



Our **FRENCH-CANADIAN** **Ancestors**

Thomas J. Laforest



Biographies of ancestors:

- AUBUCHON dit LE LOYAL • BARIL • BIRON • BOUCHER • CAPEL
- CHAMPOU dit JOLICOEUR • COSSET • DUBÉ • DUCLOS
- GARNIER dit PELLERIN • GOUIN • HÉROU dit BOURGAINVILLE
- LECLERC • LEFEBVRE dit BOULANGER
- LE MAISTRE dit LA MORILLE et LE PICARD • LE MARCHAND
- MASSÉ dit BEAUMIER • PÉPIN • PERROT • PINARD • RACLOS
- RIGAUD • SIMON de LONGPRÉ • TERRIEN du PONCEAU



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Marin Boucher

CHAPTER 7

Marin Boucher



even and a half centuries ago, the royal troops of France with Blanche de Castille at their head, regent of the country until her son Louis IX attained his majority, captured the imposing fortress of the castle of Bellême and took possession of the county of Perche. The Duc d'Alençon, brother of Philippe VI, had obtained this territory earlier, but in 1525, the region was returned once and for all to the French crown.

A century passed: Then around 1633 there was great activity. Robert Giffard and Noël Juchereau were recruiting for New France. They searched the wooded hills around their small village, (from whence would come the celebrated strong-muscled, dappled gray work horse) and tried to convince the men and their relatives to follow them to Canada. Giffard must have been very persuasive since he succeeded in enlisting the following: the family of Jean Guyon, mason; the family of Zacharie Cloutier, carpenter; Henry Pinguet, Marin and Gaspard Boucher, and many others who had verbal contracts of indenture and even some who made private agreements. The contracts of Guyon and Cloutier, full of precise details, were signed before notary Roussel on 14 March 1634. The two of them were committed for 5 years to Giffard “up to the point of leaving in order to make, by the grace of God, the aforementioned colony the country of New France.” (1)

LE PERCHE

What is this country from whence came the greatest number of first families to be established in Canada in 1634? A bro-

chure published in 1974 entitled *Le Perche des Canadiens* gives us precise information on the subject. The name Perche disappeared from the administrative divisions of France two centuries ago, but it still exists as a geographical region to the west of the Paris basin; between Normandy to the north, Maine to the west, the Vendômois to the south and the Beauce to the east.

This province is vividly contrasted from the neighboring regions by its terrain. Erosion carved the countryside into numerous valleys and its large forest is one of the water sources for western France. Numerous rivers and tributaries drain into the Seine and the Loire. The coast of lower Normandy is fed by sources deep in its wooded crests.

The introduction of Christianity into the Perche seems to date from the 5th century. After the difficult period of Norman invasions, the Perche was organized and developed with the help of its seigneurs. Monasteries were founded everywhere, but then the Hundred Years War weighed heavily on the countryside. Castles and villages were destroyed and but few Roman churches remained. After the conflict, the villagers left the forest and built a new town on the other side of the ruins which they designated the old bourg. Around the middle of the 15th century, the people of Perche started to farm again. With the advent of an iron and weaving industry, the villagers resumed a way of life long since forgotten. The country scarcely changed in the 17th century, except that agriculture and the crafts of artisans could not employ the expanding population. Increased knowledge of the New World, a taste for independence, and, perhaps for some of them, the idea of converting the native people, hastened their departure.

TOWARDS NEW FRANCE

Before enlisting his people, Robert Giffard, son of Guillaume, sieur de la Tour and trumpeter at Autheuil, knew what waited for him in Canada. He had gone there for the first time in 1621, and lived there for 5 or 6 years. After his return to France, he took all the time he needed to fulfill his plan of

implanting a certain number of families from Perche on Canadian soil. At the beginning of spring in 1634, Giffard and his future colonists were at the port of Dieppe. Four ships commanded by Duplessis-Boschard, and assisted by the Captains de Nesle, Bontemps, and de Lormel, awaited them before setting sail for New France. Among the passengers was Marin Boucher and his family, burning with impatience at the idea that in several weeks they would become acquainted with their new country. Benjamin Sulte tells us that Marin, originally from Langy, had just sold a house to Jean Guyon, one that he owned in Montagne, which was next to that of Pierre Forget.

