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The Constabulary and Archers in New France

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Buried into the records of New France, one occasionally comes across some rather strange references to "archers" and a "Maréchaussée" unit from the later part of the 17th century to the end of the French Regime in North America. In an order of payment to the Treasurer General of the Navy for 1600 pounds there is mention of two "Archers serving near the person of Sieur Talon" on 3 April 1670. The Sieur Jean Talon was the Intendant of New France residing in Québec City, the most senior and powerful official in the colony after the Governor General. This sum for these two archers from the "Grande Prévôté de France" (also called the "Prévôté de l'Hôtel" in the payment order) included their "casaques" and "hoquetons." The following year, the financial order is repeated for these two "archers."¹

A few years later, more "archers" appeared. On 9 May 1677, a royal edict created the "Office of Prevost of the Maréchaussée of New France" that featured a "Prevost of our cousins the Marshals of France in our country of New France" assisted by six "archers" to combat "robberies, murders" and other crimes.²

Such terms as "archers," "Prevost," and "Marshals of France" are certainly evocative, especially when considered in the colonial world of New France. These terms, however, do *not* refer to men armed with bows and arrows led by police inspectors under the command of a marshal of France pursuing criminals on the shores of colonial French Canada. But they *do* indicate that an important military and judicial institution of Old France had been created in New France.

As early as in 8th century France, there were royal instructions regarding the use of armed men paid by the king to pursue criminals. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, parties of disbanded soldiers turned into groups of bandits often roamed the countryside looting and robbing defenseless peasants, raping women, and destroying property. Travel was quite unsafe as one could be robbed and murdered by highwaymen. To combat these criminals, the royal governments had to hire soldiers permanently to patrol highways and pursue these criminals. During the early Middle Ages, these royal soldiers were often archers

so that, in time, the word "archer" came to mean a soldier that performed constabulary or police duties. Such soldiers went on to be armed with swords, axes, maces, lances and, eventually, firearms, but the name "archers" remained as the universal term to denote a constable until the end of the 18th century in France.³

During the 14th century, these groups of archers came under the authority of the marshals of France. They were then, it must be stressed, amongst the only troops maintained on a permanent footing by the royal treasury along with the royal guards. Because of this subordination to the authority of the marshals, their units became known as the "Maréchaussée" that sometimes translated into English as the Marshalsea. Units of archers were commanded by a prevost, an officer who had judicial as well as military powers so that this institution was also known as the "Prévôté" to denote men-at-arms that also had police powers. Nowadays, many countries still use the name Provost Corps to denote units of military police. The Prevost of a body of archers was usually assisted by an "Exempt" as his lieutenant.⁴

The art of war evolved over the years and the 16th and 17th centuries saw the advent of large standing armies in peacetime. Units of archers thus became a much smaller part of the standing army, but retained and enhanced their particular role as constabulary troops. For some of them, this included serving with royal armies on campaign to control bands of unruly soldiers that would steal and brutalize inhabitants, just as is done by our present military police. In terms of seniority, the units of Maréchaussée were ancient troops and had precedence after the royal guard. Furthermore, they remained directly under the responsibility of the marshals of France, the army's highest ranking officers. Indeed, one unit, the "Prévôté de l'Hôtel du Roi" whose origins went back to 1422, was one of the most senior companies of the royal guard. Its archers were part of the king's bodyguard as well as its provost corps.

In practice, especially from the 16th century, many units of Maréchaussée as well as groups of archers maintained by

towns to perform watch and police duties appeared all over the kingdom. Some were devoted to special duties, such as the "Prévôté des Monnaies de Paris," who were raised in 1530 to pursue counterfeiters, but most provided an armed body of soldiers to combat criminals throughout the realm. A large number of Maréchaussée units were mounted to rapidly move around the countryside while those in cities usually served on foot. Their duties were judicial in the sense of being "the strong arm of the law." Units of archers also provided ceremonial escorts to senior official of the courts and of the civil administration. It should be stressed that the creation and maintenance of special units of archers was peculiar to France. It was a body of troops similar to a national police force with military organization and training. No other country in Europe had anything like it.⁵

Louis XIV became king as a child in 1643 and he took the effective reins of power in 1661. One of his most important early actions to increase royal control over government administration was to increase the powers of civil officials called "intendants" who now joined governor-generals as rulers of the kingdom's provinces. By precedence, governor-generals represented the king and protocol granted them a number of privileges such as their own personal guard unit for escorts. An intendant was subordinate to the governor-general in military and diplomatic matters, but controlled all budgets (including military budgets), oversaw the legal system, and was also responsible for trade and industry. The powers were thus divided so that senior officials could not have overwhelming powers. The intendant reported independently to the minister and, ultimately, the king. It was therefore natural that archers escorted him to stress the dignity of his function.⁶

As will be seen by the descriptions below, the badges and uniforms worn by the officers and men of these constabulary units were specifically intended to identify them as the enforcers of the royal judicial system. This was especially the case for the command batons and the bandoleers strewn with lilies, and their clothing was in the colors of the royal livery.

Archers of the Prévôté de l'Hôtel in Canada

In 1665, King Louis XIV appointed Jean Talon as the first intendant of New France. He is well remembered as one of the outstanding administrators of early Canada. As seen above, the king saw that he was escorted by two archers. These were detached from the most senior unit in the kingdom, the king's own "Prévôté de l'Hôtel," the ancient royal guard unit. This was a clear indication of royal support for this senior official. As seen above, the sums paid for these archers included their "hoquetons" and cassocks. These must have made a surprising and fine sight during ceremonies attended by Intendant Talon in Québec City or Montréal. The archers of the Prévôté de l'Hôtel du Roi were dressed in a "hocqueton" surcoat made in the colors of the royal

livery: scarlet, white and blue with, embroidered thereon, Hercules' heraldic mace and King Henri IV's motto (ERIT HAEC QUOQUE COGNITA MONSTRIS) on the chest and the back. The whole garment was further decorated with crown "LL" ciphers and gold embroidery "which is the most ancient badge of the guard of the household of the King of France" with silver and gold. They were armed with a sword and a partisan (see Figure 1). Cassocks were also mentioned in the funds made available for Intendant Talon's escort archers, probably as their ordinary dress. These cassocks were probably blue lined with scarlet, the corps's badge on its front and back, and edged with silver lace.⁷



Figure 1. Archer of the "Prévôté de l'Hôtel", the ancient royal guard unit, 1660s. Two such archers escorted New France Intendant Jean Talon. Detail from a print after Marbot. Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, Providence. Author's photo.

Archers of the Navy in New France

During the period of Intendant Talon's posting in Canada, from 1665 to 1672, the portfolio of the overseas territories came under the responsibility of the ministry of trade, commerce, and the navy. The escort of his successors to this office therefore were no longer detached from the Prévôté de l'Hôtel, but came instead from the corps of archers under the authority of the prevost of the Navy called "Archers de la Marine" — Archers of the Navy. The French navy also had its own body of militarized police troops that served in its main naval bases, particularly in the ports of Brest, Rochefort and Toulon. A few archers would be detached to escort and carry out the orders of the port's intendant and this also applied to the intendants posted in America. The intendant for New France resided at Québec and another for the West Indies was based in Martinique. From 1714, a third was added in Saint-Domingue (now Haiti). As time passed, a junior rank of intendant was created for smaller colonies called "commissaire-ordonnateur" whose responsibilities were similar to the Intendant, but on a smaller scale. In North America, the colonies of Louisiana and Isle Royale each had a commissaire-ordonnateur with offices in New

Orleans and the fortress of Louisbourg respectively.⁸

All these officials had their escort of archers. Up to the middle of the 18th century, the intendant had two and a commissaire-ordonnateur had one, a number that doubled thereafter. The duties of these archers were summed up as apprehending crooks, delivering the intendant's and commissaire's messages and orders, and providing escorts on formal days. The usual constabulary and legal duties seemed to have posed no problems.

