

Cultural *Métissage* – Tobacco and Smoking
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Cultivation of Tobacco by Native Americans

On 27 May 1635, **Jean de Brébeuf, S.J.**, described the crops grown by the Huron and the game and fish in Huronia.¹ The Huron lived in the area surrounding Georgian Bay in Lake Huron.

For they cultivate the fields, from which they gather Indian corn, – the grain which some call Turkish, – abundance of excellent pumpkins, and also tobacco. All this region abounds in game and fish; and so the Hurons have at hand the means of supplying a living, if not luxurious, yet adequate and healthful; and they sell to others.

In 1640-1641, **Jérôme Lalemant, S.J.**, described the mission to the Tobacco² or Petun Nation who lived in the Bruce Peninsula which juts into Lake Huron.

The Khionontateronons, who are called “the nation of the tobacco” from the abundance of the plant, there, are distant from the country of the Hurons – whose language they speak – about twelve or fifteen leagues toward the West.

In 1641, **Charles Raimbault, S.J.**, and **Isaac Jogues, S.J.**, visited the Chippewa/Ojibwa at Sault Ste. Marie. While they were on their mission, they learned about the Sioux:³

These people till the soil in the manner of our Hurons, and harvest Indian Corn and Tobacco.

In the relation for 1666-1667, **Claude Allouez, S.J.**, related information that he had learned from wandering Sioux. At that time, they no longer cultivated corn:⁴

These are people dwelling to the West of this place, toward the great river names Messipi. They are forty of fifty leagues from this place, in a country of prairies, rich in all kinds of game. They cultivate fields, sowing therein not Indian corn, but only tobacco; while Providence has furnished them a kind of marsh rye⁵ which they go and harvest towards the close of summer in certain small Lakes that are covered with it.

Native-American Beliefs about, and uses of, Tobacco

In 1623-1624, **Gabriel Sagard**, a Récollet missionary who lived among the Huron, commented that the Huron only ate twice a day, . . . smoking quite often during the day deadened their hunger.⁶

In 1636, **Jean de Brébeuf, S.J.**, described the use of tobacco in a sacrifice which they made when they spoke to the Earth, the Sky, Rivers, Lakes, Rocks and other things which the Huron believed were animate and that a powerful demon lived in all those things.⁷

Here are the ceremonies they employ in these sacrifices. They throw some Tobacco in the fire; and if it is, for example, to the Sky that they address themselves, they say, *Aronhiaté onné, aonstaniwas taitteur*, “O Sky, her is what I offer thee in sacrifice; have pity on me, assist me.” If it is to implore health, *taenguiaens*, “Heal me.”

¹ *JR*, Vol. 7, p. 7.

² *JR*, Vol. 20, p. 43.

³ *JR*, Vol. 23, pp. 223, 225.

⁴ *JR*, Vol. 51, p. 53.

⁵ Wild Rice.

⁶ Gabriel Sagard and H.H. Langton (translator), *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons* (Toronto, Ontario: The Champlain Society, 1939), p. 62.

⁷ *JR*, Vol. 10, p. 159.

In the same volume **Brébeuf** described the role that tobacco played in the gifts that are given to the family of an individual who had been murdered.⁸

The four others [gifts] are addressed immediately to the relatives, to console them in their affliction and to wipe away their tears, *condatee onsa hoheronti*, “Behold,” says he, “here is something for him to smoke,” speaking of his father or his mother, or of the one who would avenge his death. They believe that there is nothing so suitable as Tobacco to appease the passions; that is why they never attend a council without a pipe or calumet in their mouths. The smoke, they say, gives them intelligence, and enables them to see clearly through the most intricate matters.

In 1637, **François Joseph Lemercier, S.J.**, described a Huron Council and their belief in the powers of tobacco:⁹

The council was opened by our presenting to them a cake of Tobacco in a dish, in the manner of the country; one of the Captains¹⁰ broke it, in the manner of the country; one of the captains broke it, in order to distribute it to the more prominent members of the company. They never speak of business, nor come to any conclusion except with the pipe in the mouth; this smoke, which mounts to their brains, gives them, they say, enlightenment amid the difficulties that present themselves.

