Microfilm.

³² Jetté, p. 1115. Marie-Madeleine born 11, baptized 12 November 1720; Joseph born 03, baptized 04 November 1722; Jacques born 31 Dec 1724, baptized 01 January 1725; and Jean-Baptiste born and baptized 25 April 1726.

³³See footnote 10 above. Also, I thank Gail Moreau, Editor, for bringing to my attention an entry in the Ste. Anne registers: **1719** - November the baptism of the seven-month-old child, Marguerite Bosserrone, legitimate daughter of Joseph Vaudry and Marie Lepage. The godmother was Marguerite Lepage. Jetté has a May birth and 12 Dec 1718 burial of a Marguerite, the daughter of Joseph Vaudry and Marie Lepage. Something does not fit. Is there another unaccounted for child? Or is this another transcription error? {Author's note: **Having since seen the original registry at the Chancery of Detroit, I can verify that the date is 1719.**} Did Marie give this daughter the last name of her first husband to insure inheritance rights? According to PRDH Online, Marie Lepage's Vaudry children who married before 1800 were Marie Madeleine, married 3 January 1757 at Fort Vincennes to Pierre Perthuis Lalime; and Jean Baptiste, married 28 August 1756 at Fort Vincennes to Agnes Richard Lafleur.

as one of the “habitants du fort” granted a property by Alphonse de Tonty of “deux pieds de front sur 20 de profondeur” on “rue Montreal” next to Paul Guillet.³⁴

With these events documented, it is obvious that Burton also erred in the following two entries in his Village directory:

Vaudry, Joseph. Came Aug. 19, 1710. He was born in 1687, and married Marguerite Lepage, widow of Simon Gilbert. Etienne, Jacques and Joseph [Vaudry] were brothers and sons of Jacques Vaudry and Jeanne Renault.³⁵

Simon, Gilbert, or Simon Sanspeur, dit Gilbert, sergeant in the troops. His wife was Marguerite La Page. She died July 20, 1730, at Detroit.³⁶

I cannot resist digressing at this point to go back one generation because the parents of the Lepage sisters present the basis for some interesting speculations (and I stress these are speculations). The father of Marie and Marguerite Lepage, Jacques Lepage,³⁷ in about 1670, left Canada for New England,³⁸ where he married, about 1683, Madeleine David, first cousin of Thérèse David, the godmother of the “unfortunate” Thérèse.

Madeleine David was born 15 February 1666 at Sorel; and her cousin, Thérèse David, daughter of Claude David, Guillaume’s brother, and Suzanne Denoyon, 4 September 1664 at Trois-Rivières. Madeleine David’s father, Guillaume,³⁹ married about 1656 at Trois-Rivières to Marie Armand, of unknown origin, and by 1674 (or after 1676)⁴⁰ had moved on to “Nouvelle-Hollande” or modern day New York, from which he returned to France. In 1711 he may have been an inhabitant of La Rochelle,

³⁴ “Les Habitants du detroit 1721,” NAC, Microfilm #F413, AC C11^E, Vol. 15: ff. 186-88. It is probable that the Marguerite Lepage serving as godmother in 1719 is wife of Simon Gilbert and sister of Marie Lepage, and that the Gilbert family was thus in Détroit by 1719.

An August 1719 notarial contract shows Simon Gilbert at Détroit and Marguerite Lepage in Montreal: 29 Août 1719, Adhémar *dit* Saint-Martin, J.-B. (1714-1754) (Mtl) “Obligation de Marguerite Lepage, épouse actuelle de Simon Gilbert *dit* Sanspeur, son époux, présentement à Detroit, à Marie-Anne Hubert, veuve de Jacques-Charles de Couagne, marchand, de la ville de Villemarie.”

Doc #: 17190829PA012423 Archiv-Histo: <http://www.cdnq.org/cnq/origines/origines.html>.

This is an interesting document as it is a contract between two women. Marie Hubert, widow of Jacques-Charles Decouagne, merchant of Montréal, loaned Marguerite Lepage 1747 *livres 7 sols du país* (1310 *livres 10 sols 3 deniers* in money of France) for good merchandise to trade and for her equipment on her voyage to join her husband at Détroit. Photocopy, ANQ.

³⁵ “Cadillac’s Village,” p. 35. Nevertheless, in his entry for “Le Page, Marie” on p. 29, Burton says she “married Joseph Vaudry, for they are called legal husband and wife in 1720.” Underlining mine.

³⁶ “Cadillac’s Village,” p. 34.

