

A Review: Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous & Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press and the Omohundro Institute, 2012)

Not all that is presented to us as history has really happened; and what really happened did not actually happen the way it is presented to us. ~ Goethe

Brett Rushforth's work has brought Indian slavery in New France to the attention of many readers, a laudable goal. Although most of his readers may have some understanding about Afro-American slavery in the history of the United States, they are, for the most part, unfamiliar with the society of New France as well as unaware of slavery as practiced among Native Americans.¹ A good number of Rushforth's readers are thus in a position of having to trust the author's understanding and presentation of his sources, most of which were originally written in French, a further complication. In addition, many United States historians are unaware of some of his secondary sources, such as *Programme de recherche en démographie historique* (Program of research in historical demography), PRDH,² and Marcel Trudel's work on slavery,³ or—and this is important—how to use them accurately. It is therefore unavoidable that Rushforth's pronouncements will seem impeccable to such audiences. The citations look good.

Readers who know the society of New France and have studied original manuscripts, including those for the settlements in the *pays d'en haut*, the country up river from the New France colony on the Saint Lawrence River that became the United States, however, are not as easily impressed. This research done in recent years can identify deficiencies in *Bonds of Alliance*. And, despite a reputation for scholarship, the Omohundro Institute and the University of North Carolina Press failed to recognize even basic errors that the published sources available to them would have pointed out. They, or the peer reviewers, did not check footnotes and sources, especially in chapters 3 to 6, for references to Detroit and Michilimackinac or to individuals who resided in the mother colony of New France. Once such a flawed work is published, historians quote what they believe is a responsibly edited source and blindly perpetuate the errors. A short review like this can cite only a few inaccuracies and suggest the serious effect they have on the analysis in the book. *Bonds of Alliance* cannot be trusted because of its factual errors and its selective use and manipulation of sources.

Errors about important French-Canadian families appear on page 169:

As Michilimackinac slaveholder [*sic*] Augustin Grignon recalled later in the eighteenth century [*sic*], *Panis* was a general term used to designate a wide variety of peoples. Of all the Indians “consigned to servitude” in that western post, he wrote [*sic*], “for convenience sake, I suppose, they are all denominated Pawnees.”⁴

¹ Readers of Carl J. Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women, Native Slavery in the Illinois Country* (University of Illinois Press, 2010) will have an understanding of Indian slavery in the Upper Mississippi Valley based on sound and convincing sources. His depiction of the interaction between Europeans and Native Americans presents their common humanity, not stereotypes.

² Available at www.genealogy.umontreal.ca by subscription and in the less-precise (because it has not been updated by periodic corrections) RAB CD version used by Rushforth.

³ Marcel Trudel, with the collaboration of Micheline D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec* (Montréal, Hurtubise HMH, Cahiers du Québec, coll. « Histoire », 2004). A *Dictionnaire des esclaves et de leurs propriétaires au Canada français*, previously published by the same author in 1990 and revised somewhat, is on a CD that comes with the book. Most of Trudel's work was done before PRDH and does not benefit from it.

⁴ Rushforth's cited source: Wisconsin Vol. III, page 256. This source was published in 1857. (Available at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=28>) Rushforth often confines himself to the translated and antiquated *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* publications. Digital versions of many of the original documents can be read at Library and Archives Canada on the web.

To begin with, Grignon did not record his memories; the man who interviewed him did, the editor of the *Historical Society of Wisconsin* publications, Lyman Cooper Draper. Secondly, Grignon did not recall them in the eighteenth century. The interview took place during 1857. Grignon had been born in 1780 in Green Bay; he said his earliest memories were of about 1785. He was not baptized until 6 August 1787 at Ste. Anne Church on Mackinac Island.⁵ There was no priest at Green Bay to perform the rite. Thirdly, it was his grandfather, not Augustin, who might be identified as a “slaveholder.” The father of Augustin Grignon (1780-1860) was Pierre Grignon, Sr., husband of Domitille Langlade, the daughter of Charles de Langlade and Charlotte Bourassa. Charles was the son of Augustin Mouet de Langlade and Domatille, widow in a first marriage of Daniel Amiot *dit* Villeneuve, and herself an Ottawa.⁶ From the biography of Augustin Grignon in the *Dictionary of Wisconsin History* online:

The father [Pierre Grignon] traded first in the Lake Superior region, associated with Charles Langlade (q.v.) at Mackinac, and later at **Green Bay**, where **both resided permanently after about 1764**. In 1776 Grignon married Langlade's daughter, and to this union were born seven sons, all of whom achieved a degree of importance in the Wisconsin fur and Indian trade. Of Grignon's sons AUGUSTIN GRIGNON, b. Green Bay, became perhaps the most important **in Wisconsin**.⁷ [Emphasis mine.]

Therefore, Augustin Grignon cannot even be considered a resident of Michilimackinac. Rushforth misunderstands and misrepresents the identity of his so-called “Michilimackinac slaveholder.”

Although Rushforth cites Grignon for his opinions about Panis (a term sometimes, but not always, identifying Indian slaves), he then chooses not to mention other details that Augustin Grignon recalled about the slaves of his grandfather, Charles de Langlade:

The **two Indian slaves of my grandfather**, were given to him by the Ottawas, and both were Osages; they [the Osage] made good servants, were happy and contented. A portion of these servants [the Osage, in general] were after a while given their freedom, either for their good conduct or some other cause; and it seems to me as if there was some requirement or obligation on the part of the white owners to liberate them after a specified period of servitude. One of those of my grandfather, died while living with him and the other, Antoine, must have remained as his servant not less than ten years, when he gave him his freedom, and then employed him as an engage [*engagé*: hired man]. Antoine subsequently hired himself successively to several different persons, and finally

⁵ Grignon says he remembers the trip with his mother and siblings. Translation of the record: “August 6, 1787, by us the undersigned priest was baptized conditionally Augustin, born on June 27, 1780, son of Pierre Grignon and of Louise Domitille Langlade, his wife. The godfather was Sieur Joseph Ainse; and the Godmother dame Daniel Bourassa, who declared that she could not sign her name. [signed] *Payet*, Missn. Priest *pierre Grignon ainsse*” See <http://www.thenavarres.com/genealogy/getperson.php?personID=I129&tree=NavarreAndrus&smallWindow=1> for a digital image of the 1787 Baptism Record for Augustin Grignon in the registry of Ste-Anne Church at Mackinac Island.

⁶ See my “‘But I read it....’ Daniel Joseph Amiot *dit* Villeneuve had two wives?” *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*, Vol. 32, #1, January 2011, 47. The answer to the question is “false.” Bertrand Desjardins at PRDH has accepted that Marie *Kapeδapnokδe* / *Oukabe* and Domitille, Ottawa wife, first, of Daniel Amiot *dit* Villeneuve; second, of Augustin Mouet de Langlade and mother of the famous Charles Langlade, are the same woman rather than two different women.

⁷ *Dictionary of Wisconsin History* online:

https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=2475&term_type_id=1&term_type_text=People&letter=G

got back among the Osages, when he was recognized by his mother, from whom he was taken when a mere child; his brother was a chief among the Osages, and he was soon raised to the chieftainship.⁸

Anyone's recollections must always be treated with caution; but, as is Rushforth's practice, he cherry-picks details from Augustin Grignon's memories (and from other sources), omitting those which challenge the conclusions argued elsewhere in his book, that the "slave trade" was rampant throughout New France and its outposts. Rushforth repeats the phrases "slave trade" and "slaveholders" incessantly to imprint these concepts in the reader's mind; yet he omits this testimony that Grignon's grandfather had two slaves, both of whom were given to him, not "traded" or bought. What is more, he ignores the slave named Antoine, who was set free. That he read this testimony is undeniable because, later, on page 289, he quotes part of it, saying Charles Langlade "had two [slaves], given him by the Ottawas, who were of the Osage tribe."⁹ Rushforth omits the manumission of one of these slaves and Grignon's comment that "a portion" of the other Osage "servants" were "given their freedom."