In 1642, **Jérôme Lalemant, S.J.**, related how a recent convert used tobacco as a symbol when he invited his fellow Huron to become Christians.¹¹

Thereupon he drew out the first present, and threw it down before those whom he invited to embrace the Faith. Then he continued his harangue; “It is not enough to have your ears pierced, and to listen to what will be said to you. You must abandon your old customs and superstitions: for you cannot mix good things with bad. I do not ask you to do anything that we have not ourselves done. We have burned all our songs, all our dances, all our superstitions and everything that the Devil had taught our forefathers. In order that you may also burn yours as easily, here is some tobacco which the Father gives you, and to which you will set fire. When you burn it, you will burn your old customs, to adopt new ones.” And, as he said this, he drew out some cakes of tobacco, which constituted his second present.

On 12 July 1730, **Mathurin Le Petit, S.J.**, wrote from the Louisiana Mission. Part of his letter described the use of tobacco by the Natchez medicine men.¹²

This Nation, like the others, has its Medicine-men; these are generally old men, who without study or any science, undertake to cure all complaints. They do not attempt this by simples, or by drugs; all their art consists in different juggleries; that is to say, that they dance and sing night and day about the sick man, and smoke without ceasing, swallowing the smoke of the tobacco. They Jugglers eat scarcely anything during all the time that they are engaged in the cure of the sick, but their chants and their dances are accompanied by contortions so violent that, although they are entirely naked and should naturally suffer from cold, yet they are always foaming at the mouth. They have a little basket in which they keep what they call their spirits, that is to say, small roots of different kinds, heads of owls, small parcels of the hair of fallow-deer, some teeth of animals, some small stones or pebbles, and other similar things.

⁸ *JR*, Vol. 10, p. 219.

⁹ *JR*, Vol. 15, p. 27.

¹⁰ The Jesuits and other officials referred to the leaders of each Tribe as Captains; today, we would call them Chiefs.

¹¹ *JR*, Vol. 22, p. 237.

¹² *JR*, Vol. 68, pp. 151, 153. Le Petit’s discussion of the healing ceremony continues on p. 153.



George Catlin, 1832, Wée-ke-rú-law, He Who Exchanges – Courtesy of the Smithsonian¹³
He Who Exchanges is holding an effigy pipe

In the same letter, **Mathurin Le Petit, S.J.**, described a ceremony which incorporated smoking into the reception of Ambassadors from other Nations that sought peace with the Natchez.¹⁴

On the day that the Ambassadors are to make their entrance, all the Nation assembles. The Masters of ceremony place the Princes, the Chiefs of the Villages, and the old Chiefs of quality near the great Chief on particular seats. When the Ambassadors arrive, and are within five hundred steps of the great Chief, they stop and chant the song of peace. The ambassage ordinarily consists of thirty men and six women. Six of the best made, and who have the finest voices, march in front; they are followed by the others who chant in like manner; regulating the cadence with the *sicicouet*. The six women are the last.

When the chief has directed them to approach, they advance; those who have the calumets,¹⁵ chant and dance with much agility now turning around each other, and now presenting themselves in front, but always with violent movements and extraordinary contortions. When

¹³ <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4089>

¹⁴ *JR*, Vol. 68, p. 159

¹⁵ A ceremonial pipe.

they have entered the circle, they dance about the chair on which the Chief is seated, they rub him with their calumets from his feet even to his head, and after that go back to find those who belong to their suite. Then they fill one their calumets with tobacco, and holding the fire in one hand, they advance all together before the Chief and smoke it; they direct the first puff of smoke toward the Heavens, the second toward the Earth, and the others around the horizon, after which they without ceremony present the pipe to the Princes and the other Chiefs.

The Jesuits gave tobacco as gifts to Native Americans

In 1636, **Jean de Brébeuf, S.J.**, gave the Huron who enlarged the missionary's cabin a dozen cakes of Tobacco and some skins.¹⁶

In 1675, when **Jacques Marquette, S.J.**, and his companions were wintering at the Chicago portage, they were visited by a group of Illinois who were eager for tobacco. The Illinois "threw beaver skins at our feet," but Marquette returned the furs and gave the Illinois pipefuls of tobacco, because he did not know if they would continue on to the Illinois.¹⁷

Cultivation of Tobacco by French Canadians

On 2 November 1726, **Nicolas I. de Beaubois, S.J.**, noted that he had "a small Tobacco plantation that is truly magnificent."¹⁸ Beaubois lived in New Orleans.