At the beginning of June, the first contingent from Perche arrived in Québec and lost no time in choosing a site along the luxuriant banks of the majestic Saint-Lawrence River. Boucher immediately opted for a lot on the Saint-Charles River, on land belonging to the Recollects.

Father Archange Godbout did patient research, urged on of course, by Madame Pierre Montagne, to find the origin of these families from Perche, from whom the majority of French Canadians are descended (2). In *Our Ancestors of the 17th Century*, a colossal work which unfortunately remains unfinished, Father Godbout gives details on three generations of Bouchers. (3)

In his report published in 1975, the Archivist of Québec, 15 years after the death of Father Godbout, gives us another portion of the work by this esteemed genealogist, written under the title of *Old Families of France in New France*, with introduction and additional notes by Roland J. Auger, then Director of Genealogical Service at the National Archives of Québec, Pages 139 and 140 are devoted in large part to Marin Boucher. (4)

We read therein that Marin was a relative of Gaspard, but not his brother, as was often claimed. He had at least 2 sisters: Jeanne, who was married on 15 July 1629 at Saint-Jean to Thomas Hayot (5); and Antoinette, wife of Guillaume Lecourt.

TWO MARRIAGES IN FRANCE

Marin Boucher, born between 1587 and 1589, was married twice before leaving for Canada. On 7 February 1611, he married Juliane Baril, daughter of Jean, living at LaBarre, in the parish of Saint-Langis-lez-Mortagne (Orne). Juliane died on 15 December 1627 and was buried at Saint-Langis the next day. Around 1629, Marin took a second wife, Perrine Malet. The following children, except for Louise, were baptized at Saint-Langis: Nicole (1611), Jean (1613), François (1617), Thienette (1620), Charlotte (1622), and Marie (1625); as for Louise, she was baptized at Saint-Jean in 1615.

From the second marriage came: Louis-Marin (1630) and Jean-Galleran (1633). The family did not end there; 5 other children baptized at Château-Richer or at Québec were:

3. Françoise (1636), married 14 years later to Jean Plante, the ancestor of the Plante families in Canada.
4. Pierre (1639), future pioneer of the Rivière-Ouelle
5. Madeleine (1641), the ancestress of the Houde (and Houle) families, by her marriage to Louis Houde in 1660.
6. Marie (1644), future wife of Charles Godin, ancestor of a large number of our current Godin families.
7. Guillaume (1647), married to Marguerite-Jeanne Thibault in 1671.

Perrine Malet, the second wife of Marin Boucher, was born between 1604 and 1606, and was the daughter of Pierre Malet and of Jacqueline Liger from Courgeout (Orne). When the Bouchers came to New France in 1634, they were accompanied by 3 children: Louis-Marin, 4 years old; Jean-Galleran, 1 year old; and François, 16 years old.

HEIR TO CHAMPLAIN

We know almost nothing about the first 4 years of Marin Boucher and his family in New France, except that the pioneer is mentioned in Champlain's will. According to the historian, E. Mitchell (a member of the Society of Canadian Writers, and the Historical Societies of Montréal and Boucherville), the

founder of Québec certainly knew Boucher before his death. She states (6) that “the Commandant of Trois-Rivières, Marc-Antoine Bras-de-fer de Châteaufort, assumed his duties as interim governor immediately after the funeral. He presided at the reading of Champlain’s will—a will whose validity was to be contested (7)—in which a man called Marin was mentioned, and it concerns, we believe, Marin, relative of Gaspard: ‘I give to Marin, mason, living near the house of the Récollet Fathers, the last suit that I had made from material which I got at the store,” wrote Champlain.’ (8)

Marin Boucher must have greatly appreciated this legacy from Champlain, because we know how much our ancestors, who were for the most part very poor, attached importance to any clothing, be it also threadbare and worn out.