When Rushforth attempts to describe the "slaveholders" involved in the so-called "slave trade" at Detroit, he repeatedly makes similar errors of identification and omission. A major gaffe appears on the bottom of page 279:

Four years after Marie-Madeleine [Roy]'s death in 1732, [Pierre Chesne *dit*] Labutte married another **métis** [*sic*] woman, Louise Barrois, the daughter of François Lothman dit Barrois and "Marianne sauvage," **likely an Ottawa woman.**

The end-of-the-paragraph¹⁰ footnote 39 reads in part:

For Labutte, Roy, and Barrois, see *Marriage Records, Ste. Anne Church, Detroit, 1701-1850* (Detroit, 2001), part 1, appendix A, 25.¹¹ The main evidence of Louise's Ottawa origins is Labutte's **unusually close relationship** with Detroit's Ottawa community.¹²

⁸ The passage is on the same page 256 as Rushforth's reference and concludes on 257.

⁹ Word in brackets by Rushforth. Although Rushforth cites "Grignon, "Recollections," *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, XVIII (1908), 179," this is actually a page showing Indian pictograms. The accurate citation should be Joseph Tasse, "Memories of Charles de Langlade," Report and Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, VII (1876), 179. Tasse, reworking Grignon's memories, writes: "Some of the Green Bay colonists, mentioned above, possessed slaves. Langlade had two, given him by the Ottawas, who were of the Osage tribe." Tasse adds: "He treated them, not as slaves, but as faithful servants."

¹⁰ Rushforth's (and others') practice of lumping all citations for a paragraph in a "master" footnote is an unmanageable and deplorable style. In addition, Rushforth has no comprehensive bibliography, two details that certainly do not encourage readers to check citations. Apparently, his peer review members or advisors did not.

¹¹ This citation is not even to the partially transcribed records, which are on pages 3 and 4 of the main portion of the book. For some unknown reason, Rushforth declined to identify the editor of this book, Sharon A. Kelley, past editor of *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*, the journal of the French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan, and that it was published by The Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, The French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan, and Detroit300 Tricentennial Grant Program. In his introductory message he credits someone named Mike McDonnell who "helped [him] to trace the complicated lines of genealogy for several Detroit and Michilimackinac families and provided valuable feedback on Ottawa and métis [*sic*] connections across these communities." If he is indeed Rushforth's source, he is in gross error, thus invalidating sections concerning Detroit and Michilimackinac.

¹² *Bonds*, 279-80. Emphasis added. The source cited in no way claims a Native American ancestry for Louise Barrois either in the index or in the summary of the marriage record.

While it is true that Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte's first wife, Marie Madeleine Roy, was the daughter of French-Canadian Pierre Roy and his **Miami** wife, Marguerite OuabanKiKoué, the Chesne / Roy marriage in 1728 resulted in only one son, also named Pierre, and was cut short by Madeleine's death four years later in 1732 at Detroit.¹³ In identifying Labutte's second wife, Louise Barrois, granddaughter of Jacques Sauvage, as the descendant of Indians, Rushforth commits an error that plagues internet posts and web sites.

Sauvage is a perfectly normal and honorable last name both in France and in New France (and in Canada and the United States today), and it does not translate as English savage (nor did the original word). This Sauvage family is documented back to Paris, France. Two of the premier sites for the genealogical data for New France are PRDH,¹⁴ especially in its periodically updated internet version, and Fichier Origine.¹⁵ Both agree on the origin of this Sauvage family in France. PRDH is a pay-for-use web site, but Rushforth cites (and sometimes misunderstands) its CD version often; Fichier Origine is free-of-cost. Nor do any Native Americans appear on Louise Barrois's mother's, Marie Anne Sauvage's, maternal side or on Louise Barrois's paternal side. Again, a check of PRDH or Fichier Origine would have verified these facts. At any rate, to say that a husband's "unusually close relationship with Detroit's Ottawa community" determines his wife's origins is sexist and laughable.