There was, however, a resounding incident involving etiquette in 1726-1727 that put Intendant Dupuy at odds with the Marquis de Beauharnois, governor general of New France. This was an age when rules of protocol were taken very seriously because they were an expression of one's power and dignity. Governor General de Beauharnois was highly insulted that Intendant Dupuy should be so "pretentious" as to appear escorted by two archers of the Navy at various ceremonies when protocol called for one, and that archers would even have their own bench in the church when attending mass. Furthermore, the archers appeared at ceremonies armed with carbines rested on their shoulder, even at mass. Indeed, the two archers even had their own guardhouse. All this was referred to senior authorities in France. In his 1728 reply, the minister blamed Dupuy and called on him to respect the protocol. He added that archers had no business being in church with their own bench, but they could still enjoy the use of their own guardhouse.⁹

The "Archers de la Marine" also had a distinctive uniform. In 1673, this consisted of a blue cassock trimmed with lace and buttons, and a bandoleer. By that time, the bandoleer was the common badge of identification for all archers in the kingdom. They consisted of a wide length of material, often velvet that was usually embroidered with badges, and edged with lace. Descriptions of the bandoleer are limited. We do know that those made for Navy archers at Rochefort in 1722 were of blue velvet with an inch wide gold lace border and with badges and ornaments. These appear to have consisted of gold lilies and silver crossed anchors. A 1751 description mentioned blue velvet bandoleers embroidered with gold and silver. There are a number of references of bandoleers being sent to archers in New France.¹⁰

Archers were also to wear blue, the color of the royal livery and, by the middle of the 18th century, they had a regular uniform. This consisted of a blue coat with scarlet cuffs and lining, red waistcoat, breeches and stockings, white metal buttons and a hat laced with silver (Figure 2). More local clothing might be issued. In June 1759, at the start of the siege of Québec, four archers of Intendant Bigot were each served with a capot, a pair of breeches, three cotton shirts and a pair of tanned shoes.¹¹



Figure 2. Archer of the Navy, c. 1750. Blue coat, red cuffs, lining, waistcoat, breeches and stockings, silver buttons and lace, buff gloves, blue velvet bandoleer with gold lilies and silver crossed anchors edged with gold lace. Armed with a sword. Watercolor by Francis Back. Fortress Louisbourg National Historic Site, Parks Canada.

Maréchaussée of Canada

With the French settlements rapidly expanding on the shores of the St. Lawrence River during the second half of the 17th century, the colony received a government structure that was patterned upon that of a French province. In the 1670s, the growing population meant increases in criminality and, as seen above, a small unit of Maréchaussée was created in 1677 consisting of a prevost and six archers. The prevost acted as a military commander, police officer and, in certain cases, as a junior prosecutor. His protocol authority still devolved from the marshals of France, which gave him certain distinctions and badges whose origins went back to the Middle Ages.

In 1681, a secretary was added and, by 1683, a lieutenant was also part of the unit. This rank's name was more properly changed to "Exempt" later on as was the practice in French Maréchaussée units. The exempt gave notice of the royal and government orders and made the formal arrests assisted by archers. Exempts were often veteran soldiers that were renowned for their politeness and good manners when taking persons into custody; they sought to avoid resistance and violence whenever possible. To pay for this officer, the number of archers was reduced to four. In 1709, following "disorders due to alcohol" in Montréal that must have been substantial, the governor general and the intendant informed the minister of the Navy that they had established a "lieutenant [or exempt] of the prevost with three archers" to control these and other crimes in the city.¹²

This seems to have been the apex of the Canadian Maréchaussée. The Montréal detachment was disbanded some years later. By 1728, the unit had only its prevost, two exempts and four archers. Its secretary was unpaid as he actually doubled as court secretary. All subsequent calls by the successive provosts and senior officials in Canada to augment the Maréchaussée were ignored in France although the population multiplied six-fold between 1680 and 1760.

Furthermore, the Maréchaussée in France went through a major reorganization that made it a truly national mounted constabulary force, but none of these measures were applied outside of France.¹³

Archers in Canada served on foot in towns. They were also often called upon to chase criminals, especially deserters, that resulted in "difficult and often perilous travels...in all seasons, on foot, on horses, in sleighs and, by water, in wooden or bark canoes" if need be. Although not a mounted unit like in France, horses were sometimes needed by the archers of the Canadian Maréchaussée. On those occasions, horses were rented. Veteran soldiers were usually the favored candidates for being archers in Old France and this also seems to have been the case in New France. They were also eligible for the military pensions paid by the Navy at the end of their service. For instance, when 68 year old Archer Pierre Jourdain was admitted to half pay in 1737, he had been an archer for 32 years and "a soldier before" that.¹⁴

In spite of its very limited numbers, the Canadian Maréchaussée gave a good account of itself within the limits of what it could do. It was given assistance by the companies of militia with regards to the pursuit of common criminals and also by squads of regular soldiers. The range of crimes they repressed was extensive and included murder, robbery, duels, prostitution, abortion, counterfeiting, sodomy, rape, and sorcery. However, when it came to deserters from the garrison, Canadians often tended to hide them so that the archers were really the only effective force pursuing them. A serious incident took place in 1741 when two condemned soldiers guilty of crimes were branded with a fleur de lis at Montréal's market square. When they bolted and escaped, the squad of 25 soldiers stood still although the exempt and three archers present managed to recapture one. To their credit, the troops eventually recaptured the second culprit a month later, but the incident showed the limits of using soldiers to catch their comrades.¹⁵

When suspects were arrested, they were usually put in chains except if they were gentlemen or military officers. In such cases, the archers only removed their swords. Similarly, the court only ordered judicial torture to common folks and not to gentlemen or officers. The hangman was normally in charge of the torture sessions, but archers and the prevost might be present with a prosecutor. With regards to assaults and duels between gentlemen and noblemen, the prevost had judicial powers to rule on such cases because of the powers devolved from the marshals by various royal edicts. The application of the law was much simpler in a relatively sparsely populated colony such as New France than in the complex justice system and overlapping jurisdictions of Old France. Nevertheless, various features might be found depending on the nature of the cases and the social classes of the culprits.¹⁶

There were no Maréchaussée units in Louisiana and Isle

Royale although, in 1751, Commissaire-ordonnateur Saint-Michel requested to have such a unit in Louisiana "to contain the troops." He asked that a prevost, an exempt, and from six to eight archers be established in Louisiana, but his request was ignored.¹⁷

Canadian Maréchaussée Uniforms and Badges

There are a number of references pertaining to the badges and dress of the Canadian Maréchaussée, but no formal descriptions from instructions or orders regarding a uniform seem to exist. This is not too surprising because, during the 17th century, the dress of Maréchaussée units in France was fairly vague and could vary quite a lot from one to another.

The one object that was very important to the prevost's function was his privilege to carry a command baton similar to those held by French army marshals. This was a devolution of power that went back to the Middle Ages when commanders of units of archers took their orders from the marshals. To indicate their status and authority, they were allowed to carry the marshal's baton. The baton could vary in style, but it usually was covered with blue velvet strewn with embroidered gold lilies and might often have gold caps at both ends. This was the design finally adopted formally in 1758. We know that the marshal's baton was carried in Canada because, in a memoir of 1738, Prevost de St. Simon mentioned that he traveled in the countryside "with the arms of the King, holding the command baton" of his office. In regards to costume, provosts in France appear to have favored wearing blue lined with scarlet—the colors of the king's livery.¹⁸

In France, the exempt traditionally dressed in blue and, as a badge of office, carried an ebony wood cane trimmed with ivory at both ends. This was also probably the case in Canada.¹⁹

Archers also had a peculiar dress that evolved since the 16th century. Their most essential badge of distinction was a fairly wide bandoleer worn over the shoulder. This item was made of quality cloth, often velvet, decorated with insignia and trimmed with lace. It thereafter remained their essential badge of office and was always worn when on duty. Cassocks were worn by many troops well into the 17th century, but went out of use thereafter in favor of uniforms. Archers, however, continued to wear cassocks into the 18th century when they gradually went out of use. Thereafter, they had clothing that appears to have been nearly always blue, the basic color of the king's livery, that might be trimmed with red and have white metal buttons and lace.²⁰

Canadian archers had bandoleers and, initially, cassocks. In 1680, a court case regarding a suspect resisting arrest in Montréal mentioned that he grabbed the archer by his bandoleer. A Québec City probate inventory of 1704 revealed that Archer Laverdure had an "archer's cassock,

a sword, a pistol" and "an old uniform issue hat" in his belongings. As time passed, cassocks became less popular in metropolitan France as well as in New France. By 1729, cassocks were no longer worn in Canada and, the prevost complained that the archer's "bandoleers were worn and torn." Unfortunately, these items are not described, but the most likely aspect of these items is that they would have been blue with gold lilies. Archers were armed with swords, carbines and might also have pistols and polearms on certain occasions.²¹

