

DIPLOMATS, SOLDIERS, AND SLAVEHOLDERS: THE COULON DE VILLIERS
FAMILY IN NEW FRANCE, 1700-1763

By

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To my father, in whose great footsteps I am walking

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INTRODUCTION

A Death in the Woods

In the spring of 1754, a Canadian ensign named Joseph Coulon de Villiers, sieur de Jumonville traveled to the Ohio Country with a small detachment of soldiers. At the time, both the French and the British were claiming ownership of this geographically significant region. Jumonville's mission was to order any British settlers or military personnel whom he met in the area to depart. Unfortunately for Jumonville and his men, the British found them first. George Washington, who was then a young lieutenant-colonel, was in the Ohio Country as well. He had received word that a potentially dangerous band of French soldiers was skulking about in the woods. On the morning of May 28, Washington, accompanied by roughly forty Virginian soldiers and Indian allies, ambushed Jumonville's camp. According to later reports, the Half King, a Seneca allied with Washington, killed Jumonville while the ensign attempted to explain his peaceful intentions. This death in the woods became known as the Jumonville Affair.¹

¹ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 5-7, 27, and 42-65; Marcel Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," *Pennsylvania History* 21, no. 4 (October 1954): 367 and 373; Jacob Nicolas Moreau, *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits avec leurs pièces justificatives, pour servir de réponse aux observations envoyées par les Ministres d'Angleterre, dans les Cours de l'Europe* (Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1756), 107-108; Fernand Grenier, *Papiers Contrecoeur et autres documents concernant le conflit Anglo-Français sur l'Ohio de 1745 à 1756* (Québec: Les Presses Universitaires Laval, 1952), 192-195; Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, ed., *Journal of Chaussegros de Léry* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1940), 27-28; William L. McDowell, Jr., ed., *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765* vol. 3 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970) 4.

News of the Affair infuriated the French. They blamed Washington for the death of Jumonville, whom they considered a peace envoy. Claude Pierre Pécaudy de Contrecoeur, the commander at Fort Duquesne, granted Jumonville's older brother Louis permission to lead a force against Washington. Louis departed the fort with 600 Canadian soldiers and 100 Indian allies. Meanwhile, Washington and his men had retreated to the Great Meadows, not far from their previous encounter. Certain of French retaliation, they hastily built the aptly named Fort Necessity. On July 3, Louis and his party pummeled the fort with gunfire while taking cover from the surrounding woods. Both sides inflicted casualties, but that night it was Washington who capitulated. Many historians contend that the Jumonville Affair and the subsequent Battle at Fort Necessity provided an impetus for the French and Indian War.²

Since the 19th century, scholars from both the United States and Canada have analyzed the Jumonville Affair using a Washington-centered narrative. They have debated whether or not Washington was at fault for Jumonville's death and have considered how the events of 1754 prepared him to become the hero of the American Revolution and the Father of the United States.³ This approach was a departure from

² John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, vol. 1 (Washington, 1938), 70-84; Dorothy Twohig, ed., *George Washington's Diaries, An Abridgement* (Charlottesville, 1999), 52-59; "Capitulation," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 July 1754; René Chartrand, *Monongahela 1754-1755: Washington's Defeat, Braddock's Disaster* (New York, 2004), 29-41; Anderson, 59-65; Grenier, 196-197.

³ For examples, see Jared Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington; Being his Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official, and Private, Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts; with a Life of the Author, Notes, and Illustrations*, vol. 1 (Boston: American Stationers' Company, 1837); Joel Tyler Headley, *The Illustrated Life of Washington* (New York: G.F. & Bill, 1860); Bernard Fay, *George Washington: Republican Aristocrat* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931); John Mercier McMullen, *The History of Canada: From Its First Discovery to the Present Time* (Brockville, C.W.: J. M'Mullen, 1855); Abbé Georges Robitaille, *Washington et Jumonville: Étude Critique* (Le Devoir, 1933); Gilbert F. Leduc, *Washington and "The Murder of Jumonville"* (Boston: La Société Historique Franco-Américaine, 1943); Marcel Trudel, *L'Affaire Jumonville* (Québec: Les Presses

early historical sources which had portrayed the Jumonville Affair as simply another example of imperial conflict in America and had only discussed Washington as an incidental character.⁴ However, the unforeseen outcome of the French and Indian War, namely, the British victory which paved the way for the American Revolution, led historians to kidnap the event for the sake of the national narrative. The Washington-centered model has persisted, even with the rise of innovative interpretive approaches like the “new Indian history.” For example, in *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (2000), Fred Anderson, while emphasizing the role of the Half King, still examined the Affair from Washington’s perspective.⁵

Preoccupied with Washington, scholars have ignored a significant question: who was Jumonville? After all, it was his death that helped to spark the French and Indian War. Scholars have reduced Jumonville, however, to the role of a bit player. They include him in their discussions of the Affair, of course, but do not delve into his background. As this neglect of Jumonville demonstrates, focusing on the national narrative can obscure other stories. Instead of using the Jumonville Affair as a springboard to examine Washington, this dissertation uses the event as a springboard to examine Jumonville. To

Universitaires, 1953); Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de L’Amérique Française* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003).