Not satisfied with turning Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte's second wife, Louise Barrois, into a "métis,"¹⁶ Rushforth also creates a fictional family for her. Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte's second wife had no known or surviving children, despite the fact that Rushforth imagines Labutte with his "two slaves and **three** sons" producing record crops on his "farm" by 1750, the year of a census in Detroit. He insists in a footnote that Donna Valley Russell, in her transcription of the census, erred when she assigned the statistics for this productive "farm" to Labutte's brother, Charles Chesne.¹⁷ In fact, two concessions of land of those

¹³ Pierre and Madeleine had been married at *Fort St. Philippe Villages des Miamis*, also known as French Fort Miami or *Poste Miami* (now Fort Wayne, Indiana) and not at Detroit as Rushforth falsely claims. If he had looked at page 3 of *Marriage Records, Ste. Anne Church, Detroit*, he would have seen that the 1728 marriage is correctly placed at "*Fort St. Philippe Villages des Miamis*," although the record was carried to Detroit to be inserted in the church register. Nor did Rushforth consult the original register for it (available at Ancestry.ca: Early U.S. French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954, D > Détroit, Ste-Anne; Autres Registres > 1704-1744 > 107), instead using the sometimes-inaccurate Family History Library transcription. Rushforth confuses Fort Miami with Fort St. Joseph (Niles, Michigan), and attempts to link Labutte to involvement with his Miami wife's "relatives" at St. Joseph. Whether he even knows Fort Miami existed is open to question; the index to the book is not helpful in determining this, as well as in other ways.

¹⁴ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique* (Program of research in historical demography) or PRDH: www.genealogy.umontreal.ca See certificate #69841.

¹⁵ <http://www.fichierorigine.com/detail.php?numero=300048>

¹⁶ This, or the feminine form, *métisse*, is a label that was, nevertheless, not applied to Louise. The terms were almost never used in the records during the New France period. At Detroit, in the registers of Ste. Anne de Detroit, the first use of the word occurred under the British. It is fashionable today in historical circles to make everyone even remotely connected with Native Americans into *métis* for as many generations as possible. Sadly or ironically, this is similar to the custom in the early history of America to turn all descendants of African Americans into half-breeds, quadroons, octoroons, etc.

¹⁷ *Bonds*, 278 and footnote 37, 279. He does not identify the "other documents" that make him challenge Russell nor does he challenge Lajeunesse's transcription of the same census. Lajeunesse is Ernest J. Lajeunesse, C.S.B., *The Windsor Border Region: Canada's Southernmost Frontier A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960), 54-56; Donna Valley Russell, editor, *Michigan Censuses 1710-1830 Under the French, British, and Americans* (Detroit: Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, 1982) 15-17. The original census can be seen at Library and Archives Canada, "1750, septembre, Dénombrement des habitants du Détroit, 1750. Récapitulatif et nominatif: noms des hommes, femmes, garçons de 15 ans et au-dessus, filles de 15 ans et au-dessus, petits garçons, petites filles, esclaves, arpents de terre en valeur, gerbes de froment, arpents de blé d'Inde. Joint à la lettre de MM.

granted in 1734 went to the Chesne brothers, one to **Labutte**, Pierre Chesne's *dit* name or alias (3 *arpents* on the river by 40 deep) and another to **Chesne**, his brother Charles, (4 *arpents* on the river by 40 deep).¹⁸ In the 1750 census, "LaButte" had no entries for "land under cultivation" on his property, and he had only one *esclave* (slave), two *boeufs* (oxen), and three *vaches* (cows). Only one inhabitant had three slaves, *L. Campau*, whom Rushforth mentions only incidentally, perhaps because he could locate no sources for any Indian "kin." The entire settlement of Detroit in 1750 included 33 slaves in a population of 483, not counting the garrison. Chesne *père* (Charles) is one of only six who owned two slaves in 1750. Since Rushforth wants his readers to believe that most of the farm labor was done by slaves (although he admits he cannot document all of them), it was natural for him to want Labutte (with only one slave in the census but allegedly married to a "métis" wife descended from the Ottawa) to own the profitable tract that actually belonged to Charles. He seems unable to believe that French Canadians were capable of anything of worth without being related to or enslaving Native Americans.

