

# **OUR FRENCH CANADIAN ANCESTORS**

**Volume XI**

**by**

*Thomas J. Laforest*

**PALM HARBOR, FLORIDA**

**1990**

Copyright © 1990 The LISI PRESS

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form, by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Inquiries should be addressed to The LISI Press, P.O. Box 1063, Palm Harbor, FL 34682-1063

ISBN: 0-914163-11-6 (Volume XI)  
Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 83-81941

Laforest, Thomas John, 1917-  
*Our French Canadian Ancestors*  
Volume XI, 310 pages, July 1990  
20 Chapters  
Appendices  
Bibliography  
Index of Names  
ISBN: 0-914163-00-0 (Series)

## CHAPTER 2

Michel Brouillet dit Laviolette



rrouillet as a family name does not come from the words brouillard (a dense fog) or brouillon (untidy) but, according to Dauzat, from breuil, like Dubreuil. It means a domain in a forest enclosure.

Three Brouillets came to Canada: Nicolas, Jean and Michel.

The first was the twenty-seven year old Nicolas, son of François-Nicolas and of Françoise Perrin, from Saint-Nicolas de Sensal, diocese of Fribourg, Switzerland. He married the 46 year old daughter of Jean and Françoise-Marie Monet, on 30 April 1759 at Montréal. As might be expected, this couple had no children.

The second, Jean Brouillet dit Lavigneur, son of Jean and of Simone Légère, from Saint-Jean-Baptiste, arrondissement and diocese of Angoulême, became the husband of Marie-Madeleine Ricard, daughter of Jean and of Madeleine Pineau, on 7 January 1706 at La Pérade. Eight Brouillet children were baptized at Batiscan. This ancestor drowned on 8 July 1718. He has numerous descendants among us.

We are interested in Michel Brouillet, son of Jacques and of Renée Vaizière, a Poitevin born on 3 May 1645 at Goueux, a community situated at the confluence of the big and little Blourde Rivers, from whence they join the Vienne. A few kilometers inland and to the north, is Lussac-les-Châteaux, head town of the canton of Montmorillon, the administrative center of the territory of

the arrondissement. Michel belonged to the diocese of Poitiers. When he left his country for Canada, Bishop Gilbert II de Clérambault de Palluau directed the destiny of this famous diocese.

#### FOR THE HOMELAND

Volunteer or not, Michel Brouillet, strong and in good health, enlisted under his country's flag. About 1663 Louis XIV decided to assure the stability of New France. Thus he created the Sovereign Council and sent strong and capable girls called the Daughters of the King. In 1664, the Carignan-Salieres Regiment was sent over to subdue the arrogant Iroquois. It was here, during this unusual military hustle and bustle, that Michel Brouillet dit Laviolette first appears in Canada.

Michel served in the Company of Captain Louis Petit. We know eight of his companions who must have been among the fifty other soldiers in the unit. Petit and his men arrived in Canada with the second contingent of the Carignan Regiment; they debarked at Québec from the ship *Saint-Sébastien* on 12 September 1665. The fate of a Company Commander is often bound to that of his soldiers. Petit and his men were chosen to spend the winter at Fort Saint-Louis, which was under the command of Jacques de Chambly. In February, Governor de Courcelles decided to attack the Mohawks in their own territory. The advance was made over a distance of sixty miles, resulting in the destruction of a Mohawk village not far from the Dutch. Forty well-armed Iroquois came out of the woods to send five or six French soldiers and a Lieutenant to Heaven, and wounded two captains, including Louis Petit. We can assume that Michel Brouillet was in the action but emerged safe and sound.

In 1668 there was a general demobilization. After his theological studies, Louis Petit was ordained a priest by Msgr de Laval in 1670 and was sent to Acadia in 1676 as the Vicar-General.

Brouillet seems to have liked Monsieur de Chambly because he decided to remain in Canada in the seigneurie of his former garrison commander. He received one hundred livres and provisions for about a year when he left the regiment and decided to make Canada his new homeland.

#### LAVIOLETTE-DUBOIS

After his military service, Laviolette remained in the area, at Chambly. It took him two years to prepare for the arrival of his future wife, even though he had yet to discover her identity.

Marie Dubois, daughter of the late Guillaume and of Isabelle LaSoeur, was a twenty-eight year old orphan, protected by the Sun King. Her native town was Lisieux, famous today for its pilgrimage to Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, and formerly for its cathedral built in the twelfth century. The coastal river, *la Touques*, passes through Lisieux before emptying into *la Manche* (the English Channel).