³⁷ Jetté, p. 715. He was from Tours, Touraine, France and was confirmed 10 Feb 1669 at Québec. Fournier “presumes” that Jacques Lepage arrived in 1665 with the Carignan regiment, p. 159.

³⁸ Fournier, p. 159.

³⁹ For Guillaume David, PRDH says to see “The Origins of the Montross and David Families of Tarrytown, *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 122-4 et 123-1. I have not yet consulted it. “At Trois-Rivières in 1658, Marie Armand, Mme. David, asked to be excused from giving verbal testimony, ‘inasmuch as she has difficulty speaking French.’” Peter N. Moogk, *La Nouvelle France*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000, p. 147, citing NAC, MG 8, D1 (Archives judiciaires de Trois-Rivières, feuillets séparés), 28: 8 May 1658. [Author’s note: I have now seen this record and several others.]

⁴⁰ Langlois, p. 42. Guillaume David worked for a time for Nicolas Juchereau de Saint-Denis.

France.⁴¹ Both David families were contemporaries of the Couc, Fafard, and Ménard families I have written about.⁴²

The Lepage family remained in New England in the present-day New York or New Jersey area until 1699 or 1700, when they returned to establish themselves in Montréal. Three of their then four children: Jacques, Jeanne-Marguerite,⁴³ and Susanne (who had been baptized at the French Protestant Church of New York 17 October 1697),⁴⁴ were supplied the rites of baptism as Roman Catholics at Montréal in 1700, although Marie's baptism, wherever it took place, seems not to have survived.⁴⁵

It is extremely intriguing (considering that Cadillac was accused of doing business with the English)⁴⁶ that the only woman granted land at Fort Pontchartrain was born in colonial English territory and lived there until she was about 14. Her parents and also her grandfather's, Guillaume David's, family lived among the English. Cadillac boasted that he knew the English colonies well, noting that he had been at Boston and even claiming that he had traveled into the interior of the continent at some time between 1685-1692.⁴⁷ Is it possible he met the Lepage and/or David families in his travels?

But it is Étienne Véron Grandmesnil the younger, the (alleged) father of Marie Lepage's daughter Thérèse, who will be my next focus. When Thérèse later appears in the records, she is using the last names of her acknowledged father, Véron and Grandmesnil, and not the last name of her mother's first husband or her mother's maiden name. For now, I will assure you that Thérèse did survive, and that, at age 38, she married on 22 April 1748 at Trois-Rivières, PIERRE BABY,⁴⁸ son of JACQUES BABIE and *Madeleine Verron Grandmeny*, the "unfortunate" Thérèse's paternal aunt and sister of Thérèse's father, Étienne Véron Grandmesnil the younger.

Suzanne Boivin Sommerville—26 October 2000
2014 version

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⁴¹ Jetté, p. 312.

⁴² On 29 December 1657, Pierre Couc filed charges against Guillaume and Claude David and Barthélémy Bertaut for assault and the injuries he sustained. Langlois, p. 41, citing Baillage de Trois-Rivières. Marie-Anne David, sister to Madeleine, the wife of Jacques Lepage, was confirmed in the same year, possibly on the same day and place, as Isabelle Couc, in 1678 at Sorel. Their names appear on the list of 15 individuals confirmed in 1678 at Sorel "et autres lieux circonvoisins" (and neighboring regions). Registers of Sorel, LDS Film #1294705.

⁴³ Baptized at age 8 as Jeanne-Marguerite, Montréal 1700-08-24, document 210997, PRDH Online.

⁴⁴ Fournier, p. 161.

⁴⁵ Jetté. Jacques Lepage, the father, died in 1706 at Montréal, age 50; Susanne in 1708; and son Jacques died at Montréal in 1713. Madeleine David remarried in 1711 to Jean Poussard *dit* Bonappétit and was buried 3 February 1715 at Montréal. Did Marie Lepage return to live with her mother after leaving Détroit?

⁴⁶ On 6 July 1709 Pontchartrain wrote to Cadillac, "You must know that the beaver pelts which came to Detroit last year [1708] have all been sold to the English." AC, B 30, ff. 162-168, quoted in Jean Delanglez, "Cadillac, Proprietor at Detroit," p. 254.

⁴⁷ Because of his knowledge of the area, Cadillac accompanied the cartographer Franquelin to map the coast of New England in 1692.

⁴⁸ PRDH, document 181015 - Trois-Rivières, names spelled as on PRDH certificate.

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