In 1727, **Paul du Poisson, S.J.**, a missionary to the Arkansas noted that the individuals who had been granted plantations or habitations by the Company of the Indies grew tobacco as well as other crops.¹⁹

On 12 September 1749/1750, **Peter Kalm** noted the following regarding tobacco in his journal.²⁰

Tobacco. Every farmer plants a quantity of tobacco near his house, in proportion to the size of his family. It is necessary that one should plant tobacco, because it is so universally smoked by the common people. Boys of ten or twelve years of age, as well as the old people, run about with a wipe in their mouths. Persons of the better class do not refuse either to smoke a pipe now and then. In the northern parts of Canada they generally smoke pure tobacco; but further north and around Montreal, they take the inner bark of the red Cornelian cherry (*Cornus sanguinea L.*), crush it, and mix it with the tobacco, to make it weaker. People of both sexes, and of all ranks, use snuff very much. Almost all the tobacco which is consumed here is the product of the country, and some people prefer it even to Virginian tobacco; but those who pretend to be connoisseurs reckon the last kind better than the other.

Bois de calumet (wood for pipes) is what the French called the *dogwood*, which had green branches and stem and not red like the [European] cornel. It sent forth each year long, narrow, even shoots without branches which had a fairly large pith. Both Indians and French took these shoots or branches, removed the outer bark, so that they become smooth, then bored out the soft kernel and used the branches for their pipestems. The bowls of the pipes were made of a kind of limestone which was blackened so they appeared pitch black. . . . The pith of this tree is so soft

¹⁶ *JR*, Vol. 10, p. 249.

¹⁷ *JR*, Vol. 59, p. 175.

¹⁸ *JR*, Vol. 67, p. 271.

¹⁹ *JR*, Vol. 67, p. 281, 283.

²⁰ Kalm, Peter, Adolph B. Benson, editor and translator, *The America of 1750 – Peter Kalm's Travels in North America – the English Version of 1770* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., unknown date, two volumes), pp. 510, 588.

that a long narrow stick cut from the same tree will force out the kernel when it is pushed through a branch of it. This is not true of the red dogwood, the core of which is harder. On paring the bark from this branch people loosened it so that it remained attached at one end. Then they put the other end of the cutting in the ground a little distance from the fire and allowed the bark to dry a bit, whereupon they placed it in their tobacco pouch and smoked it mixed with their tobacco. They also used the bark of the red dogwood in the same manner. I inquired why they smoked this bark and what benefits was too strong to make alone and therefore was mixed [with bark]. This is one of the customs which the French learned from the natives and it is remarkable that the Frenchmen's whole smoking etiquette here in Canada, namely the preparation of the tobacco, the tobacco pouch, the pipe, the pipe-stem, etc. was derived from the natives, with the exception of fire-steel and flint, which came from Europe and which the natives did not have before the French or Europeans came here. Red dogwood the French called *bois rouge* and knew of no other use for it than the one mentioned above.

In 1750, **Louis Vivier, S.J.**, noted that “excellent tobacco” was grown at Pointe Coupée and at Natchez.²¹



Alexander Cavlié Mercer – 1828 – *A French Canadian and an Inhabitant of Québec* – Courtesy of LAC Mikan #3025413

Notations regarding Tobacco in the expenses of *Commandants*

Olivier Morel, sieur de LaDurantaye, submitted expenses for a trip to the Illinois after 14 French traders had been pillaged by the Iroquois. Following are the notations for tobacco:²²

On 2 July 1683, LaDurantaye gave six pounds of tobacco to the four nations of Michilimackinac.

On 5 August 1683, LaDurantaye gave two pounds of tobacco to the Potawatomi.

LaDurantaye gave the *Outagamie* [Fox] tobacco in order to keep them in their village. He also promised them that the French governor would protect against the Iroquois.

LaDurantaye gave a Sokoki [Abenaki] guide who guided him to Fort St. Louis a length of tobacco in addition to other gifts.

