The Myths and Reality of Robert Navarre, Detroit’s First Royal Notary
Gail Moreau-DesHarnais
24 October 2015
Statue of Robert Navarre, Westin Book Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, Michigan
NAVARRE, ROBERT, notary and subdelegate of the intendant; said to have been b. 1709 at Villeroy (dept of Seine-et-Marne), France, youngest son of Antoine-Marie-François de Navarre and Jeanne Plugette (Pluiette); m. 10 Feb. 1734 Marie Lothman de Barrois at Detroit (Mich.).

A descendant of the kings of Navarre, Robert Navarre was educated in Paris. When he came to Canada is not known. He signed notarial acts at Detroit as early as 24 Nov. 1729, and in 1734, when he reached the age of majority, he received his commission as a royal notary.
ANTHONY OF BOURBON, duke of Vendome, king of Navarre, had a son

JOHN NAVARRE, who married in 1572, Perette Barat. Their son

MARTIN NAVARRE, married in 1593 Jane LeFebre. Their son

JOHN NAVARRE, married in 1623 Susanne Le Clef. Their son

ANTHONY NAVARRE, married in 1665 Mary Lallemand. They had a son

FRANCIS NAVARRE, who married Jane Phugette. This name is also given as Phuette and Phuyette.
The following is the lineage of Robert Navarre as established from notarial records and church records.

I  Guyot Navarre
II Pierre Navarre  ca 1515-1530  Perrette Poullion
(Guyot…)
III Jehan Navarre  ca 1550  Perrette Barat
(Pierre/Perrette Poullion)  (Olivier/Marion Papelart)
IV Martin Navarre *dit* L’Aisné  ca 1598  Jeanne Lefebvre
(Jehan/Perrette Barat)  (Pierre/Marguerite Guérin)
V Jean Navarre *dit* L’Aisné  20 Jul 1630  Suzanne de la Clef
(Martin/Jeanne Lefebvre)  Villeroy  (François/Jeanne Robert)
VI Antoine Navarre  5 Nov 1662  Marie Lallemand
(Jean/Suzanne de la Clef)  Villeroy  (Jean/Jeanne Gillet)
VII Antoine François Navarre  21 January 1709  Jeanne Pluyette
(Antoine/Marie Lallemand)  Bonneuil-en-France(Étienne/Marie Guyard)
VIII Robert Navarre
Navarre genealogy from *Family Records of Theodore Parsons Hall and Alexandrine Louise Godfroy, of “Tonnancour”...* 1892.
Among those who were especially prominent at an early day, Robert Navarre may be mentioned. In his veins coursed the proudest blood of France. The ancient records of Meaux show that Jean Navarre who married Perette Barat in 1572 was the son of Antoine, Duke of Vendome, and half-brother of Henry IV, King of France and Navarre, the predecessor of the great line of kings forming the Bourbon dynasty. The Robert Navarre who arrived at Detroit in 1728, was a lineal descendant of this family. … The [Navarre] line in France counts among its descendants representatives of the proudest families of the old nobility, among whom we may mention the name of Count Léon Clément de Blavette, of Versailles, from whom whose heraldic tree the descent of Navarre was obtained.
Navarre genealogy from *Legends of Le Détroit* by Caroline Watson Hamlin – 1884.