This Marie Dubois, after her arrival in Québec in the summer of 1670, met Etienne Revellos who proposed marriage. On 26 August, notary Romain Becquet signed their marriage contract. According to Silvio Dumas, Marie brought property valued at three hundred livres and a gift from the king worth fifty. Suddenly, lover Etienne disappeared like a bird of passage, whereupon Marie went to Montréal. On 3 November, she was "in the chamber of Monsieur de Chambly" seeking approval her marriage contract under a private agreement to Michel Brouillet dit Laviolette. A missionary from Chambly blessed their union, but the document itself has been lost.

Such is the incomplete and not very complicated introduction to their love story. Marie and Michel lived together for nearly forty years.

#### CHAMBLY

The soldiers from the Carignan Regiment came to an understanding with their officers, the future seigneurs, in order to share the soil. Michel Brouillet carved for himself a portion of land with four arpents of frontage by forty deep, a double concession, on the west bank of the basin, *"at six arpents from there where this bank makes a right-angle turn towards the fort, some twenty-five arpents away to the east"*. Among their neighbors, we note Julien Plumereau dit Latreille, Louis Duverger, witness to the marriage contract of Michel and Marie, and Marcellin Dupré. Monsieur de Chambly received the title of Seigneur on 29 October 1672. In 1673, on 14 October, he granted concessions to seven censitaires. The next day, seventeen colonists, including Michel Brouillet, appeared before notary Adhémar and de Chambly to receive their land grants.

Until 1675, Michel Brouillet cleared the forest and grew wheat on this fertile land. Michel borrowed two hundred twenty-six livres from his seigneur. On 15 October 1674, the administrator for the seigneur, Philippe Goyau, induced Michel to agree to a settlement of an annual rent of twenty livres and six sols, to pay his debt.

Michel preferred to be a creditor rather than a debtor. Already new ideas were filling his head. On 8 November 1675, he decided to leave the Saint-Louis coast. He sold half of his property to René Dumas dit Rencontre, another soldier from the Carignan Regiment. Where then did the Brouillet family wish to go?

#### SOREL

It seems that Michel had talent as a miller. The flour mill of the fort at Sorel was short-handed and the job interested him. Brouillet looked over the land possibilities and he obtained a concession with two arpents of frontal land by forty deep. The lost notarial act is known to us by that of the neighboring concession subsequently made to Nicolas Pion dit Lafontaine in September 1676. The following year at Sorel, Michel acquired a homestead

nearer the river, between those of Charles Lesieur and Jean Lavallée. The price of this acquisition: 300 livres owed to Pierre Guignard dit d'Olonne. During the summer of 1677, Brouillet hired Pierre Lhomme, son of Michel, for a year at a salary of ninety livres, in order to assist him in all legitimate work.

The Brouillets lived then in the heart of the present-day town of Sorel, in an area bordered by the commercial street, the park Royal, the court house and the church of Saint-Pierre. The head of the family worked at the mill to grind fine flour, on days when the winds were favorable.

In the census of 1681, Michel Brouillet owned only two head of cattle, had one gun and six arpents under cultivation. His seigneur, Pierre de Saurel, was said to be the owner of forty-three head of cattle, sixty-two sheep and eighteen goats, and owned one hundred fifty arpents of cultivated land.

The Brouillets loved Sorel very much, but again Michel was looking far afield. Was there not a better place elsewhere?

#### POINTE-AUX-TREMBLES

On the first of November 1689, the *Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice* rented the seigneurial windmill on the Sainte-Anne coast of Pointe-aux-Trembles to Michel Brouillet. This mill was situated not far upstream from the town. "*The land and the house near the said mill*" were part of this lease which had a duration of three years. Michel must deliver "*ninety minots of wheat*", each year, in addition to maintaining the sails, cogs, spindle, capstan and to strengthen the support of the millstones.

In the spring of 1690, Pierre Lusseau dit Desruisseaux sold his sixty arpents of land at Bois-Brulé with house, shed and six cultivated arpents to Michel Brouillet, for the sum of eight hundred livres. It was situated a quarter of an hour's walk from the windmill and two

leagues from the enclosing walls of Ville-Marie. In 1698 the seigneurs of the island added twenty arpents in depth to this concession.