²¹ *JR*, Vol. 69, p. 215.

²² *ILHC*, Vol. 23, pp. 60-67.

On 20 November 1683, Nicolas Perrot, acting on behalf of LaDurantaye, gave tobacco to the Puans, the Sauk, the Fox, and the Menominee in order to persuade them to go to Montréal.

LaDurantaye purchased 20 pounds of tobacco from Guillet, Rivard *dit* Loranger, and Desbroyeux, three *voyageurs* who brought Governor La Barre's orders to march against the Iroquois. LaDurantaye gave the tobacco to the Indians when he invited them to make war on the Iroquois.

On 14 October 1712, **Charles Renaud, sieur Dubuisson**, submitted expenses for items that had been given to New France's Allies during the Fox and Mascoutin attack on Fort Pontchartrain.²³
100 *livres* of tobacco

In 1749, **Peter Kalm** discussed the tobacco that was traded with the Native Americans:²⁴

Tobacco is sought after by the northern Indians, in whose country it will not grow. The southern Indians always plant as much of it as they want for their own consumption. Tobacco has a great sale among the northern Indians, and it has been observed that the further they live on the northward, the more tobacco they smoke.

Residents of Detroit who supplied tobacco to / or for the benefit of Native Americans during the Period from 1739 – 1750 – *Métissage*

From 1738 to 1750, residents of Détroit were asked to supply goods or services “for the benefit of the King” to the Native-American Allies who participated in military campaigns against the Chickasaw as well as for other purposes. See the Military Page on the FCHSM website for a timeline for this period as well as a list of all of the residents who supplied good or services during this period: http://www.habitanteritage.org/french-canadian_resources/military.

The following list is limited to those who provided tobacco to the Native Americans. In addition to the name, dates, and items provided, the list also includes the Mikan # that can be used at the Library and Archives Canada website [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/search/arch_adv] to retrieve a copy of the request for reimbursement for these items.

Jean Louis Campeau – he is usually referred to as Louis Campeau. Jean Louis Campeau was a merchant

- 31 July 1745 – Louis Campeau supplied 52 pounds of tobacco, one pound of vermillion, and one woman's shirt – Mikan # 3074675

Chesne – the references to a Chesne without a first name could refer to Charles Chesne or to Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte, his younger brother. I have noted how the individual or Company is referred to in the LAC document.

- 28 July 1743 – Over the previous year, Chesne and Company's contributions included tobacco, *eau de vie*, *mitasses*, *porcelain*, shirts, wheat, and vermillion – Mikan # 3069293 – Chesne and Company

Antoine Cuillerier – the references below without a first name probably refer to Antoine Cuillerier, although his brother Jean Baptiste Cuillerier also lived in Detroit. Jean Baptiste Cuillerier was usually

²³ MPHSC, Vol. 33, p. 568.

²⁴ Peter Kalm and Adolph B. Benson, editor and translator, *The America of 1750 – Peter Kalm's Travels in North America – the English Version of 1770* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., unknown date, two volumes), p. 521.

referred to as Jean Baptiste Cuillerier *dit* Beaubien; he was a merchant. Antoine Cuillerier was an interpreter and a merchant. In his role as a merchant, he acted as a *commis* [agent] for Jacques Charly.

- 25 July 1746 – Antoine Cuillerier supplied 400 pounds of tobacco, ten barrels of *eau-de-vie*, eight pounds of vermillion, trade toile to make a large flag for the pavilion, and 250 bullets – Mikan # 3074828
- 2 October 1747 – *Sieur* Cuillerier as *commis* for the deceased Jacques Charly supplied the following for the Miami – two canoes, 30 *livres* pay for an interpreter, 50 pounds of tobacco, *eau-de-vie*, one pair of *mitasses* for a chief, one two-point blanket, and a shirt – Mikan # 3074592

Douaire *dit* Bondy

- 28 July 1747 – Bondy's contributions included eight white blankets, 80 pounds of tobacco, eight pounds of vermillion, 43 pots of *eau de vie*, one musket, 70 pounds of grease, molton fabric, ten men's shirts, six women's shirts, 200 pounds of flour, 24 pounds of flour for the Miami who were in Détroit – Mikan # 3074872