⁴ For examples, see Moreau, *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits*; Jacob Nicolas Moreau, *The conduct of the late ministry, or, a memorial; containing a summary of facts with their vouchers, in answer to the observations, sent by the English ministry, to the courts of Europe* (London: Printed for W. Bizet, at the Golden-Ball, in St. Clement’s Church-Yard, 1757); M. Dobson, *Chronological Annals of the War; From its Beginning to the Present Time* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1763).

⁵ In his book review, Jay Cassel critiques Anderson for this. He points out that while Anderson begins his discussion of the Jumonville Affair by giving equal attention to all of the actors, he ultimately lets Washington’s narrative take over. Says Cassel, “This is not a multi-party history told from various perspectives...This is a white American narrative.” Jay Cassel, “A Canadian Perspective on Anderson’s *Crucible of War*” *Canadian Journal of History* 35, no. 3 (2000): 488; Anderson, 5-7 and 42-65.

understand him, it is necessary to explore his familial context. Who were his relatives? Where did they live? What were their occupations? What role did native groups play in their lives? What do their stories reveal about New France? This dissertation answers these questions and, in so doing, recreates the world in which Jumonville lived and in which the Affair occurred.

This dissertation argues that Jumonville and his family members, as diplomats, soldiers, and slaveholders in New France, had complex relations with a diverse array of native people. These interactions played a significant role in their professional and personal lives. By analyzing these dynamics, this dissertation illuminates an interconnectivity between people and places in 18th century New France that has been obscured by selective attention to events like the “Jumonville Affair.”

This dissertation is a microhistory of New France that illustrates the complicated interactions between important population groups.⁶ Jumonville’s family and its involvements with diplomacy, warfare and slavery is the interpretive lens through which this analysis is developed. This microhistory reveals the lived experiences of Jumonville’s relatives and the native people with whom they interacted, thus, demonstrating the value of this methodological approach. As James Sidbury notes, the best microhistories are those that not only focus on the local, but also address broader issues.⁷ This dissertation, while focusing on New France, has implications for the larger fields of American and Native American history.

⁶ For more on the development of microhistory, see Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 101-117. For an example of a successful microhistory, see Alan Taylor, *William Cooper’s Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

Chapter Outlines

Chapter One, “Military Settlers: Jumonville and His Family in New France,” introduces Jumonville’s family as fully integrated members of French colonial society. Military and settler life, which were intertwined in New France, were central for this family. François Jarret, Jumonville’s maternal grandfather, migrated to New France as a soldier in the mid-17th century. He received a land grant called Verchères, where his children and grandchildren were raised, including Jumonville himself. These descendants, from both the Jarret de Verchères and Coulon de Villiers branches, made theirs an elite military family. Jumonville’s female relatives played a significant role in sustaining the family by managing and defending their lands and sending supplies to support their husbands’ western posts. By discussing these elements, this chapter begins to answer the question, “who was Jumonville?”⁸

Chapter Two is entitled, “From Godparentage to Gift-Giving: Diplomacy at the St. Joseph Post.” Establishing alliances with native communities was one of the primary duties of commandants. This chapter demonstrates that Jumonville’s family members, while serving as commandants in the Upper Country,⁹ forged relationships with native people using a variety of diplomatic tools. For example, they served as godparents to Indian children, thereby creating fictive kinship ties with them. Performing such

⁷ James Sidbury, *Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel’s Virginia, 1730-1810* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

⁸ I consider them elite because several members of this family received The Cross of St. Louis, an award reserved for long-serving and distinguished officers. Also, these family members were appointed commandants at posts in the Great Lakes region. Peter Moogk, *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada—A Cultural History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 187-188.

⁹ The Upper Country, called the *pays d’en haut* by the French, refers to the Great Lakes region.

diplomatic acts was essential because to maintain their posts commandants required Indian allies.