It is necessary to remember that in 1689 the Iroquois committed terrible ravages in the Montréal region. Even in 1690 the enemy returned on 2 July, to kill one of Brouillet's neighbors, Jean Delpé dit Pariseau. On Monday 27 August 1691 in the same territory, Nicolas Millet and his wife Catherine Chaperon were kidnaped by these wild savages. Fortunately, they were freed a week later.

Do we have any idea of the anguish of the good people of this area? The Brouilllets held on, apparently ending their migrations. However, on 2 May 1699, Michel Brouillet rented for a duration of two and a half years the windmill of the seigneuresse Catherine Legardeur, Saurel's widow. Michel must have often made the crossing between Pointe-aux-Trembles and Sorel on days when the winds were good.

#### SOREL HOUSEHOLD

The six children in the Brouillet household were named Bernard, Jean, Gilles, Pierre, Marie and Marie-Françoise.

1. The eldest, Bernard, born 8 September 1671, succumbed to the call of the wild. From 1688 to 1702 he was very often away from his family, because he was a voyageur transporting merchandise to the West. He would usually return with a canoe full of beautiful and profitable furs. On 29 June 1697 at Pointe-aux-Trembles, Bernard joined his heart to that of Marie Chartier dit Robert, daughter of Guillaume and Marie Faucon. The Sulpicien Claude Lebreton blessed their marriage which was rewarded by fourteen children. Sons Jean and Robert took up their father's trade; they became coureurs de bois. Abbot Charles De la Goulalie, on the first of December 1723, at Pointe-aux-Trembles, saw Bernard's mortal remains placed in consecrated land. According to



Cyprien Tanguay, widow Marie Chartier one day retired to the Congrégation of Notre-Dame under the name of Sister Sainte-Marguerite. We may note that today, several descendants of this branch of the family bear the surname of Bernard.

2. Abbot Pierre de Caumont poured the baptismal water over the forehead of Jean Brouillet on 23 January 1674. The infant had been born at Chambly on the preceding 5 November but his baptismal act was recorded at Boucherville. On 27 November 1707 at Saint-François, on the Ile Jésus, Marie-Françoise Leclerc won the heart of this confirmed bachelor. Their last and eighth child was baptized at Terrebonne. It was also at this place that Jean Brouillet was buried on 25 August 1732. His widow was remarried to Charles Etienne on 27 July 1735.

3. Gilles Luton dit Bonvouloir, former soldier in the Louis Petit Company of the Carignan Regiment, accepted with pride the honor of godfathering Gilles Brouillet on 8 February 1675 at Chambly. The godson of the soldier put on his seven league boots and signed on for the high country from 13 June 1695 to 9 July 1700. After this period of adventure, he resigned himself to sedentary life on 7 January 1704 by marrying Marie Bricault at Pointe-aux-Trembles. She was the twenty year old daughter of Jean dit Lamarche and of Marie Chénier. A dozen children came to enliven this new home.

4. Louis Petit, former captain in the regiment and Michel Brouillet's superior, became a priest and went to Sorel before going to practice his ministry at Port-Royal in Acadia. On 4 March 1676, he baptized Pierre Brouillet dit Laviolette. Pierre grew up and on 22 November 1706 became the husband of Marie-Louise Boulard, at Rivière-des-Praires. They were married by Father Jean Bouffandeau, a Sulpicien priest. Eight Boulard-Brouillet children enriched the descendance. Pierre's funeral was held on 23 March 1752 at Pointe-aux-Trembles. His wife was buried quite near her deceased husband two years later on 13 April 1754.

5. Abbot Benoit-P. Duplain baptized Marie, the last

of the Brouillet family to be born at Chambly, at Saint-Pierre in Sorel on 24 October 1677, three days after her birth. François Vaudry, son of Jacques and of Jeanne Renaud, became her faithful husband on 3 October 1693 at Pointe-aux-Trembles in the presence of François Séguenot, Sulpicien. Thirteen children were invited to the banquet of life. This François Vaudry was, like the Brouillet sons, a voyageur and a coureur de bois, as early as 1688, in the service of the famous explorers Nicolas Perrot and François de Laforest.

6. The youngest Brouillet, Marie-Françoise, the only one born at Sorel, became a daughter of the Church on 20 February 1679. Alas! she did not survive. In the census of 1681, she was no longer alive.

Thus began the unending course of the names of Brouillet and Bernard in New France.

#### EPILOGUE

The Brouillets, according to the documents which remain to us, had been active, fortunate and happy people. They even had a feeling for festivity. On the occasion of the marriage of one child, the whole family was there with brother-in-law Vaudry. At Pierre's wedding, the registry reported an official attendance of twenty-one.