Endnotes

- 1 Archives Nationales, Colonies (henceforth cited as AC), B, Vol. 2, Ordonnance pour les appointements, 3 April 1670; Vol. 3, Ordonnance pour les appointements, 3 February 1671.
- 2 *Édits, ordonnances royaux, declarations et arrêts du conseil d'état du roi concernant le Canada* (Quebec, 1803), Vol. 1, pp. 86-87.
- 3 The ancient term "hocqueton" could denote either the cassock or the actual archer. It may have also been used to distinguish the close-bodied surcoat such as those worn by the archers of the Prévôté de l'Hôtel from the loose cassocks. As per the words "Hocqueton," "Casaque" and "Archers" in Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel* (Rotterdam and La Haye, 1691).
- 4 A "Marshalsea" court under the responsibility of a knight-marshal was set up in England in about 1300, but it simply became a debtor's prison and was abolished in 1842. The institution in France became the national constabulary force. It has been known as the "Gendarmerie Nationale" since the French Revolution and it is still considered part of the armed forces.
- 5 On the very complicated history of Prevost and the Maréchaussée in France, see: Louis Larrieu, *Histoire de la maréchaussée et de la gendarmerie* (Paris 1927-1933) available on line at the site of the Service Historique des Armées; General Beson and Pierre Rozière, *Gendarmerie Nationale* (Paris, 1982); Louis Saurel, *Peines et Gloires des Gendarmes* (Paris, 1973); George Carrot, *Histoire de la police française* (Paris, 1992).
- 6 On government structure, see in particular: Gustave Lanctôt, *L'administration de la Nouvelle-France* (Montréal, 1971). The governor general of a French province or of a colony had the place of honor in all formal functions and the military protocol reserved to a marshal of France. His own guards to escort him, drums rolled when he passed, a captain's guard of royal troops was posted at his residence and was saluted by artillery salvos when he arrived and departed from a town. The intendant had seats of honor in churches, walked at the left of the governor general in formal public events and was escorted by some of his archers wherever he went: Lanctôt, pp. 27-28, 63.
- 7 *État de la France* (Paris, 1677), Vol. 1, n.p.; Dunoyer de Noirmont and Alfred Marbot, *Costume militaires français* (Paris, 1846), plate 76 and text on page 74 quoting the 1658 *État de la France*. The figure is based on the plates published in 1662 in *L'Entrée triomphale de Leurs Majestés Louis XIV et Marie-Thérèse dans la ville de Paris*.
- 8 On intendants, see the superlative study by Jean-Claude Dubé, *Les Intendants de la Nouvelle-France* (Montréal, 1984).
- 9 Archives Nationales (France), Colonies (henceforth cited as AC), C11A, Vol. 48, Beauharnois to Minister, 29 December 1726; AC, C11A, Vol. 50, Minister to Beauharnois, 18 May 1728.
- 10 Tarif de toutes sortes de marchandises, 1673, from Francis Back; Archives Nationales, Marine, series B2, Vol. 256, Navy Council to

Sieur Dumont, 14 December 1722; Archives du port de Rochefort, series 1E, Vol. 139, Maurepas to Ricouard, 24 March 1745 regarding a bandoleer to be sent to Intendant Hocquart in Canada; AC, F1A, Vol. 37, Colonies, 20 December 1751 regarding eight bandoleers for Saint-Domingue; AC, C11B, Vol. 32, Etat des vivres, Isle Royale 1753

- 11 Archives Nationales, Marine, series G, Vol. 240, État de ce qui composera l'habillement uniforme d'un archer de la Prévôté de la Marine, undated but c. 1740; Ms. in a private collection in France describing the dress and cost of the archers, undated, c. 1760; *Encyclopédie méthodique, Marine* (Paris, 1783-1786), Vol. 1, p. 66; *Journal du Siècle de Québec*, Aégidus Fauteux, ed., (Québec, 1922), p. 23, the color of this clothing is not mentioned.
- 12 Pierre-Georges Roy, *Le vieux Québec* (Québec, 1923), pp. 117-121; AC, C11A, Vol. 30, Vaudreuil and Raudot to minister, 14 November 1709. By the royal regulations of 27 December 1709, the rank equivalence for the Maréchaussée in France was defined as lieutenant for an exempt, captain for a prevost.
- 13 AC, C11A, Vol. 70, St. Simon to minister, 2 November 1738; AC, C11A, Vol. 89, St. Simon to minister, 8 November 1747; AC, C11A, Vol. 95, La Jonquièrre and Bigot to minister, 13 October 1750; AC, C11A, Vol. 101, Vaudreuil to minister, 4 November 1750
- 14 AC, C11A, Vol. 70, St. Simon to minister, 2 November 1738; AC, C11A, Vol. 89, St. Simon to minister, 8 November 1747; AC, C11A, Vol. 67, Liste des soldats..., 18 October 1737.
- 15 Raymond Boyer, *Les crimes et les châtiments au Canada français* (Montréal, 1966) mentions many of the cases brought to trial and convicted; AC, C11A, Vol. 76, Procès-verbal of Maréchaussée Exempt de La Jannièrre, 3 February 1741; AC, C11A, Vol. 75, Beauharnois to minister, 15 October 1741.
- 16 According to Raymond Boyer, *Les crimes...*, p. 255, there were 29 cases of "The Question" being applied in the form of judicial torture in Canada during the French Regime. Some of the surviving minutes of the sessions are reproduced in his study and make difficult reading. Judicial torture ended in Canada with the advent of the British regime in 1760 and in France as a result of the 1789 revolution. On jurisdictions, see especially Louis Larrieu, *Histoire...*, chapter 4.
- 17 AC, C13A, Vol. 35, Saint-Michel to minister, 18 May 1751.
- 18 Marshals "...have a baton, which is blue strewn with golden lilies..." Du Verdier, *Le Vrai et Nouveau Estat de la France* (Paris, 1656), p. 77; AC, C11A, Vol. 70, St. Simon to minister, 2 November 1738; Tarif de toutes sortes de marchandises, 1673, from Francis Back.
- 19 Maxine de Sars, *Le Noir, lieutenant de police 1732-1807* (Paris, 1948), p. 38.
- 20 Paris city archers had blue cassocks in 1663, Tony Borel, *Une Ambassade Suisse à Paris 1663* (Paris, 1910), p. 104; Toulouse archers had blue "cassocks strewn with lilies" *Mercurius Galant*, May 1686, p. 183; La Rochelle archers wore "red cassocks with the arms of the city embroidered on the middle of the back and on the chest" *Mercurius Galant*, June 1695, p. 102. In 1720, the Maréchaussée units in the provinces were reorganized into one corps of 33 cavalry companies wearing blue coats with red cuffs and lining, buff waistcoats and breeches, silver buttons and hat lace, white silk aiguillettes, buff bandoleer edged with silver lace, Briquet, *Code Militaire* (Paris, 1761) Vol. 6, pp. 118-119. This reorganisation was not extended to the colonies in America.
- 21 Rémi Tougas, *L'Allemande* (Sillery, 2003), p. 36; Archives Nationales du Québec à Québec, Notary F. Génaple, No. 1864, Inventaire des biens, 15 April 1704; Tenaille-Chapton, *Histoire de la Gendarmerie* (Paris, 1829), p. 92; AC, C11A, Vol. 51, St. Simon to minister, 28 October 1729.

The French Connection in Chicago During the War of 1812

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Chicago, in the years preceding the War of 1812, was a small frontier outpost of American civilization that consisted of a United States military post and a few resident civilians. The Fort Dearborn garrison was a one-company unit of 68 men and three officers strategically located to assert United States control of the vast and hostile wilderness region, which had been dominated by the British since the end of the American Revolution. The civilian population consisted of fur traders and their families, mostly of French or Métis (French and Indian) background who supplied manufactured items to the Indians in exchange for furs and pelts. The furs were brought to Chicago and then to Mackinaw (the fur capital of America) in boats on Lake Michigan, then returned to Chicago loaded with trade goods for the traders. The boats (called *bateaus*) were large, oar-powered vessels, up to 50 feet long.¹ The furs gathered at Chicago came primarily, from Illinois and Indiana, purchased by *engagés* (employees) or partners of the traders who lived in the Indian villages. These hardy individuals supplied the Natives with trade goods in exchange for the furs, which were brought to Chicago on a yearly basis for shipment to Mackinac.

The arrival of the *bateaus* was always an occasion for celebration as the *engagés* unwound from the arduous trip up the Illinois River or the tough oar pull down Lake Michigan. Drinking home-distilled whiskey and dancing with the local belles was the order of the day and the nights were punctuated with loud singing, drumming, and raucous laughter. The voyageurs and their Indian drinking companions led to the term, "Wild Chicago."² Everyone had a great time and no authority existed to modify bad behavior. No civil government hampered their fun; no church officials were present to caution against sin. It was truly "Wild Chicago."