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**Navarre.**

This family so illustrious in the early days of the colony traces back in an unbroken line to Antoine de Bourbon, Duke de Vendôme, father of Henry 4th, whose natural son, (1) Jean Navarre, married 1572 Perette Barnt; (2) his son Martin Navarre de Villeroy married 1598 Jeanne Lefèvre, whose son (3) Jean Navarre, married 1638, Susanna Le Clef; their son (4) Antoine Navarre, du Plessis en Bois, married 1665, Marie Lallemant, whose son (5) Antoine Marie Francois Navarre, married 1663, Jeanne Playette, whose (6) Robert Navarre, was sent to Fort Pontchartrain as Sub-Intendant and Royal Notary, where he married, 1754, Marie Lethman de Barrois, his son Robert (Robiste) married, 1762, Marie Louise Archange de Mersac, whose daughter Archange Louise married, 1796, Dominique Godé de Maruntette, whose daughter, Marianne Navarre married 1822, Pierre Godfroy, Antoine Navarre du Plessis’ other sons remained in France, and one of them married Catherine de la Rue; their only daughter married Jean Navarre de Livry (her first cousin) whose daughter in turn, Marie Jeanne Navarre, born 1709, married Jean Louis Navarre de Maisonneuve (her cousin) brother of Mons. de Navarre, Marquis de Longueil, whose wife, born at St. Luce, was lady of honor (Dauphine d’Honneur) to Madame Elizabeth, sister of Louis 16th of France and the Duchess of Bourbon. Catherine Antoinette, Jeannie Martine Petronille, remained the only daughter by the death of her two sisters. She married Louis François Marguelet de la Noue, from whom Geneviève Célie Marguelet de la Noue, eldest sister of Madame de Penteville, espoused Count Leaud Pertuis, whose daughter Marie Céline Leonette de Pertuis, espoused Alex. Jacques Marie Clement de Biavett, whose son Edward married Marie Clement de Boulanger de Montigny, whose son Count Léon Clement de Biavett married Isabelle de Brossard, de Versailles, France.
Thus, the timeline was “established” that, in its own way, stated the “royal lineage” of Robert Navarre, Detroit’s first notary.

- **1884** – Marie Caroline Watson Hamlin, *Legends of Le Détroit*
- **1890** – Silas Farmer, *History of Detroit* …
- **1892** – Theodore Parsons Hall, *Family Records* …
- **1897** – Father Denissen, *Navarre* …
- Then a leap forward to **2015** and the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. 
14 MARCH 1483 document from the archives of Meaux naming Pierre Navarre and Perrette Poullion as the parents of Jean Navarre, husband of Perrette Barat
TRANSLATION OF 14 March 1483

- Appeared and were present in person honorable persons Jehan NAVARRE archer de la garde du corps du roy nostre sire [archer of the bodyguard of the king our lord] dwelling at Villeroy {,} being in this city of Meaux on the one part, and Perrette BARAT his wife [being] by him to pass these presents duly and sufficiently licenced and authorized of the other (part), saying the said parties that since the consummation of their marriage and throughout it{,} honorable man Pierre NAVARRE bourgeois merchant of Paris and residing there after the death of honest woman Perrette POULLION his wife {,} father and mother of the said Jehan de Navarre {,} in order to equalize the said Jehan de NAVARRE to his brothers and sisters {,} children of the said Pierre NAVARRE and of the said POULLION, he [Pierre de Navarre] had mortgaged, given, and transported to him [Jehan] the sum of four hundred livres tournois of annual income [rente] to be taken on l’hostel de ville de Paris in one part, and six[1]

[1] Translation by Suzanne Boivin Sommerville who has translated, line by line, the document that is online.
Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henri IV, King of Navarre and France, versus Jean Navarre, ancestor of Robert Navarre

Antoine

Born 22 April 1518, La Fère, Picardie, France
Married Jeanne (D’Albret) de Navarre, 20 October 1548
Died 17 November 1562

Jean

Born *circa* 1530, or earlier
Married Perrette Barat *circa* 1550
Died after 15 January 1604
Myth or reality?

Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre by marriage, born 22 April 1518, fathered Jean Navarre, ancestor of Robert Navarre, born \textit{circa} 1530 or earlier?