He maintains that during "the 1750s and 1760s, Labutte used his wealth **to buy** [*sic*] at least eleven Indian slaves, who bolstered his productive capacity and elevated his status [*sic*] among Detroit's most influential families."¹⁹ When the slaves associated with him are looked at individually, however, and not just counted, it becomes apparent that Labutte did not "buy" eleven slaves who "bolstered his productive capacity." His one slave's babies who died soon after entering the world cannot be considered slaves that Labutte "bought" or, along with four who died in their teens, a means for bolstering Labutte's "productive capacity" on his non-existent "farm." Conclusions based on fabrications and imperfect calculations cannot be trusted.

Rushforth is not content, however, with these distortions. He often reads like a scandal sheet as he impugns the reputations of Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte and other men at Detroit and Michilimackinac by accusing them of fathering the offspring of their slaves with no evidence to support his libel, except his imagination. Rushforth snidely insinuates:

It is tempting ... to read [Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte's] massive pledge of alms to the Detroit parish [Ste. Anne du Détroit] as **a form of penance** for a **prolonged** relationship with his slave Charlotte. Although she never named the fathers of the five children she bore between 1754 and 1769,²⁰ Charlotte was Labutte's slave for all of those years, living in his home under the supervision of his métis [*sic*] wife, Louise Barrois.²¹

de La Jonquière et Bigot du 1er octobre 1751. (Tableau 28)." In an ongoing study of the Chesne family, Diane Wolford Sheppard and Gail Moreau-DesHarnais report: "Charles married Catherine Sauvage, daughter of Jacques Sauvage and Marie-Catherine Jean, 18 January 1722 at Ste. Anne de Detroit. They were the parents of 12 children, all born at Détroit. They are known by the Chesne surname." Rushforth apparently did not find Charles's marriage to Catherine Sauvage, Louise Barrois's maternal aunt, enough to qualify him as the husband of a *métisse*. For a documented account of the Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte family, see Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, Diane Wolford Sheppard, *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*, Vol. 33, #4, October 2012, 213-227.

¹⁸ Library and Archives Canada (LAC), "Liste des concessions données au Canada tant en fief qu'en censive de 1731 à 1734," Series C11A. Correspondance générale; Canada, MG1-C11A, Original: Volume 61, fol. 280-280v, available at LAC in digital format. Another file describes the 1734 concessions.

¹⁹ *Bonds*, 279. Table 2 of slaves on page 292 also does not account for children born and deceased soon afterwards. Infant and maternal mortality were high.

²⁰ Rushforth cites only Trudel, *Dictionnaire des esclaves*, 234, for children born to Charlotte and for most other references to lists of slaves. Although Trudel is a historian to be admired, he was not a genealogist, nor did he ever consult the actual church registers of Detroit or Michilimackinac, only flawed transcriptions. He also made errors.

²¹ *Bonds*, 281, emphasis mine.