The change from anarchy began in 1803 when the U.S. Government sent Captain John Whistler and a small unit of U.S. Army soldiers to build Fort Dearborn at Chicago and establish American authority in the region.³ Captain Whistler and his soldiers built the fort, completing it in 1804, and set up a one-company garrison post in a vast and hostile wilderness area. The Native American inhabitants, mainly Potawatomi, had fought the Americans in the 1790 Indian Wars in Ohio and Indiana and had been secretly supplied by the British who still occupied much of the western territory that had been lost to the United States in the American Revolution.⁴ The British wanted to keep control of the lucrative fur industry and openly catered to

the Indian trappers who supplied the pelts. The Brits hired fur traders who lived in the Indian country and supplied the Natives with manufactured goods in exchange for the furs. The majority of these traders were French Canadian or Métis (French and Indian) people who had married into the tribes and spoke the language.⁵

The French fur traders became "de facto" members of the tribe, living with them and supplying much-needed items. The shrewd traders became members of important Indian families by taking Indian wives and soon became accepted as friends and valuable suppliers by the other tribal members [Editor's note: for a detailed discussion of French and Native relations in the fur trade, see Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 2001).

The Americans attempted to compete with the French traders by establishing a government "factory system," which was basically a trading post store at each fort managed by a government employee, called a "factor," who reported to the "Indian Agent," another government employee.⁶ The "Factory" at Chicago was housed in a large, log building just outside the fort and was the residence and store of the "Factor." The first Factor was Ebenezer Bellknap and Charles Jouett was the best known of several Chicago Indian Agents. The "factories," like all government bureaus, had rules and regulations set up by far distant officials who had no concept of the industry. One example was the rule that forbade the factories to sell whiskey, arms, or ammunition—the items most desired by the Indians! These same rules were also imposed on the independent traders but were promptly ignored.

Indians who had furs to trade were forced to travel many miles to the nearest U.S. fort to purchase items from the factor. It was much more convenient to visit the trader who lived in the home village and could supply these same items.

It soon became apparent that the American Factory System could not begin to compete with the entrenched and beloved French traders. [Editor's note: This should not be confused with the "American system" of interchangeable parts that characterized American industrial production in the late 19th century.] The U.S. Government then decided to seize control of the fur trade by requiring that all traders must be U.S. citizens with a U.S. trader's license. It was naively believed that the French traders would move back to Canada and that Americans would take over the trade. The ambivalent French countered the new law by renouncing British citizenship and publicly swearing allegiance to the United States, and then having the declarations written up and registered at the county recorder's office, where they received official naturalization documents.

These citizenship papers entitled the new Americans

to purchase the required traders' license and business continued as usual. Chicago, at that time, came under the jurisdiction of Wayne County, Michigan and the traders had to travel to Detroit to become licensed, U.S. citizens.

One of the Chicago traders who changed nationalities was John Kinzie who took the Oath of Allegiance in Detroit on 11 July 1796.⁷ John moved to Chicago in 1804 and soon became the principal trader of the area. He was the only independent trader in Chicago who was not French, but was able to speak and write in that language. He had a natural gift of "tongues" and could also speak excellent Potawatomi and other Indian languages. He was a very fine silversmith and made the jewelry and ornaments so much desired by the Indians. They always called him by his Indian name, "Shawneeaukee," the "Silver Man."⁸

John Kinzie and his family came to Chicago in 1804 after purchasing the property of Jean Baptiste Point de Sable in 1800 through an agent.⁹ He brought a large stock of merchandise with him and soon became the principal trader in the area. His success in business was due to his high moral character and his vast knowledge and appreciation of Indian culture and customs. John never stooped to cheat his customers—a common practice among some fur traders. He extended credit to everyone and always supplied those in need, regardless of their ability to pay. Another influence in his success was his longtime friendship with important tribal leaders, such as Tecumseh, Shabbona, Black Partridge, and Sauganash.

The first permanent French settler of Chicago was the trader, Jean Baptiste Point de Sable (1745-1818), a mulatto of French and Haitian descent who built a large home and other buildings on the north side of the Chicago River in 1785 where he traded furs and lived with his Potawatomi wife, Catherine, and children, Jean Baptiste, Jr. and Suzanne until 1800 when he sold out and moved south, eventually, to St. Charles, Missouri.¹⁰ His daughter, Suzanne, married a French trader, Jean Baptiste Pelletier, in 1790 at the Church of the Holy Family in Cahokia. The Pelletiers lived with the de Sables, in Chicago, until 1800, when they moved to Peoria. They had a daughter, Eulalie Marie, born 8 October 1796 and baptized at Cahokia in 1799. The two families were ardent Catholics who traveled over 300 miles, one way, through the wilderness, to receive the sacraments of baptism and marriage. Suzanne also has the distinction of being the second Métis child born in Chicago.¹¹ The honor of the first Métis child born in Chicago belongs to Jean Baptiste Amiot. His baptismal record at Michilimackinac states that he was born in October 1745 at the Des Plaines River near Chicago. The Amiot family, however, were not permanent residents of Chicago.¹²

Another early French Chicago settler was Antoine Ouilmette (1760-1841) and his wife, Archange Chevalier (1764-1840) who arrived in 1790 and built a cabin near Point de

Sable.¹³ Antoine was a Métis (French and Potawatomi) born near Montreal. Archange was also a Métis and daughter of Francois Chevalier, chief of the Lake Calumet Potawatomis. She had two sisters; Catherine, married to Alexander Robinson, and Sheshi, married to Louis Buisson. All three Chevalier girls were prominent in early Chicago history. Ouilmette was employed by the American Fur Company and traded for them from his home. He also worked part time for John Kinzie and operated an occasional ferry service across the river. He sometimes contracted to move travelers over the Mud Lake portage in times of low water, using wagons pulled by oxen to carry the boats from the south branch to the Des Plaines River. He operated a small farm and raised horses, cows, sheep, and chickens and was quite successful in these efforts. He is listed on the 1825 Chicago Tax List as having personal property worth \$400, a considerable sum at the time.

During the uneasy and scary months preceding the War of 1812 Indians warned Ouilmette that an attack on Fort Dearborn was probable and advised him to leave the area. However, other Potawatomi friends assured him that no French or Métis people that stayed neutral would be harmed and he elected to remain on his property. On the surface Ouilmette appeared to be neutral but after the initial attack on the Americans he hid the wife of army Lieutenant Helm, Margaret, and Sergeant William Griffith in his home.¹⁴ He then disguised them in distinctive Métis clothing and placed them on board Kinzie's boat and they were transported to safety. He saved their lives at great danger to himself and his family.

Years later at the Treaty of 1829 at Prairie Du Chien his wife and children were awarded two sections of land (1280 acres) at Grosse Point (now Wilmette) where they moved and opened a trading post.¹⁵ During the Black Hawk War of 1832 Ouilmette served with honor in Captain Kerchival's militia company. In the Chicago Treaty of 1833 he was awarded money for the losses he suffered in 1812 when the Indians stole his cattle. In about 1836 Antoine and Archange Ouilmette moved west to join their Potawatomi relatives. Both of them died at Council Bluffs, Iowa—Archange in 1840 and Antoine in 1841.¹⁶ The beautiful city of Wilmette is located on the site of their reservation and is named in their honor.

Francoise La Framboise (b. ? d. 26 April 1835) was also a prominent man in Chicago at this time.¹⁷ Members of the large La Framboise family were well-known fur traders throughout the northwest and had trading stores at Mackinac, Milwaukee, and elsewhere. In 1794 the youngest son, Francoise, married a Potawatomi girl at Mackinaw. Her name was Shaw-we-no-qua (aka Madeline). They were blessed with three sons and a daughter. The family moved to Chicago from Milwaukee in 1810 and set up another store on the east side of the South Branch of the Chicago River about a mile south of the forks. The family already knew

most of the other French and Métis people in the settlement and soon became acquainted with the few Anglo families, including Lee, Kinzie, and Burns, and with the soldiers of Fort Dearborn. John Kinzie promptly hired the sixteen-year old daughter, Josette La Framboise, as nursemaid and housekeeper for his busy home. She also worked part-time as an interpreter at Fort Dearborn since she was fluent in several Indian languages as well as French and English. Josette married Jean Baptiste Beaubien in 1812 and took on the added duties of managing his household while still keeping her other jobs. Her older brother, Alexis, and younger brothers, Claude, Joseph, and La Fortune, worked at the family store with their father, Françoise.