Is it possible for a 12-year-old or younger boy to father a child?
Cassini map of Navarre towns in Seine-et-Marne: Annet, Claye, Gressy, Compans, le Plessis du Bois, Iverny, Villeroy, Chauconin, Charny, and Bussy-St-Georges
Map from Moriceau, *Les fermiers de l’Île-de-France*
Historic times

Hundred Years’ War 1337-1453 caused much destruction which involved the farms and *seigneuries*

Wars of religion

New social structure based on agriculture in the region of Seine-et-Marne began: Navarres were one of the main families
Two important books for Navarre research, both by Jean-Marc Moriceau

*Les fermiers de l’Ile-de-France: L’ascension d’un patronat agricole (XVe-XVIIIe siècle)*
(France: Fayard, 1998, second edition)

*Terres Mouvantes: les campagnes françaises du féodalisme à la mondalisation XIIe-XIXe siècle*
(France: Fayard, 2002)
First known Navarres

Perrinet Navarre – Iverny – 1404

Husson Navarre, from the 1420s to 1432, Claye near Meaux

Guyot Navarre – Chauconin, 1479, ancestor of Robert Navarre; actions affected Navarre descendants in 1573
Pierre Navarre and Perrette Poullion, married *circa* 1515

Known children: Jacques, Urbain, Robert, Michel, Nicole, and Jean/Jehan.

1552 – *laboureur* in Charny

1567 – *marchand laboureur* in Charny

1571 – *marchand bourgeois* in Paris

1583 – *marchand bourgeois* in Paris; Perrette Poullion deceased by then
Jean Navarre and Perrette Barat, married *circa* 1550

Known children: Perrette, Pierre, Marguerite, Barbe, Marion, Martin

1571 – *marchand* - Villeroy

1573 – *archer du corps du Roi* – Villeroy

1578 – *archer du corps du Roi* - Villeroy

1583 – *archer de la garde du corps du Roi* – Villeroy

1599- 1604 – *archer des gardes* …, Villeroy
AN - 214536 - Plaq. et F°46 R°

Cour des aides - lettres patentes et provision d'offices
15 mai - 30 avril 1393

Déclaration du roy pour Jehan NAVARRE archer
gardes du corps dudit seigneur
XXXIII° Avril 1393 XXV° XIX

"Heney par la grâce de Dieu, roy de France et de
Navarre. À ses amis et fidèles cruels, les gages roux n'ont point du
Loyau
à Paris, présidents et seigneurs sa valeur de ses aides et tailles eu.

L'estat de Maurois et à tous ses autres justiciers et officiers
qu'il appartiendra

Selon leurs se souvenant les privilèges octroyés par nos précédents roya
ux aux, à ses officiers domestiques et commandants pour plusieurs et
grandes considérations suivant par ceux accords octroyé avec l'état et écrit
pour tous officiers de toutes tailles tailleurs seuls tributs impostes

comptant et réunis généralement quelques suivant leur sort

parce que vous parmi ay après entretenu en faire davantage
nostre seigneur et bien ami Jehan NAVARRE archer des gardes de nostre cors

sont la charge de revoir de Vîtry du nom des entrezuez tout par leuy.
Jean Navarre, *archer du corps des gardes du corps du Roi*

Under command of Louis L’Hopital, *sieur* de Vitry

Served for 40 years, as of 1599 – thus, literally guarding the body of the king from about 1559 on: François II (1559-1560); Charles IX (1560-1574); Henri III (1574-1589); Henri IV (1589-1610)

Position that was purchased (the purchase of these offices increased the King’s coffers), but at the same time the “office-holder” received quarterly wages, and gave him certain fiscal advantages. The duty was very light, but there was prestige attached to the position.
Martin Navarre and Jeanne Lefebvre, married \textit{circa} 1598

Known children: Jeanne, Marie, Jean, Antoine

1600-1601 – \textit{marguillier, laboureur} – Villeroy

1632 – \textit{procureur fiscal} of Villeroy, buried there

1 August 1632
Villeroy, l’église
Farm at Villeroy
Jean Navarre and Suzanne de la Clef, marriage contract 11 June 1630, married 30 July 1630, Villeroy

Known children: Jeanne, Antoine, Martin, Nicolas, Jean, Martin, Jean Baptiste, Suzanne, Rolland