The donation had been made in 1755, a date cited two pages earlier but not repeated here, a year that is admittedly after the 1754 birth of Charlotte's first child with no father named. Four more such children were born within the next 14 years. Is it realistic for Labutte to have had some kind of premonition that he would "prolong" a relationship and continue to impregnate his "slave" in the years following his 1755 gift? How could what Rushforth calls a "massive pledge" be "a form of penance" for what Labutte was going to do in the future? This is nonsense. A new church was built at Detroit in 1755, another reason for the gift in that year, a fact Rushforth ignores. Rushforth quotes George Paré's English translation of Father Simple Bocquet's documentation of why the donation was actually made:

Pierre Labutte, Sr., moved by a holy and religious good will for the glory of God and the decoration of his temple, has resolved to give alms to our church in the sum of a thousand livres in merchandise, to be taken from his warehouse at our selection.²²

This does not convince Rushforth. He even suggests more than once that the priests concealed the truth when they entered the baptisms. If Labutte fathered these children born to Charlotte, why would such a man, a scandal to the community, be buried within the church itself, just five years after the birth of the 1769 child?

Pierre Chesne dit Labutte, former church warden, a bourgeois merchant {not a farmer} of the city who lived on rue Saint Anne {thus in the area of the original fort, not on "farm land"}, interpreter of Indian languages for the [French] King; died after an illness of more than a year; son of the deceased Pierre Chesne and the deceased Jeanne Ballin [Bailly], while alive resided in the parish of Pointe-aux-Trembles, diocese of Quebec, Government of Montreal; widower, in a first marriage, of the deceased **Magdelaine Roy** {not identified as a *métisse*}; husband, in a second marriage, of **Louise Lothement Barois** {not identified as a *métisse*}; about 80 years {actually about to be 76},²³ **16 May 1774**, buried in the *neffe* of the church near the *coeur*²⁴

To be buried in the nave of the *coeur*, or chancel, the part of a church containing the altar and sanctuary, was a distinct honor. Rushforth ignores the fact that Labutte, only five years before his death, if he sired Charlotte's 1769 child, would have been a 71-year-old father. While this is not impossible, to demonize Labutte and his contemporaries with disputable accusations does not further an understanding of slavery.²⁵

Although the index in *Bonds of Alliance* indicates references to "Labutte, Pierre Chesne dit" on pages 278-281 only, Labutte reappears on page 377 in Rushforth's discussion of the "Pontiac War." Pontiac, Rushforth says, formed "ties with Detroit's principal French slaveholders" and "relied on these friendships, especially with Pierre Labutte and Antoine Cuillerier, representatives of Detroit's two largest slave-holding families [*sic*]. Both had marital ties to the Ottawa community." Antoine's "tie" to the

²² George Paré, *The Catholic Church in Detroit, 1701-1888* (Detroit, 1951, 200). Those interested in facts should read the rest of Paré's discussion of the donation. The "temple" is the new church building erected in 1755.

²³ Actually born and baptized 23 July 1698 in Montréal, thus about to be 76.

²⁴ From "People Buried from Ste. Anne de Detroit (1766-1778): Part III" by Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, in *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*, October 2010. This is only one of several lists of burials compiled by Gail and published by *Michigan's Habitant Heritage* in 2010 and 2011. See <http://fchsm.org/Journal/Journal.html> under the Contents button for other articles published in this journal.

²⁵ The church registers of New France do identify many instances when slaves and other Indians conceived illegitimate children by named men. The destinies of some of these children might surprise Rushforth.

Ottawa community exists only because of Rushforth's error²⁶ and his imagination, through Antoine Cuillerier's sister-in-law, Marie Ann Barrois, wife of his brother Jean Baptiste Cuillerier *dit* Beaubien and sister of Labutte's alleged "métis wife" Louise Barrois, a falsehood presented 100 pages earlier. How can a reader unfamiliar with the facts respond to such misrepresentations?

Issues like this do not bother Rushforth; they apparently did not bother any of the peer reviewers or the publishers of the book. As stated above, the citations "look good." Similar problems can be found throughout *Bonds of Alliance*. He considers Guillaume Dagneau Douville de Lamothe as "a likely candidate" at Detroit for at least some of his slave Barbe's children for whom no father is named at their baptisms (**if**, François Leduc *dit* Persil is not the guilty party!). He then casts guilt-by-association on Lamothe by saying "he came from a family with a history of using Indian women for labor and probably [*sic*] sex." He cites no valid evidence for such a "history," a word that implies more than his allegations in the one example he points to involving a brother. Even if Lamothe's relatives could be proven to be despicable men, Lamothe is not guilty of their acts.