FARMER OF THE JESUITS

On 24 August 1638, Marin was called to give testimony on the circumstances of the voyage of Gaspard Bouchard “his relative” who also arrived in 1634 (9). We know that Marin first worked a piece of land that the Recollets had abandoned in 1629, following the surrender of Québec to the Kirke brothers. Later he took a farm, with his brother-in-law, Thomas Hayot (the ancestor of the Ayotte families), on land of the Jesuits at Beauport. On 11 June 1648, reports the Jesuit Journal (10), the two farmers separated. Hayot kept the farm and Boucher took a concession next to that of Olivier Le Tardif.

ON THE BEAUPRÉ COAST

Later Boucher and his family lived on the Beaupré coast. Marin then sold his former farm of 3 arpents in frontage on the Saint-Charles River “from the stream which separates the cleared field of the Reverend Fathers Récollets from the deserted property formerly of Jacques Caumont.” (11) Marin claimed to have received the land from the Company of New France, but the Recollets claimed this land as belonging to them, when they returned to Canada in 1670.

On 6 March 1656 (12), Boucher signed a note for 176 livres for the Fabrique de Québec, an old debt contracted from the Compagnie des Habitants. “Meanwhile our mason-farmer, wrote Father Godbout, advanced in age. (13) Little by little, he gave up his concessions: He gave 1½ arpents in frontage to his son-in-law Louis Houde which was returned to Marin on 13 September 1655 (14). He then gave 2 arpents to another son-in-law Jean Plante on 15 April 1656 (15) which was receipted for on 7 February 1659 (16); an increase of 8 perches on 8 July, and right of passage on 27 September 1668 (17). He gave another 2 arpents to his son Jean Galleran, on 30 April 1656 (18), and added an increase of 7½ perches on 15 December 1662 (19). He made a similar gift to his son Guillaume on 29 July 1670 (20). At the time of the 1667 census, Marin Boucher had reached the age of 80. Therein he listed 8 head of cattle and 20 arpents under cultivation (21). He must have died shortly after 1670. In 1681 Perrine Malet, his widow, was listed in the census along with Antoine Voilon, a tailor, who seems to have been in her employ (22). She was buried at Québec on August 1687.”

This citation from Father Godbout, leaves us a little curious concerning the date of death of Marin Boucher, but his epitaph exists fine and clear, copied from the registry of Château-Richer dated 29 March 1671, as follows:

“In the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1671, on the 29th of March died Marin Boucher after having lived as a good Christian and received the Holy sacraments of eucharist, penance and the last rights of extreme unction, was buried in the cemetery of Château-Richer by Monsieur Morel accompanied by the Reverend Father Nouvelle and by me doing priestly functions for them on the coast of Beaupré.”

(signed) F. Fillion, missionary priest

THE BOUCHERS ARE LEGION

The descendants of Marin Boucher are extremely numerous in America. "His descendants would today form a complete regiment," exclaimed the historian Benjamin Sulte 100 years ago, in speaking of Marin Boucher (23).

In our day the expression is not strong enough. It would be necessary to speak of an entire army.

According to Tanguay, the surname Boucher has given rise to no less than nineteen variations: Belleville, Cambray, De-Boucherville, De Grosbois, De la Bruyère, De la Perrière, De Montanville, De Montbrun, De Montizambert, De Niveville, Desnois, Desroches, Desrosiers, De Verchères, Dubois, Simon, St. Amour, St. Martin and St. Pierre. (24)