1633 – procureur fiscal - Villeroy

4 October 1646 – burial of Suzanne de la Clef, procureur fiscal, laboureur

1666 – receveur de la terre et seigneurie de Villeroy

22 July 1672 – burial in church of Villeroy of Jean Navarre
Antoine Navarre and Marie Lallemant, married 5 November 1662, Villeroy

Known children: Jean, Antoine, Martin, Suzanne, Antoine, Antoine, Jeanne, Antoine François, Antoine, Marie Anne, Louis, Antoine, Pierre, Marie Hyacinthe

1663 – laboureur, ferme de la Trace; 1664 – receveur de M. le Grand Prieur, at La Trace; 3 February 1695 – Marie Lallemant buried in church of Villeroy; receveur de la terre et seigneurie du Plessis-aux-Bois, de Cuisy, and de la Trasse

21 February 1705 – burial of Antoine Navarre in church of Villeroy, aged 81 years and two or three months
Ferme à Plessis-aux-Bois, dating from the 16th century

fr.topic-topos.com
7 - PLESSIS-AUX-BOIS par Jilly (XVIIIe s.) — Intérieurs de la Ferme Fouschuit
St-Pathus
www.cartesfrance.fr
Terms for the agricultural hierarchy and society in Seine-et-Marne

- **Fermier**: bénéficiaire d'un bail à ferme, contrat par lequel un propriétaire cède la jouissance, pour une durée convenue, d'un bien immeuble contre le paiement de redevances (les fermages) en argent et en nature.

- **Laboureur**: c'est un exploitant qui dispose d'un capital et des outils nécessaires pour faire valoir les biens qu'on lui a confiés par bail. Certains laboureurs acquièrent très tôt des terres et des fermes.

- **Marchand laboureur**: laboureur qui dispose en outre de moyens et de réseaux pour vendre le produit de son travail.

- **Marchand bourgeois**: marchand urbain, qui se borne à vendre sans rien produire ("vendeur de tout, faiseur de rien").

- **Procureur fiscal**: il représente les intérêts du seigneur dans une justice seigneuriale.

- **Receveur**: il perçoit pour le seigneur les rentes et cens, et autres droits féodaux qui lui sont dus.

- **Amodiateur**: officier qui afferme les revenus de la seigneurie.

- **Manouvrier**: simple ouvrier agricole qui ne dispose que de ses bras pour gagner sa vie, et se loue de ferme en ferme.

- **Honorable homme/femme, honnête personne**: titre donné à une personne d'un certain rang social, à un notable.
The mastery of penmanship was evident in the signatures from Pierre Navarre (1567) to Robert Navarre (1790), excerpt below from 1604.
Navarres of Seine-et-Marne

Descendants of Pierre Navarre and Perrette Poullion were numerous by the end of the 1600s.

Very influential, some even earning their way into the ranks of the minor nobility - by achievement, not birth.

According to Moriceau, they were a “clan among clans.” However, they were not royalty.
End of 1600s, there was an economic depression.

Family of François Navarre and Jeanne Pluyette affected; married 21 January 1709, Bonneuil-en-France

Known children: Robert, Étienne, Marie Jeanne, Françoise Jeanne (Petronille), François, Angélique Thérèse, Marie Catherine, Jacques, Nicolas; and Marie Jeanne Angélique and Marie Anne, daughters by deceased wife Marie Anne Courtier
Antoine François Navarre and Jeanne Pluyette

1703 – receveur de la terre et seigneurie de Gressy;
1706 – receveur et laboureur de la terre de Villeroy;
1720 – procureur fiscal et receveur des seigneuries de Bussy-St. Georges et Guermantes; 1725 – amodiateur and fermier, Bussy-St. Georges
1725 – last known record (signed) by Jeanne Pluyette
1730 – Chaury (Moriceau)
1754 – François Navarre buried in church of Compans
Baptism of Robert Navarre, 27 October 1709, Gressy, Seine-et-Marne
St-Denis de Gressy, Seine-et-Marne
photo by Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, September 2010
Robert Navarre was a scholarship student in Paris in January 1723 – age 13.