In April 1812 marauding Winnebago Indians killed two people at the Lee farm. This hostile deed prompted Captain Helm, Fort Dearborn commander, to form a civilian militia unit and to place former soldier Thomas Burns in charge. He enlisted 15 civilians, including three of the La Framboise brothers.¹⁸

The Declaration of War in 1812 and the open hostility of the pro-British Indians were very unsettling to the civilian population. The French and Métis people were informed by Indian friends and relatives of an impending attack on the fort and were advised to leave the area. The La Framboise family decided to heed the warning and move back to their other store in Milwaukee.¹⁹ The three boys deserted the militia and "borrowed" twelve horses from the garrison herd to use as pack animals to carry the store inventory on the move. The family prevailed upon Josette to accompany them but she loyally refused to leave the Kinzies who needed her services. Her husband, Jean Beaubien, also pleaded with her to leave but she refused to leave her position as guardian of the Kinzie children.

Jean Baptiste Beaubien (1787-1864) came to Chicago in 1811, from Milwaukee, to open a trading post.²⁰ He was born in Detroit into a prominent and well-regarded French Canadian family and received his early education in that city. Jean entered the fur business as a young man and learned the trade as an apprentice of Joseph Bailly on the St. Joseph River and then traded on his own at Mackinac where he married his first wife, an Ottawa woman, who bore him a daughter, Marie. His second wife, Maw-naw-bun-no-qua, also an Ottawa and a sister of Chief Shabbona, bore him two sons, Charles Henry and Madore at Milwaukee. She died of natural causes in 1811 and Jean moved to Chicago.²¹ He built a house on the east side of the south branch, just south of the forks, and moved in with his three young children and hired Josette La Framboise as a nursemaid and caretaker for the children. Josette was quite beautiful and very efficient. She soon fell in love with the tall, handsome, and vivacious Beaubien and became his third wife in 1812. The marriage ceremony was performed by Justice of the Peace, John Kinzie.²²

Chief Shabbona was most fond of his nephews, Charles Henry and Madore and often visited them in Chicago.²³ He knew of the Indian plans to attack Fort Dearborn and advised Beaubien to leave immediately. Jean took the warning seriously and moved, with his children, to Milwaukee in the early summer of 1812. Josette refused to go with them because she knew that the Kinzie family desperately needed her in these dangerous times.

Jean Baptiste Chandonnai, a highly regarded local figure at this time, was a Métis, born at Mackinaw. In his youth, Chandonnai moved to the village of his uncle, Potawatomi Chief Topenebe, on the St. Joseph River. Topenebe was the most powerful and influential Indian leader in southwest Michigan and was a good friend of John Kinzie and William Burnett, fur traders at his village. Chandonnai worked as an apprentice for Burnett and then clerked for Kinzie at his post. Jean and Kinzie often hunted and fished together and developed a lifelong friendship. The young Métis was intelligent and friendly and had excellent language skills speaking several Indian tongues as well as French and English. He was a very good trader and by 1812 was chief clerk at the busy Kinzie post in Chicago. He was unmarried and lived alone near the store in a small cabin between the homes of John Kinzie and Louis Buisson on the north side of the Chicago River.

In the early summer of 1812 Kinzie had been informed that an attack on Fort Dearborn would take place and advised to leave the area. His friends, Black Partridge and Topenebe, said they could no longer guarantee his safety. John could not believe that his family was in danger and refused to leave. However, when Tecumseh learned of John's plan to stay and sent Shabbona and Sauganash to give him the same dire warning, he decided that he would send his family away if trouble started but would remain himself, to offer aid to the garrison. On 11 July 1812 Kinzie gave an important assignment to Chandonnai. He was ordered to get the bateau ready to move John's family to St. Joseph as soon as the fort was evacuated. The soldiers marched out on 14 August 1812 and Jean loaded the boat with 14 people and a mule tied to the mast and rowed down river toward Lake Michigan. Just south of Fort Dearborn Topenebe's warriors, who had been sent to protect them, stopped them and they observed part of the terrible battle and massacre of the soldiers and civilians along the lakefront. Mrs. Kinzie saw a warrior capture Captain Heald's wife, Rebekah, and her horse. She immediately sent Chandonnai to ransom her. Jean took the mule and a bottle of whiskey and made the trade, aided by Chief Topenebe who added some gold ornaments to seal the offer.²⁴ Mrs. Heald had been badly wounded by a musket ball to her right arm and was in great pain. She also had several more serious wounds. Chandonnai brought her to the bateau and then returned the boat and people back to the Kinzie house landing. She was taken into the house where her wounds were tended by John Kinzie who operated to remove the musket ball from her arm using only

a penknife and without the benefit of anesthesia.

Topenebe arrived with five warriors and posted them to protect the home and family of his good friend, Shawneeaukee. John bargained with the victorious chiefs at the Frog Creek village to have the wounded Captain Heald turned over to him for medical treatment and then arranged for the Healds to escape to St. Joseph with Topenebe and Chandonnai. Captain Heald hired Alexander Robinson at St. Joseph to bring them to Mackinac by canoe, a journey of 300 miles on Lake Michigan, and they surrendered to the British commandant.²⁵ The Healds were rescued by the brave actions of John Kinzie; Chandonnai and Robinson, both Métis; and by Topenebe, Pokagan and other friendly Indians.

The British learned of Chandonnai's efforts for the Americans and sent an officer to St. Joseph to arrest him. Chandonnai resisted arrest and killed this official. Some time later he moved to Detroit and lived with John Kinzie at his residence. He and John were arrested there in 1813, charged with treason by the British government and jailed at Fort Malden, Ontario. Chandonnai managed to "escape to the Indians" and rejoined the Americans and later became an important interpreter for them at the Treaty of Greenville, Ohio, in 1815. Jean married Marie Chapoton in Detroit and returned to Chicago in 1817 to work for the American Fur Company. In later treaties he was awarded two sections of land (1280 acres) along the St. Joseph River for his services to the United States and died in Michigan in 1833.

Another resident fur trader was Louis Buisson (ca. 1758-1820) a Métis who lived with his family near Lake Michigan about a half-mile north of John Kinzie and the Ouilmettes.²⁶ His wife Sheshi, also a Métis, was the daughter of Francois Chevalier, chief of the Lake Calumet Potawatomis. The Buisson children were Jean Baptiste, Michael, Nickolas, and Pierre. Louis Buisson also had a house in Peoria and traded there with the Prairie Potawatomis. His Indian relatives told him about the impending attack but noted that his family would not be harmed if they remained neutral and stayed indoors during the hostilities. Louis believed them and elected to remain at home.

After the attack on the Americans, the Ouilmette family hid Lt. Helm's wife, Margaret, and were aided by Sheshi Buisson who helped disguise Margaret in bright, Métis style clothing. When they observed a search party of Indians crossing the river, Sheshi quickly hid Margaret Helms under a feather bed and then calmly sat on the bed sewing a quilt while the hostile Indians looked through the house. Margaret was not found and owed her life to the brave efforts of Sheshi Buisson and her sister, Archange Ouilmette.

Francoise Des Pins was a Frenchman from Montreal who traded with the Illinois River valley tribes and was in competition with Thomas Forsyth at Peoria.²⁷ He

lived alone in a small cabin a half-mile south of the Leigh farm and was well known for his medical skills. Des Pins remained neutral and stayed in his home during the battle. Immediately after the Fort Dearborn troops surrendered he was called to the scene to administer to the wounded, both white and Indian. After the massacre, Des Pins, and his partner, Louis Buisson, moved into the vacant Kinzie home and continued to trade with the Indians. He ransomed a captive woman, his former neighbor, Martha Leigh and her daughter Sally, from Chief Black Partridge and brought them to Chicago to live with him. In due time they fell in love and were married and Mrs. Leigh became known as Madam Des Pins. Martha's first husband, James Leigh, a member of the Chicago militia had been killed in the massacre, as were her other children.

Another French and Métis family came to Chicago in 1810 from Milwaukee and lived near the fort on Frog Creek.²⁸ The father, Jean Baptiste Mirandeu was a blacksmith and trader and often worked for the garrison. He was born and educated in Quebec and became an early settler in Milwaukee where he married an Ottawa girl and raised a family of four boys and four girls. Daughters Jane and Victorie worked as servants for the Kinzie family, well supervised by Josette Beaubien. Madeline and Victorie Mirandeu were playing near the fort, one day, and witnessed the fight between John Kinzie and Jack LaLime in 1812 that ended in the death of LaLime. The girls later testified at an inquiry held at Fort Dearborn that found Kinzie not liable in the killing.