He then confuses François Leduc *dit* Persil with not one but three men. For Leduc *dit* Persil to have been the first of these men, however, he would have had to have been a voyageur at nine years old in 1737.²⁷ To be the second, who was hired as a voyageur in 1747, he would have to be originally from L'Assomption, a village that was not his residence before he made Detroit his home. The reference to this second man does not even have the name François Leduc on it, only *François* with an unreadable last name.²⁸ The author alleges, with no proof, that the man at Detroit was not only a voyageur but also a fur "trader."²⁹ This comment is not supported in the footnote allegedly identifying Leduc *dit* Persil's past occupation as a voyageur. The author falsely believes all voyageurs were traders. To be the third man the author claims he is, he would have had to have been married with children and 40 *arpents* in cultivation at Detroit by 1750, producing 1,800 sheaves of wheat, 300 in oats, no corn, with 3 horses, 4 oxen, 3 cows, 4 pigs, and 40 poultry, and not a single slave,³⁰ according to a census that year cited by the author. This is patently false. The man in the census is Jean Baptiste Leduc, an older man and distant cousin. François Leduc *dit* Persil, arrived at Detroit only in July 1749, age 21, subsidized by the government until early 1751 on the property granted to him on the South Shore (now Windsor, Ontario).³¹ He is clearly identified in records in the mother colony and at Detroit. He was born and baptized 2 December 1727 in Montréal.³² He married at Detroit Marie Angélique Bigras *dite* Fauvel on 3 February 1754. No one

²⁶ Antoine Cuillerier married Marie Angélique Girard in 1722. The Girard ancestry has no Native Americans.

²⁷ Rushforth insists that Leduc *dit* Persil "first traveled to the Pays d'en Haut twenty-two years earlier [than 1759, thus 1737] as a voyageur, eventually settling in Detroit by the late-1740s, where he planted wheat and raised a handful of domestic animals." He bases the "twenty-two years" on the 21 June 1737 contract for a totally different François Leduc. Same or similar name does not equal same person, especially in New France. See Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, <http://www.banq.qc.ca/accueil/> (BAnQ): TP1,S35,D9,P106.

²⁸ BAnQ: TL4,S34,P736. The name François Leduc does not appear on the 11 July 1747 record, only a François with an unreadable last name. The destination in 1747 was *Poste de Nepigon*. The last three names identified are "**Nicolas Leduc, François ... [*sic*, a blank in BAnQ summary and unreadable on the document], François Beauchamp, de [from] l'Assomption."**

²⁹ The canoe men in 1747 were specifically forbidden to trade. If they did, they would lose their contracted earnings.

³⁰ See footnote 17, "1750, septembre, Dénombrement des habitants du Détroit."

³¹ Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, "Edward Cicotte Ledger 1749-1752 Containing Accounts of French Settlers at Detroit," *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*, Vol. 29, no. 3 (July 2008): 150 of 147-156. "François Leduc *dit* Persil 'arrived in the convoy on 26 July 1749 and received one ration from 26 July 1749 to 26 January 1751. He was given land on the South Shore.' He married Marie Angélique Fovel *dite* Bigras on 3 February 1754 at Detroit." This transcription of the Cicotte Ledger includes individuals not listed in Ernest J. Lajeunesse, C.S.B., *The Windsor Border Region: Canada's Southernmost Frontier A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960), 54-56.

³² PRDH #46744, Father: Joseph Leduc; Mother: Marie Andrée Anne Hurtubise. François Leduc *dit* Persil was in the mother colony and present at the burial of a girl named Geneviève, age 5 and a half, *en nourrice* (cared for by a

bothered to check before publication. Nevertheless, these misidentifications are used to cast doubt on the reputation of this man.