Laurent Eustache Gamelin – he was referred to as Eustache Gamelin; he was a merchant

- 26 August 1750 – Eustache Gamelin's contributions included 60 pounds of grease, 30 bushels of Indian corn, two calumets, one pair of culottes, one cotton shirts, and six pairs of moccasins – Mikan # 3075260

Jacques Godé / Gaudet

- 7 August 1744 – Jacques Godé's contributions included 100 pounds of tobacco, four pounds of vermillion, 12 white blankets, 14 trade shirts, and 1,500 grains of porcelain – Mikan # 3069305

Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont was a merchant

- 10 June 1748 – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont's contributions included *eau de vie*, tobacco, vermillion, powder, musket parts, lead, and wheat – Mikan # 3074590
- 10 June 1748 – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont's contributions included, tobacco, powder, *capots*, shirts, fabric, vermillion, powder, lead, porcelain, blankets, and hatchets – Mikan # 3074858

Claude Gouin – Claude Gouin was a merchant

- 1739 – Claude Gouin's contributions included Indian corn, powder, tobacco, Siamese knives, blankets, *mitasses*, and grease that was given to the Huron, Iroquois, Ottawa, and Potawatomi who were going to war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3068762
- 1 August 1744 – Claude Gouin supplied 50 pounds of tobacco and 12 Siamese knives – Mikan # 3074678
- 1 August 1744 – Claude Gouin supplied 50 pounds of tobacco and 12 Siamese knives – Mikan # 3074703

Pierre Jorian – Pierre Jorian was an *engageur*

- 25 July 1745 – The contributions of Pierre Jorian and Company included a two-point blanket, three pounds of tobacco, three pounds of vermillion, a toile shirt, and 50 pounds of powder – Mikan # 3069391 – Pierre Jorian and Company

Jacques Lacelle / Laselle

- 7 August 1744 – Jacques Lacelle / Laselle supplied 33 pounds of tobacco and a two point blanket – Mikan # 3074676

Marsac, *films*

- 26 July 1745 Marsac, *filis*, provided a pair of bulls that were used for a feast, four pounds of vermillion, three pairs of *mitasses*, six men's trade shirts, 500 grains of porcelain, 50 pounds of bread, 25 pounds of lard, a half bushel of peas, and three bushels of Indian corn – Mikan # 3069395

Porlier de la Grossardière – Porlier de la Grossardière

- 26 July 1745 – Porlier de la Grossardière furnished six blankets, three pairs of *mitasses*, three pounds of vermillion, 101 pounds of tobacco, six hatchets, and six travelling cases – Mikan # 3069393

Pierre Vallée

- 24 July 1745 – Pierre Vallée's contributions included *eau-de-vie*, powder, balls, tobacco, porcelain, vermillion, trade shirts and a blanket – Mikan # 3069383

Notations regarding Tobacco in the Huron Mission Records in the Detroit River Region²⁵

In June 1742, Jean Baptiste Goyau was paid three *livres* of tobacco as part of his wages for the work that Goyau did for the Mission.²⁶

In 1746, the Mission owed Caron 9 *livres* for tobacco for brother La Tour.²⁷

In 1748, the Mission owed *Madame Gervais* for 3 *livres* and a half of Illinois tobacco; and she owed the mission for 18 masses.

In 1749, the Mission owed Cicot 18 *livres* of tobacco for brother La Tour. Cicot had sold the tobacco to the Mission at 15 *sols a livre*.²⁸

In 1750, [Pierre Chesne *dit*] La Butte lent the mission 10 *livres* of tobacco; the tobacco would be paid to La Butte out of Le Roy's roll which his son has gone to get at Niagara.²⁹

²⁵ The first mission to the Huron was on the Detroit side of the River; it was established in 1728. Prior to 1728, all of the sacramental records relating to the Huron were included in the Ste. Anne du Détroit Register. In 1742, the mission was moved to Bois Blanc Island on the Canadian side of the River. In 1749, the mission was established on the mainland, near present-day Assumption Church.

²⁶ *JR*, Vol. 69, p. 249.

²⁷ *JR*, Vol. 69, p. 263.

²⁸ *JR*, Vol. 70, p. 39.

²⁹ *JR*, Vol. 70, p. 49.