Chapter Three, “Battles in the Borderlands: Warfare and the Coulon de Villiers Family,” argues that, to be successful in battle, Jumonville’s relatives had to learn to build military coalitions with native people. In some cases, they were able to form these coalitions with those among whom they had already established diplomatic ties. Such was the case for Nicolas Coulon de Villiers Sr., Jumonville’s father, in 1730 during the Fox Wars. Indian allies were vocal partners, not silent actors, who joined with the French to further their own interests. The experience of Nicolas Jr., Jumonville’s brother, during the Battle of Grand Pré in 1747 provides evidence of this fact. This chapter, particularly with its depiction of the Fox Wars, challenges the myth of the French as “benign colonizers.” While the French did, in general, have better relations with Indians than the British, they too treated certain native groups with startling violence and cruelty.

Chapter Four is called, “Jumonville’s Family and Atlantic World Slavery.” This chapter uses Jumonville’s family members as a means to study slavery in New France. Jumonville’s sister Madeleine and his maternal uncle Jean-Baptiste directly participated in the systems of Indian and black slavery. Madeleine, for example, owned Marguerite, an Indian woman who would eventually fight her enslavement in the courts. Madeleine also lived near the most infamous slave in the history of New France, Marie-Joséph Angélique. This black woman was accused of setting fire to her mistress’ house in 1734 and, as a result, burning down Montreal. This event certainly affected how Madeleine viewed enslaved people. Within the scope of the Atlantic World, slavery in New France has received minimal academic attention. This chapter remedies this oversight.

The aim of Chapter Five, “The Jumonville Affair in Historical Memory,” is to examine how and why historians have “remembered” the Jumonville Affair as they have done. This chapter uses a variety of sources to trace the developing “memory” of the event, including diaries, poetry, artwork, and correspondence. Ultimately, this chapter contends that the Jumonville Affair was initially viewed as an example of imperial conflict in America. Historians, however, have become devoted to a Washington-centered interpretation of the event.

Historiographic Contributions

This dissertation challenges the “cult” of the Founding Fathers. Beginning with Charles Beard’s *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* in 1913, scholars have been attempting to demystify our American heroes. In 1997, Annette Gordon-Reed continued this work in *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy*. Both scholars faced resistance from those devoted to maintaining the stature of the Founding generation. Like my predecessors, I illuminate the real world in which Washington and his contemporaries lived. Removing the Jumonville Affair from the Washington-centered narrative and re-contextualizing this event aids me in this endeavor.

This dissertation also dispels several myths regarding New France, one of them being that the French were “benign colonizers.” According to the myth, the French, unlike the British, treated the Indians of North America kindly, which engendered military and trade cooperation and intermarriage. According to J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a native Frenchman who immigrated to New France in the 1750s, “[t]o this day, the Indians love the name of Canadian; they look upon them to be much more their

compatriots than they do the English.”¹⁰ This characterization of the French/Indian relationship is partially true, but has been exaggerated by scholars. In the book, *In This Remote Country: French Colonial Culture in the Anglo-American Imagination, 1780-1860* (2006), for example, Edward Watts claims that the French, unlike the British, were “white people who refused to rule the ‘lower’ races [Indians].”¹¹ My discussion of the Fox Wars in Chapter 3 and Indian slavery in Chapter 4 contradicts this idea. Indeed the French established relationships with groups like the Potawatomis and the Illinois. They also, however, massacred the Fox tribe in 1730 and enslaved Indians from various communities. These were not the actions of “benign colonizers.”

Another myth that this dissertation confronts is that New France was underpopulated and, therefore, underdeveloped.¹² Certainly, in comparison to the British colonies, New France had a sparse population. Population numbers alone, however, are not determinative. As Jumonville’s family shows, the French established deep roots in the colony through land tenure, trade, and intercultural relationships.¹³

Scholars have produced in-depth studies of the various regions in New France. In *Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth Century Montreal* (1992), Louise Dechêne

¹⁰ J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 338.

¹¹ Edward Watts, *In This Remote Country: French Colonial Culture in the Anglo-American Imagination, 1780-1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 12.

¹² The devaluing of French North America has a long history. In 1757, Voltaire famously lamented that the French and Indian War should be fought over “a few acres of snow in Canada.” Theodore Besterman, ed., *Voltaire’s Correspondence* vol. 30 (Genève: Institut et MuséeVoltaire, 1958), 116.

¹³ James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 16-17; Peter Moogk, *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada—A Cultural History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), xvii.

presented a groundbreaking social history of French Canada.¹⁴ In *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (1991), Richard White analyzed the complex interactions between Indians and Europeans in the *pays d'en haut*. Meanwhile, works like Carl Ekberg's *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (1998) and Daniel Usner's *Indians, Settlers & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: the Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (1992) focused on intercultural exchange in the southernmost regions of New France. James Pritchard's *In Search of Empire: the French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (2004) synthesized the social and economic histories of all of the French colonies.