Last known appearance and signature of Robert Navarre in France – 5 August 1725, in church of Guermantes but living in Bussy-St. Georges.
L’église Bussy-Saint-Georges
www.rues-de-bussy.info
First appearance in Détroit, 24 November 1729 (age 20) – and never left.

Marriage of Pierre Estève and Marie Desforges
1734

10 February – marriage of Robert Navarre and Marie Lotman *dite* Barrois

22 May – commissioned as the first royal notary in Détroit

9 June – sister Françoise Navarre, age 22, buried in the church of Mitry, Seine-et-Marne.

10 July – Character check on Navarre as royal notary

27 July – first known act where he had the title of notary - marriage of Laurent Parent and Jeanne Cardinal
1735

9 January – birth of daughter Marie Françoise

8 August – sales act drawn up by Navarre in Détroit of a *terrain* in Québec, from Claude Leblond to François Dupont

27-28 September – civil case involving J. F. Neveu, *fils*, and Mezière de Lespervanche, Ouiatemon – a contract dated 23 July by Navarre
1736

Half-sister Marie Anne Navarre, nun in l’abbaye de Malnoue. Possibly there also in 1730.

27 March- Navarre acted as judge in case between Louis de Lacorne de Chapts and Jean Verger, Simon Gilbert, Jacques Campeau, Duplanté, and Charles Hely

16 August – Navarre commissioned as receveur du Domaine du poste du Detroit

4 November – sister Marie Jeanne Navarre, aged 22, buried in church of Villeroy
29 April – Navarre commissioned to pass judgment between Lamarque, *négociant* in Montréal, and several “particulars” in Détroit

30 April – in Paris, father François Navarre named surrogate guardian of his granddaughters Marie Angélique and Marie Jeanne Fremin, daughters of Jeanne Angélique Navarre, deceased, and Martin Fremin

25 May – *Procuration* drawn up, by Navarre between Jean Baptiste Bourque *dit* Lachapelle, in Détroit, and his wife Angélique Becquet in Montréal
1740 continued

13 June – Robert Navarre’s younger brother François was convicted of *prévarication* and locked in Saint-Lazare, at the family’s request – could have been sent to the Galères

26 July – Robert Navarre certified that Pierre Vallée was owed money for the restoration of the Huron Mission

6-7 August – *Procuration*, drawn up by Navarre, of Joseph Bouron, *habitant* of Détroit, in favor of Nolan, a Montréal merchant
1743

9 June – Commission of Navarre, notaire royal, as sub-delegate of the Intendant Hocquart.

10 October – Navarre, an honest man, was sent by Céloron de Blainville to visit the trading post at la rivière blanche and to write a mémoire [no date] Mémoire concerning trading post of François Séguin at la rivière blanche
1747

1 May – Robert Navarre was conceded land located at edge of Detroit River, three arpents wide by 40 arpents deep.
Between 1748 and 1750, there were many “certificates” by Robert Navarre, which chronicle the history of Détroit in this time period. Minute details not found in “history books” can be found in these certificates.
1749

1 April – Two commissions by Intendant Bigot for Navarre: (1) sub-delegate; (2) garde-magasin

12 June – Mémoire by Navarre of the products sewn [capots, mitasses, chemises] by Madame Barrois for various Indians, per the orders of Longueuil. She was owed 112 livres five sols for her work.
1749 continued

14 July – birth of daughter Marie Catherine Navarre

6 October – Navarre certified that Jean Baptiste Poupard was owed 140 *livres* for the birch bark canoe for the service of Céloron

*Mémoire* relating to the 1749 convoy, including notes from Navarre in August about some abuses relating to the supplies – spoiled or pillaged
Chaussegros de Léry drew up a map of the Detroit River Region, including the lands of the *habitants* from Point G to Point H.
A list enumerating the *habitant* was most likely drawn up by de Léry, with the aide of Navarre.
1750 census, by Navarre.
1751 – Continuation of land grant to Jean Chapoton, with signature of Navarre as subdelegué de Monseigneur L’Intendant
1754