In June 1812 the Mirandeu family was advised by Indian relatives that Fort Dearborn would be attacked and that they were in grave danger. They decided to return to the safety of Milwaukee and left Chicago on horseback with a string of seven packhorses, on June 30, 1812. The family returned to Chicago in 1816 and father Jean Baptiste worked for the American Fur Company. Daughter Madeline married John Clark (a.k.a. Indian Clark) in 1825 and died quite young in 1828. Victorie Mirandeu married Joseph Pothier in 1828 and, at the Treaty of Prairie de Chien in 1829, was granted a reservation of 240 acres just south of Billy Caldwell's reserve. Her sister Jane Mirandeu received 160 acres just south of Victorie's grant. This land is now part of the Cook County Forest Preserves along the North Branch of the Chicago River in the area known as Sauganash. The four Mirandeu brothers received the sum of \$1200 dollars at the Chicago Treaty of 1833, in lieu of land.

Pierre Éclair, a Métis Potawatomi, worked at the busy Kinzie post in Chicago. In the summer of 1812 he was on a work detail at the Kinzie store at St. Joseph (Michigan) and learned of the outbreak of war with Great Britain, from Robert Forsythe, a nephew of John Kinzie. Forsythe asked Pierre to return to Chicago immediately with the news. Pierre agreed and walked the entire distance (90 miles) without stopping. He had a late dinner with the Kinzie

family and then brought the news to Captain Heald at Fort Dearborn. After the massacre of 15 August 1812, he aided in the surrender negotiations of the survivors. Years later, at the Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1829 he and his wife, Pachiquitachai, were awarded a section of land at Paw Paw Grove. Pierre was an interpreter for the Indian Agency at Chicago and served in the Cook County militia of Captain Boardman in the Black Hawk War of 1832.

Francois Le Mai was another French habitant and neighbor of John Kinzie along the north side of the Chicago River. He may have been in residence there as early as 1799 since Catholic Church records indicate that he brought his children to St. Louis that year to be baptized.²⁹ Francois, a Métis trader, married to a Potawatomi woman, was living in the Chicago area when Fort Dearborn was being built in 1803. Captain Whistler described him as a tall, gaunt man with strange eyes and a part-time trader. There is no record of Le Mai's presence in the area during the massacre of 1812. He may have heeded the warnings and left for a safer environment. He returned later and lived in the village until his mysterious death in March 1828 "out of doors" as mentioned in public records. Le Mai Avenue is named in his memory.

Another important Chicago resident, at this time, was Alexander Robinson whose Indian name was Chechepinqua.³⁰ He was born at Mackinac in 1792, the son of a Scots trader and an Ottawa-Métis mother from Green Bay. He married a Potawatomi girl at Mackinaw and moved with her to St. Joseph, Michigan to work in the Indian trade with Joseph Bailly and later with John Kinzie. The friendly and charismatic Robinson was a great favorite of powerful Chief Topenebe and other Indians who always called him "Chechepinqua" (Blinking Eyes). He met Tecumseh at Topenebe's village and became a great admirer of the important Shawnee leader. He also became a good friend and hunting companion of John Kinzie as well as an employee at his Michigan post. Robinson was transferred to Chicago after Kinzie moved there in 1804 and found that he needed additional, trilingual traders at the new location. He and his wife moved into a small house on the north side of the Chicago River, next door to Billy Caldwell. The friendly and jovial trader soon became well known and well liked by everyone in the area—Indians, soldiers, French and Métis. Robinson worked at the Kinzie store until the attack on Fort Dearborn in 1812. At that time he helped protect the Kinzie family and aided in the rescue of Captain and Mrs. Heald, bringing them by boat to St. Joseph and then to Mackinaw by canoe; a journey of 300 miles on Lake Michigan! He remained there until 1815 when he returned to Chicago and farmed for a year until John Kinzie returned in 1816 and reopened his store and rehired Robinson. In 1826 he married an additional wife, Catherine Chevalier, daughter of Chief Françoise Chevalier from Lake Calumet. Indian custom allowed him a second wife if the first wife was barren and his first wife remained in the

family as a valued member of the household. When Chief Chevalier died, the U.S. government appointed Robinson as Chief of the United Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa Tribe.³¹ He represented the tribe at the Chicago Treaty of 1833, which required them to cede their lands in Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana and move west. Robinson, however, remained in the Chicago area and took up residence on his reservation of 1280 acres on the Des Plaines River near Schiller Park, which had been awarded him for his service to the government. Most of his land is now part of the Cook County Forest Preserves and is located east of River Road between Belmont Avenue and the Kennedy Expressway. Robinson lived here until his death on 22 April 1872 at the advanced age of 110 years! His home was located just north of Lawrence Avenue on the west side of East River Road. Remarkably, this house remained standing and occupied by his descendants until destroyed by fire a few years ago. The old Chief, his wife Catherine, and other family members are buried in the little family cemetery near the home site. Their names are remembered and commemorated by the Forest Preserves that occupy their old reservation—now designated as Robinson Woods, Catherine Chevalier Woods, and Chechepinqua Woods.³²

The French and Métis people of Chicago were in a terrible dilemma in 1812. Many of them had sworn allegiance to the American government and were U.S. citizens.³³ On the other hand, most of them were closely related to the hostile Indians—some by blood, others by marriage. Nearly all of the French and Métis people were in the fur industry and dependent upon the Indians for their livelihood and were on very friendly terms with the tribesmen. The French needed the Indians and the Indians needed the French. Most of the Ottawa and Potawatomi people of the region were anti-American and pro-British and had received orders from Tecumseh to destroy Fort Dearborn. The hostiles were gathering in Chicago, during the summer of 1812, and camped at Frog Creek while preparing to attack the garrison. The Indians were being supplied by the traders and had no desire to do them harm. The traders were well informed about the impending attack and were told to remain neutral and stay indoors during the fighting or to leave the area. They were advised that anyone who aided the Americans would be killed.

Most of the traders heeded the warning and remained neutral. Some families left for Milwaukee, St. Joseph, or other safe havens, despite the pleas of Captain Heald to stay in the fort. A few Frenchmen believed Captain Heald and joined the militia and some of these soon deserted. The La Frambois boys went to Milwaukee with their parents after "borrowing" some army horses for the trip. The U.S. interpreter, a teen-age, half-blood, named Saliene, recently hired by Captain Heald, deserted to the Indians as soon as the troops marched out of the fort.³⁴ The few Frenchmen who were loyal to the Americans and took up arms against the Indians were killed in the massacre. They were Louis

Petrell and his son and two unidentified militia members. The French and Métis people who were neutral and remained indoors during the attack were not harmed.

The hostile Indians left Chicago soon after the burning of Fort Dearborn and the Factory building. Many warriors traveled to Indiana to attack Fort Wayne; others returned to their home villages loaded down with loot and American prisoners to hold for ransom.

The Chicago scene, at this time, was a grim vista of desolation, dominated by the burned ruins of Fort Dearborn and the unburied bodies of massacred Americans along the lakeshore.³⁵ The terrible atmosphere of death and destruction caused many of the French and Métis survivors to leave the area; some never to return. Fort Dearborn was rebuilt in 1816-1817 and garrisoned with a unit of the Third U.S. Infantry, which encouraged many former residents to return and continue the life left behind.³⁶ Alexander Robinson was one of the first, arriving in 1815 and starting a farm. John Kinzie returned in 1816, as did the Mirandean family. Jean and Josette Beaubien came back in 1818.

Chicago slowly came back to life, but it was not the same as life before the war. The fur trade was now dominated by the powerful American Fur Company, which had taken over Mackinac.³⁷ The local traders had the choice of joining "The Company" or being forced out of business. John Kinzie and others joined up but were never as successful as before. American settlers began to arrive and to preempt land that still belonged to the Indians. The fur trade declined and the Indians became more dependent on government handouts. The settlers clamored for legal land titles and demanded that the government buy up the Indian lands and move the tribesmen west. The government agreed and began treaties with the Indians who did not want to sell or to move. The Potawatomis and their allies did not have principal chiefs with the authority to sell tribal land. The government solved this problem by appointing Principal Chiefs from prominent mixed-blood people who were favorable to the Americans. Among the "political" chiefs appointed were Billy Caldwell and Alexander Robinson who were well rewarded for their services to the government.³⁸ The Indians sold millions of acres of Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana land for a pittance. Traders' claims against the Indians were paid from the purchase money and the Indians left their homeland penniless and destitute.