Rushforth needs the Leduc of the 1750 census to be Leduc *dit* Persil so that he can indict him, as he does others, who, he says, “most likely” or “probably” used slave labor to obtain the crops on their farms. In addition, hedging his allegation about Lamothe, he suggests the “possibility that Leduc was [Lamothe’s slave Barbe’s] children’s father... [since] he,” Leduc *dit* Persil, “did spend a great deal of time interacting with Indians [*sic*] and knew many men who had taken Native women as sexual or marital partners.”³³ He gives no evidence for these claims, referring only to the 1737 and 1747 documents, neither of which refers to Leduc *dit* Persil. Rushforth hopes that no one will check. It is amazing how often he uses slimy guilt-by-association with no basis in fact. Such writing approaches the status of historical fiction.

He has no idea that Leduc *dit* Persil served many years as the *bedeau*, sexton, of the Church of Ste. Anne du Détroit built in 1755, one reason for his frequent presence at religious acts, some of which were, of course, for Indians (thus, to Rushforth, suspicious). Leduc *dit* Persil, like Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte, also had the respect of Father Simple Bocquet.³⁴

These examples only begin to identify the egregious errors. In presenting the men and women of New France and their relationships with Native Americans, Rushforth sets up a “good guy” (Native American slaves) and “bad guy” (French and French-Canadians) dichotomy and then proceeds to use factual errors and selective evidence, omitting examples that challenge his conclusions. Too often he employs a litany of guessing words, such as “likely,” “probably,” “most certainly,” *etc.*, when he cannot support his claims. In pursuing what he calls an “ethical commitment”³⁵ to expose the nature of slavery in New France, Rushforth becomes the kind of historian described by Will Durant in *The Lessons of History*, one who “oversimplifies, and hastily selects a manageable minority of facts and faces out of a crowd of souls and events whose multitudinous complexity he can never quite embrace or comprehend.”³⁶ These are real people, not one-dimensional, with their faults and their strengths, their joys and their sorrows. They should not be used as pawns in a moral and ideological chess game, as Rushforth uses them.

Bonds of Alliance is tainted by errors that could have been avoided. UNC Press and the Omohundro Institute have embarrassed themselves with this book. “Not all that is presented to us as history has really happened; and what really happened did not actually happen the way it is presented to us.” ~Goethe

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wet nurse) at the home of M. Lompré, on 20 January 1746. PRDH #114709. He also appears at other burials in Montréal, parish of St-François-d’Assise (Longue-Pointe), so it is possible he began serving as a *bedeau* before he arrived at Detroit. The ancestor of François and his cousin Jean Baptiste, Jean Leduc, married in 1652. PRDH #743.

³³ *Bonds*, 261. What a Frenchman having an Indian as a “marital partner” has to do with anything is unclear.

³⁴ Father Bocquet, in a notarized document in 1777, willed all of his earthly possessions to Leduc *dit* Persil. See the Register of Detroit Notaries in the Drouin Collection at Ancestry.ca. Rushforth also falsely maintains Detroit had no notaries, even ignoring Robert Navarre, royal notary, the husband of another of the Barrois daughters, thus brother-in-law of Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte. “On 10 February 1734, at Ste. Anne de Détroit, Robert Navarre, son of François Navarre and Jeanne Pluyette, from Villeroy in France, married Marie Lootman *dite* Barois (*Lhotemane Barrois*), daughter of François Lootman (*Lhotemane Barrois*) and Marie Sauvage.” See Gail Moreau-DesHarnais’s five-part series of articles about Robert Navarre that appeared in *MHH* in 2007 and 2008, quotation from Part V. Navarre even signed the marriage record of Pierre Chesne and Louise Barrois: Ancestry. ca: D > Détroit, Ste-Anne; Autres Registres > 1704-1744 > images 141-142.

³⁵ See the last paragraph of his introductory remarks.

³⁶ Will and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History* (Simon and Schuster, 1968), 12.