Pierre Brouillet, the tranquil son, inherited the paternal property in 1708. His sister and each of his brothers received 150 livres. Then Michel Brouillet annulled his long-term lease on the windmill belonging to the chapel of Sainte-Anne. The seigneurs from Montréal paid him 59 livres for the improvements he had made.

Michel Brouillet, our flour merchant ancestor, died on 16 May 1712. His funeral was celebrated two days later at Notre-Dame de Montréal, before Fathers Séguenot and François Citoys de Chaumaux. Yves Priat, a Sulpicien priest of Breton origin, presided at the Requiem Mass. Marie Dubois became the cherished family grandmother for more than twenty years. She died at

Pointe-aux-Trembles on 27 September 1734 at the house of her daughter Marie, the wife of Francois Vaudry. She was indeed more than 90 years old.

Charles-Ambroise Brouillet, born on 4 May 1768, great-grandson through Gilles, became the first Levite of the line. He practiced his ministry particularly at Saint-Francois des Abenakis. Abbot Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet (1813-1884) appears in history as a great defender of the Amerindians of Oregon and Vancouver Island. He even went to Washington DC about 1860 to plead their cause. For a number of years he was at the head of the Bureau founded for the protection of Catholic Indians.

Etienne Giguère wrote the following thought:

"Last spring, I decided to plant three maple trees on my land, by digging them from the ground without breaking them too much. Unfortunately, I cut the roots too near the trunk and they died. This was to be expected. The idea came to me that it can be the same with our traditions and our religion. Because by cutting ourselves off from those who have made us what we are, we destroy ourselves."

#### FAMILY NAME VARIATIONS

Brouillet has become Bernard, Boulette, Brouilet, Bruyey, Lacroix, Lafigue, Lavigueur and Laviolette.

The family "dit" name of Laviolette, undoubtedly acquired during the military service of our ancestor, has innumerable variations. A list of most of them may be found in Appendix A of this Volume.

## END NOTES

- 1) Records of Adhémar, 15 October 1673; 15 October 1674; 8 November 1675; 26 July 1677; 27 July 1677; 8 September 1677; 21 October 1678; 30 July 1688; 1 November 1689; 9 April 1690; 13 June 1690; 22 January 1692; 4 March 1693; 1 December 1695; 19 January 1698; 16 November 1698; 26 March 1699; 2 May 1699; 3 January 1700; 1 March 1701; 14 December 1703; 12 August 1708; 31 September 1708.
- 2) Records of Maugue, 22 February 1692; 13 June 1695: Gilles hired out to Jean Arnaud, merchant, and Robert Jannot dit Lachapelle, for a trip out to Outaouais country.
- 3) Records of Raimbault, 2 January 1704; 1 July 1707; 30 August 1727: Bernard Brouillet to Francois Faber for a trip west to the *Baie des Puants* (Green Bay).
- 4) Records of Senet, 28 December 1712; 13 April 1713: Gilles and his mother agreed to exchange some land; 11 May 1718 Marie Dubois sold some furniture to her grandson Michel Vaudry; 16 October 1718: Marie Dubois leased a 16 arpent section of farmland, on the Sainte-Anne coast, to her son Pierre.
- 5) Anonymous, *Les Bernard-Brouillet ou Esquisses Historiques du pays canadien-français* (1930), Librairie Beauchemin, 127 pages.
- 6) Bernard, J.-Elzéar., *Les Brouillet dit Bernard, de Beloeil* (1954), 271 pages.
- 7) Dauzat, Albert., *DENF&PF* (1951), pp.66, 71.
- 8) Dumas, Silvio., *FRNF* (1972), pp.231-232.
- 9) Jetté, René., *DGFQ* (1983), page 177.
- 10) Lafontaine, André., *RANF 1681* (1981), page 171.

- 11) Morice, A.-G., *Dictionnaire historique des Canadiens et des Métis français de l'Ouest* (1908), pp.49-51.
- 12) Roy, Regis., *Le Régiment de Carignan* (1925), p.101.
- 13) Tanguay, Cyprien., *RgCc* (1893), pp.58-59
- 14) *DBC*, Vol.2, pp.544-545.
- 15) *Le Soleil* (Québec newspaper), Saturday 15 September 1984, A-15. The thoughts of Etienne Giguère.
- 16) *MSGCF*, Vol. 1, pp. 59, 64; Vol. 3, p.94; Vol. 4 p. 135; Vol. 8, pp. 65, 188.