The French and Métis found that Chicago was a different place after the Treaty of 1833 without the Indians. It was no longer the open, fun filled place they once knew and loved. They didn't really understand the Americans and they missed their Indian friends and relatives. In the next few years many of Chicago's French and Métis people moved west to join the Potawatomis. Among those who left valuable property behind and joined their friends were Billy Caldwell, the Ouilmettes, and some of the Beaubiens and LaFrambois.³⁹

The French Connection in Chicago was a fun filled period of history that ended with the Treaty of 1833. The French and Métis people are gone but are remembered by their names on Forest Preserves, streets, neighborhoods, monuments, and plaques throughout the Chicago area.

Endnotes

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Book Review

Mots choisis : Trois cents ans de francophonie au Détroit du lac Érié. Marcel Bénéteau et Peter W. Halford. Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, Ottawa, 2008. 532 p. En guise de dédicace, remerciements, introduction, lexique, sources et références, annexe, ISBN 978-2-7603-0678-3.

Compte rendu de Robert Vézina, Université Laval, Québec.

Conçu et mis en chantier par Peter W. Halford, complété par Marcel Bénéteau après le décès de Halford, *Mots choisis : Trois cents ans de francophonie au Détroit du lac Érié* est une contribution importante au travail de description du français en usage dans les anciens pays d'en haut. Comme l'indiquent les auteurs dans l'introduction, l'objectif de ce glossaire est de « dresser l'inventaire des particularités lexicales relevées sur le territoire de l'ancienne colonie du Détroit, berceau de la francophonie en Ontario » (p. 5).

Pour établir la macrostructure de l'ouvrage – 2 850 mots et expressions –, les auteurs ont puisé à différentes sources. D'abord, ils ont repris en partie les nomenclatures de trois glossaires rédigés durant la seconde moitié du 20^e siècle (The Franco-Canadian Dialect of Windsor, Ontario, d'A. Hull; Les Canadiens-français du Détroit, leur parler, de V. Almazan; The Sugarbush Speech of the French dialect of Detroit, de N. Johnson), auxquelles s'ajoutent des entrées tirées du glossaire du père Potier (1743-1758). De plus, des entrées résultent de dépouillements de sources linguistiques imprimées et manuscrites, dont la riche collection Campau conservée à la Detroit Public Library (Burton Historical Collection). *L'Atlas linguistique de l'est du Canada*, de Dulong et Bergeron, a également été mis à contribution. Bénéteau, ethnologue de formation, a aussi tiré des données lexicales de divers corpus oraux faits à partir d'enregistrements de témoins âgés vivant dans la région de Détroit/Windsor, surtout du côté canadien de la frontière, mais également du côté américain.

L'ouvrage est d'orientation historique et s'appuie sur des sources couvrant une période de trois siècles (1701-2001). Comme le précisent les auteurs, l'œuvre « ne prétend pas livrer un portrait fidèle de la langue française du Détroit à l'heure actuelle, mais représente plutôt un effort de conserver un patrimoine linguistique [...] en voie de disparition » (p. 12). Par ailleurs, ces derniers ont adopté une perspective différentielle, ce qui est habituel pour ce genre d'étude. Ainsi, ne sont traités, en principe, que des emplois qui ne relèvent pas du français de référence (celui qui est décrit dans les dictionnaires usuels publiés en France). Il est à noter que, sauf exception, les emprunts à l'anglais, très nombreux dans le parler actuel, ne sont pas traités. Il en est de même des variantes phonétiques et formelles, qui ne sont enregistrées en entrée que dans les rares cas où il « s'agit d'anciennes formes bien attestées dans certaines régions (par exemple, *alton*, pour « laiton » dans la locution *fil d'alton*; *chunée* pour « cheminée ») ou encore lorsqu'une prononciation [...] produit un vocable presque irrécupérable avec [le] mot original » (p. 13), par exemple, *quiendre* pour *tiendre* (variante morphologique de *tenir*).

Les articles sont généralement courts, certains comportant une ou deux citations tirées du corpus linguistique, tous se terminant par une indication certaine ou hypothétique de l'origine du vocable ou de l'expression. Les définitions sont brèves, un grand nombre étant de type synonymique. Parmi les aspects dignes de mention, notons le souci des auteurs de faire la distinction entre les vocables appartenant plutôt à l'usage de la Côte du Détroit, là où se situe le plus ancien noyau de peuplement francophone – dont les origines remontent à la fondation du poste du Détroit (1701) –, et ceux appartenant à l'usage de la Côte du lac Sainte-Claire, à l'est de Windsor, où se sont fixés des Québécois entre les années 1830 et le début du 20^e siècle. La ville de Windsor et ses environs constituent une zone tampon entre les deux aires linguistiques. C'est sans doute dans le parler de la première zone de peuplement, dont la population est fortement ancrée dans le territoire depuis l'époque de la traite des pelleteries, longtemps plus ou moins isolée des autres francophones d'Amérique, qu'on retrouve le plus de traits distinctifs qui confèrent son originalité au français du Détroit (*crigne* « scalp, chevelure », *esparvier* « oiseau de proie; épervier, buse ou faucon », *gamache* « tétanos », *grenages* « graines de porcelaine », *oiseau rouge* « loriot », *valet* « châssis mobile de fenêtre à guillotine...»). Il demeure néanmoins fortement rattaché au français de la vallée laurentienne, d'où est originaire l'essentiel du contingent pionnier du Détroit. La zone de la Côte du lac Sainte-Claire, qui partage de nombreux traits avec la précédente, n'est pas pour autant dépourvue de traits distinctifs (*fève de champ* « fève de soya », *guidon* « brancard », *virebouquin* « vilebrequin...»).

D'une richesse remarquable, *Mots choisis* procure une lecture passionnante à quiconque s'intéresse à la culture et à la langue des francophones de cet ancien avant-poste de la Nouvelle-France. L'ouvrage n'est pas pour autant sans faille. Premièrement, il aurait été souhaitable de restreindre quelque peu le nombre d'entrées en appliquant plus strictement le critère différentiel, de sorte que des mots et expressions relevant du français général (du moins à l'époque où ils étaient usités au Détroit) n'y soient pas traités (*avoir le feu au cul* « être en chaleur », *courroucé* « en colère », *pétun* « tabac », etc.). Ensuite, plusieurs vocables et expressions sont décrits comme s'ils n'étaient pas usités au Québec, ce qui renvoie une image tronquée de l'histoire de leur présence dans le français du Détroit (par exemple : *papier sablé* « papier de verre », *pâtir* « souffrir », *péter plus haut que le trou* « avoir des prétensions [sic] », *pince (de canot)* « bout d'un canot » et *visite (de la)* « visiteurs » sont encore usuels en français du Québec). De plus, la brièveté de certaines définitions peut parfois causer des problèmes de décodage. Ainsi, *apichimon*, emprunt au groupe algonquin-outaouais-ojibwé (et non au montagnais, comme l'article peut le laisser entendre), ne peut être défini en premier lieu par « équipement d'hiver », puisqu'il s'agit d'un emploi très marginal qui n'est attesté que sous la plume de Bougainville, lequel n'associe d'ailleurs pas cet emploi à l'usage des Français du Détroit. On ne peut non plus définir le mot par « lit, litière, couverture », car le sens est ainsi beaucoup trop générique (*apichimon* ne peut désigner, par exemple, une couverture de laine). En fait, dans cet emploi, le mot renvoie nécessairement à une

peau ou à un assemblage de peaux de bêtes servant de matelas ou de couverture. C'est l'acception première de cet amérindianisme.

On note un problème semblable dans l'article *killiou* (plus souvent écrit *kiliou* dans les sources historiques). Le mot est défini par « oiseau d'un beau plumage » (c'est la définition qu'en donne Potier), ce qui est insatisfaisant. Selon les auteurs, « Il n'est pas clair de quel oiseau il s'agit : Clapin [...] donne "Grand aigle royal" tandis que pour McDermott [...], c'est "*the Golde* [sic] *Eagle, Aquila chrysaetos*" dont il est question. » Or, *aigle royal* et *golden eagle* renvoient au même oiseau, et c'est le sens qu'il faut donner à *killiou*.

À l'inverse, d'autres mots sont définis de façon trop étroite. C'est le cas de *natter* qu'on définit par « tresser, nouer des mèches du crin des cheveux [sic] pour les tourmenter », en spécifiant que cette acception est absente des ouvrages lexicologiques consultés. En réalité, la définition est beaucoup trop collée au seul contexte cité (... *i' nattaient les couettes de jouaux*...). Ici, *natter* signifie simplement « mettre en natte », emploi usité en français de référence.