23 May – Navarre, notaire royal, commissioned as sub-delegate at Détroit in place of Landriève

11 July – Notarial act, by Navarre, of land sale in Québec, by Joseph Couturier to Louis Gouin

14 July – Procuration, drawn up by Navarre, between Joseph Couturier and Louis Gouin

16 August – burial in church of Compans, Seine-et-Marne, of François Navarre, aged about 81
1758

12 June – Jean Baptiste Campeau commissioned as second royal notary at Détroit because of the need for a second notary

26 June, 31 December – As sub-delegate of the Intendant of New France at Détroit, Navarre certified the blank pages of the parish register, given to him by Père Simple [Pierre] Bocquet.
1759

17 February – commission of Bazagier as sub-delegate at Détroit in place of Navarre who had retired

19 November – birth of son François Marie Navarre – Navarre was still said to be the sub-delegate as well as notaire royal and receveur des domaines de sa Majesté
# Fall 1762 census by Navarre, during the British period

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<th>Nom père</th>
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Source: List of inhabitants of the territories to the north of the River, including the production of the land and the number of inhabitants of each household. (Translation from French to English)
1763

Fragmented journal by Navarre relating events during Pontiac’s Rebellion – began 7 May
21 September – birth of Jean Marie Alexis Navarre, last known child of Robert Navarre, *notaire royal* and *bourgeois* of Détroit, and Marie Barrois. The family was living on the northwest coast.
1765

4 September – Navarre signed as *témoins* [witness] to the sale of an *emplACEMENT* [site], house and shed in the Fort by Pierre Tetard Forville to George McDougall.
24 May – Navarre certified that in 1749 Louis Gervais was conceded by Sabrevois, commandant at Détroit, a piece of land three arpents wide, bordering the Huron lands, and that Gervais had paid the rent owed to the King; Navarre as receveur des rentes had received the payment.
1766

20 August – Navarre, notaire, added an addendum to the 1762 sales contract by Catherine Vien to Dominique Labrosse and his wife.
11 October – burial in the Chapel of Saint-Antoine de Padoue of Marianne Navarre, daughter of Robert Navarre, previously a royal notary, sub-delegate of Monsieur L’Intendant and receveur des domaines de Sa Majesté très chrétienne, and of Marie Barois. Marianne was the widow of Jacques Baudry dit Desbuttes dit Saint-Martin, interpreter for the King in the Huron language, and wife of Christian Anthon, a doctor.
Je suis François Navarre
Lib.de Robiche dédicè à
François Montour de
Véimr au plûôt-chercher
un petit taurau qui à bien
toi deux mois pour rempla-
ser, Ceux qui sont mort-
l’année passée,
à Dieu, mes Compliments,
à tout le monde.
Je suis tout atoy ton vieux
grand père Navarre.

au dètroit
le 1er. May, 1790.
22 November 1791 – death of Robert Navarre as reported by one of his grandsons
24 November 1791 – burial in church of Ste. Anne du Détroit of Robert Navarre, aged 82 years and 28 days
Myths about Robert Navarre

Royal blood coursing through his veins; lineal descendant of the Kings of Navarre
First notarial act in 1729
Intendant at Détroit – in some sources
Interpreter of Indian languages – no proof
Reality about Robert Navarre

From the agricultural “aristocracy” of modern department of Seine-et-Marne.

Eldest son of Antoine François Navarre and Jeanne Pluyette

No particle “de” in the family name

1734 – commissioned *notaire royal* in Détroit

1736 – commissioned *receveur du domaine*

1743 – commissioned as sub-delegate of Intendant

1749 – commissioned as sub-delegate and as *garde-magasin*

1750 and 1762 – was the census taker

1754 – commissioned as sub-delegate; retired in 1759
Reality, continued

Character traits: honest, dependable, irreproachable character, good Catholic, wanted to serve everyone, intelligent.

His life chronicled the history of Détroit from 1729 to 1791.