ENDNOTES

- (1) Mme Pierre Montagne, *Tourouvre et les Juchereau*, pp 13 and following.
- (2) Gabriel Drouin, *DNCF (1608-1760)*, Drouin affirms, among others, that Zacharie Cloutier is the ancestor of all the French Canadians.
- (3) Archange Godbout, *Nos Ancêtres aux XVIIe siècle*. This biographic dictionary of French Canadian families was published in serial in the *RAPQ* from 1952/53. All of the families whose beginnings pre-date the 18th century are presented in alphabetical order, from Abancourt to Brassard (6th and last book in 1965). Unfortunately Father Godbout left his work unfinished.
- (4) _____. *RAPQ* 1975, pp 105 to 264.
- (5) Thomas Hayot and Jeanne Boucher also had emigrated to New France.
- (6) Elizabeth Mitchell, *Messire Pierre Boucher (écuyer) seigneur de Boucherville, 1622-1717*, p 31
- (7) Robert de Rocquebrune, *Les Canadiens d'autrefois*, p 29.
- (8) Robert le Blant, "Le testament de Champlain," *RHAF* Volume 17, pp 277-282.
- (9) _____. *Archives judiciaires de Québec*, Volume III, p 15.
- (10) _____. *Le Journal des jésuites*, Edition 1892, p 52.
- (11) Henri Bancherons, act of 25 July 1647.
- (12) Guillaume Audouart, act of 6 March 1656.
- (13) _____. *RAPQ* 1959-1960, p 388.
- (14) Claude Auber, act of 13 September 1655.
- (15) *Ibid*, act of 30 April 1656.
- (16) Jean-Baptiste Peuvret, act of 7 February 1659.
- (17) *Op Cit* (14), acts of 8 July and 27 September 1668.
- (18) to (20) *Ibid*, acts of 30 April 1656, 15 December 1662, and 29 July 1670.
- (21) Benjamin Sulte, *HDCF 1608-1880*, Volume IV, p 74b.
- (22-23) *Ibid*, Volume V, p 79c and Volume IV, p 51.
- (24) Cyprien Tanguay, *DGFC*, Volume 7, p 503.

	Moulin à farine (1695)	6	JULIEN ALLARD	
		2	Veuve LOUIS JOBIN	
		2	PIERRE VOYER	
		4	ROMAIN TRESPAGNY	
		2	LOUIS DESMOULINS	
		5.5	CHARLES LE FRANÇOIS	
		3	CHARLES BELLENGER	
		2	FRANÇOIS GRIÉPY	
		2	FRANÇOIS LEFRANC	
		2	LOUIS MARTHELOT	
		3	CHARLES BELLENGER	
		3	BERTRAND CHESNAY DE LA GARENNE	
		6	ZACHARIE CLOUTIER FILS	
		6	MACE GRAVELLE	
		6.9	FRANÇOIS BELLENGER	
		6	SIMON GUION	
		6	JEAN GUION DU BUISSON	
		6	FÉLIX AUBER	
		8.8	GUILLAUME BOUCHER	
		2.5	Veuve TOUSSAINT TOUPIN DU SAULT	
		2.5	CHARLES LETARDIF	
		1.5	DOMAINE DE BEAUPRE	NICOLAS HUOT
		1.5	THOMAS GRANDERIE DIT FAVEROLLE	
		6	JACQUES COCHON DIT LA MOTTE	
		3.5	SÉMINAIRE DE QUÉBEC (JEAN JOLLIN en 1683)	
		3.5	BARTHÉLEMY VERREAU	
		6.2	ANTOINE TOUPIN	
		6	JEAN CLOUTIER	
		6.13 pi.	GUILLAUME THIBAUT	
		4.13 pi.	CHARLES CLOUTIER	
		2	PIERRE MOISAN	
		4	JEAN COCHON FILS	
		8.8	PIERRE GAGNON	
		6	MATHURIN GAGNON	
		5	MICHEL ROULLOIS	
		3.7	PIERRE ET ALEXIS GRAVELLE	
		4	Héritiers de JEAN DOYON	
		2	JACQUES LE SOT	
		2	JACQUES DAVID DIT PONTIFE	
		7	Héritiers de JEAN GAGNON Père	
		4	JEAN GAGNON FILS DE PIERRE	
		2	MARTIN GUÉRARD	
		6	ROBERT DROUIN	
		12	ESTIENNE RACINE	

CHATEAU-RICHER en 1880