En outre, on notera que les indications quant à l'origine de certains vocables sont inexactes. Par exemple, contrairement à ce qui est affirmé, *okantican* « grosse flotte aux deux

bouts du maître de rets » ne vient pas du huron, mais bien du groupe ojibwé¹. D'autres indications auraient pu être plus précises. Ainsi, on dit de *killiou* qu'il s'agit d'un emprunt « à une langue amérindienne non identifiée ». En fait, il s'agit clairement d'un emprunt à un ou à plusieurs dialectes du groupe ojibwé².

Malgré ces quelques faiblesses, l'ouvrage mérite amplement de faire partie de la bibliothèque de tous les dialectologues et lexicologues s'intéressant au français nord-américain.

Notes infrapaginale

1. Par exemple, Cuoq relève en algonquin-népissingue la forme *okandikan* « morceau de liège qu'on met à la ligne pour la soutenir sur l'eau » (Cuoq, J.A., *Lexique de la langue algonquine*, Montréal, J. Chapleau & fils imprimeurs-éditeurs, 1886).

2. Cuoq définit *kintiw* par « oiseau qu'on appelle communément grand-aigle » (Cuoq, *ibid.*). La présence du [l] dans l'amérindianisme *killiou* (*kiliou*, *quiliou*, etc.), au lieu du [n] de l'algonquin et de l'ojibwé tels que décrits aux 19^e et 20^e siècles, pointe vers un emprunt à l'outaouais, mais n'écarte pas la possibilité que l'algonquin tel qu'il était parlé au 18^e siècle ait aussi servi de source à l'emprunt. La liste complète des références serait trop longue à exposer ici.

Message from the President

Member surveys have begun to trickle in, and I am so pleased to read the responses received from many of you. At first, they were from members in the St. Louis area, but now the envelopes are beginning to bear postmarks from distant cities. The variety of comments and ideas is fascinating and will be a meaningful source for future planning. My thanks to those who already have returned the survey, and I urge those of you who have not yet had time to complete it to please do so soon. Your input is important to the future of the Center.

Because board members live at such great distances from one another, it was decided this year that rather than schedule two board meetings between the fall conferences, members of the board would meet only once. That board meeting was held in Springfield, Illinois, on Saturday, April 25. We addressed a number of issues, including the sale of ads in *Le Journal*, the redesign of our website, the selection of future conference sites, and marketing our extended publications. These and other matters are still under consideration, but in my annual report later in the year I will provide an update.

One action taken at our meeting in Springfield will be of particular interest to our members. The revision of the by-laws adopted by the Center in October 2006 provides for a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The same person, except the president, may hold any two or more offices. Since the Center's inception, the same person has held the office of secretary and treasurer. At the board meeting, Marcia Lebeau, who has served so ably as our secretary-treasurer, informed the board that when her term as secretary-treasurer expires in October 2009, it is her recommendation that a separate secretary and treasurer be elected. The responsibilities of the roles of secretary-treasurer have increased over the last 26 years, and she reasoned that it would be more desirable to have two people handling these duties. Recognizing the immediacy of this need, the board approved her recommendation, and the nominating committee in its report at the annual meeting in October will propose names for both a secretary and a treasurer. Margaret Brown, founder and first president of CFCS, chairs the nominating committee, and members include Jim Baker (Ste. Genevieve) and Bob Moore (St. Louis).

Warmest congratulations are extended to Donovan Weight who is this year's recipient of the \$1,500 Carl J. Ekberg Research Grant. Weight, who studies 18th and 19th century black history at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, has as his dissertation topic "A Cross-Cultural Study of Blacks in the Illinois Country," drawing information from anthropology, history and linguistics. The board voted at its board meeting last October to increase the amount of the grant from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

Excitement in St. Louis continues to mount for the annual meeting scheduled this fall, especially as we spotlight the historic district of Florissant in suburban St. Louis. I hope you already have October 16-18, 2009 on your calendar for a trip to the Gateway City. I look forward to seeing you there.

All good wishes,

Ruth Bryant, President, CFCS

Editor's Note

As this issue of *Le Journal* goes to press I am preparing for another field season at the site of Fort St. Joseph. Archaeological investigations continue to yield tangible evidence of the French presence in the western Great Lakes in the form of faience, military uniform buttons from the troupes de la Marine, and iron knives stamped with the names of French cutlers. You are welcome to visit the excavations this year during our annual open house, Aug. 1-2. For more information see <http://www.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph/open-house.html>. If you can't make it to Niles this summer I hope you consider attending the 2010 annual meeting that will feature the theme, "The French in Michigan." More information will be available in upcoming issues of *Le Journal*. In the meantime, I wish you a good summer and look forward to seeing you at the fall conference in historic Florissant.

à bientôt, mes amis,

Michael Shakir Nassaney
Editor, *Le Journal*

Announcements

Mark your calendars for the **2009 annual conference of the Center for French Colonial Studies**, to be held in St. Louis/Florissant on the campus of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, October 16-18. A Friday evening reception will be hosted by the Quebec Delegation Chicago at Taille de Noyer in Florissant, followed by a series of stimulating presentations on Saturday and a Sunday morning tour of historic Florissant. See the Spring 2009 issue of *Le Journal* for the program. More information should be found on the CFCFS web site by the time you read this.

The Feast of the Hunters' Moon will be held at Fort Ouiatenon Historical Park in Indiana on October 10-11, 2009. The event is a recreation of life at an 18th century outpost and includes period foods, artisans, sutlers, musicians, and interpreters. For more information, contact Leslie Martin Dotson, Feast Coordinator, 1001 South Street, Lafayette, IN 47901, leslie@tippecanoehistory.org, website www.tippecanoehistory.org, 765.476.8411.

Sources and Resources

In the year 2000 historian Bob Moore at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial put together a perspective view of St. Louis based on information reprinted in J. Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis City and County*, Vol. I (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts & Co., 1883). Scharf used information taken from an 1804 census of St. Louis' property owners, which included the sizes, styles, and materials of the structures standing in the town at that time. The map is interactive, so visitors to the site can click on the individual drawings of buildings and receive information on the owners of the structures, pictures of the buildings or the people who lived in them, and photos of the same areas and what they look like today. Just go to <http://www.nps.gov/archive/jeff/LewisClark2/Circa1804/Circa1804Main.htm> to enjoy this interactive map.

History As They Lived It: A Social History of Prairie du Rocher, Ill.

By Margaret Kimball Brown



Margaret Kimball Brown has written a new, comprehensive study of Prairie du Rocher, Illinois, that covers the history of the area from 1500 through the founding of the town in 1722, and up to the present day. Prairie du Rocher was founded on the east bank of the Mississippi, some forty air miles southeast of St. Louis. It is centered on the broad alluvial plain of the Mississippi River, near high limestone bluffs that bound it to the east. With a population more or less stabilized at 600 people, it is the only one of the seven French colonial settlements that remains a small village.

"Prairie du Rocher's suitability for study," Brown writes, "lies in its continuity, its stability of size as a small community, and the availability of records for the entire period of its existence."

The 370-page paperback, with 27 photographs, a dozen charts and three maps, retails for \$22.95, and is available at selected book stores or by mail from The Patrice Press, 319 Nottingham Drive, Tooele, UT 84074; phone 435 833 9168. There is a \$4.95 charge for shipping the first book, \$1.50 for each additional item. The firm maintains a toll-free number: 1/800/367-9242, for Visa or MasterCard orders.



Code Noir: The Colonial Slave Laws of French Mid-America, the new CFCFS extended publication has just been released. Edited by William Potter, it features an introductory article by Carl Ekberg, the complete French text of the *Code Noir de la Louisiane* of 1724 and an English translation on opposite pages as well as facsimiles of a number of related documents from the Kaskaskia

Manuscript collection with English translation. (67 pages, illustrations.)

"Vernon V. Palmer, an authority on legal history, has recently opined that the Black Code 'was one of the most important codes in the history of French codes.' Given French preoccupation with codifying laws—under the monarchy, the empire, and the various republics—this is a very large statement. Credit must be given to the Center for French Colonial Studies for sponsoring the publication of this welcome new translation of the Code." (From the *Introduction* by Carl Ekberg)

Prepaid orders only

CFCFS Members: \$9.00 Non-Members: \$11.00
Shipping and handling: 1 book: \$3.50; 2 and 3 books: \$3.50 + \$.50 per additional book; 4 and more books: \$3.50 + \$.25 per additional book.
Order from: CFCFS History Dept., North Central College CM 321
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Deadlines to submit announcements: 12/10, 3/10, 6/10, 9/10.

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