My dissertation builds upon the work of the aforementioned scholars. By using Jumonville's geographically mobile family as a subject, I am able to emphasize the interconnection between all of the regions of New France. Jumonville's family members lived in Verchères, the seigneurie that they owned in the district of Montreal. At the same time, Nicolas Sr., Nicolas Jr., and Louis, served as commandants at posts in the Great Lakes region. François, another of Jumonville's brothers and also a military official, eventually settled in Louisiana. These family members also fought in King George's War and the French and Indian War, conflicts that brought them to Acadia as well as to British colonies like New York. Tracking this family allows me to show the breadth and the scope of New France and to demonstrate the mobility of French colonists. By bringing the perspectives of French colonists, who have received scant attention compared with their British counterparts, to the forefront, this study enriches the field of Early American History.

¹⁴ This book was originally published as *Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle* in 1974.

Lastly, my dissertation contributes to American Indian History. Since the 1970s, scholars have rightly paid greater attention to Indian perspectives. Examples of this include Francis Jennings' *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (1975), Neal Salisbury's *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England* (1982), and Daniel Richter's *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (2004). This outlook is called the "new Indian history" and my work, which analyzes Indian interactions with Jumonville's family, adds to this historiography. Although Indians do not serve as protagonists, they appear as central figures who affected the Coulon de Villiers family in both personal and professional life. Scholars are increasingly recognizing the cultural diversity that is inherent in our nation's past. My dissertation contributes to this historiographic shift.¹⁵

¹⁵ Scholars of American Indian History debate the nature of the interactions between native people and Europeans. One of the most influential discussions of this issue was in Richard White's *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (1991). This groundbreaking work argued that because neither Indians nor Europeans could impose their will on the other by force, they had to negotiate in a metaphorical space called the "middle ground." Kathleen Duval's *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (2006) has added another perspective to this discussion. She speaks of native people who did have the upper hand against Europeans. This allowed them greater control over relations. I acknowledge both of these outlooks. My work does not prove or disprove either one, but simply adds to the conversation.

CHAPTER I

Military Settlers: Jumonville and His Family in New France

In 1777, Jumonville's brother, François Coulon de Villiers, petitioned the King of Spain for a military promotion. François was living in New Orleans, which was then under Spanish control. He desired a position in the headquarters staff of the Fixed Louisiana Infantry Battalion, the Spanish military unit in the region. To make his case, he described his forty-nine-and-a-half years in military service, including his many exploits against the British during the French and Indian War.¹ Most significantly, François emphasized the sacrifices that his family members had made during their military careers. He mentioned the 1733 battle in which his father, brother, and brother-in-law died. He also noted that at the beginning of the French and Indian War "Jumonville, another of my brothers was assassinated by the English."² François ended his petition by summarizing all the misfortunes that the Coulon de Villiers family had endured:

My father dead with four of my brothers, a brother-in-law, and an uncle; two other brothers wounded and crippled; all without counting several of my nephews who also perished in [royal] service. For all of which, I hope that Your Majesty, in consideration of my zeal and that of my entire family, will concede me a reward appropriate to my seigniority [sic] and services.³

As evidenced by François' petition, the military played a central role in Jumonville's family history. His male relatives served as soldiers throughout New France, from Acadia

¹ Gilbert C. Din, "François Coulon de Villiers: More Light on an Illusive [sic] Historical Figure," *Louisiana History* 41, no. 3 (2000): 352-357.

² Din, 353-354.

³ Din, 357.

to Louisiana. They achieved success, but often died in the course of their duties. These constant losses, like Jumonville's death in 1754, became a normal part of family life.⁴

The military was crucial in the development of New France. Captains, lieutenants, ensigns, and rank and file soldiers protected the colony from British and Indian enemies both in full scale wars and in minor skirmishes. Officers serving in the Great Lakes region created vital alliances with native groups that translated into trade and military partnerships. Military personnel also contributed to New France by becoming settlers, cultivating land as seigneurs and habitants. Additionally, they married and raised families, bolstering the colony's population.⁵ Jumonville's family members epitomized this "military settler" lifestyle.⁶

⁴ For brief biographies of the entire Coulon de Villiers family, see Amédée Gosselin, *Notes sur la Famille Coulon de Villiers* (Lévis: 1906).

⁵ Scholars debate the significance of the military's role in New France. James Pritchard argues that "Military recruits had little impact on colonial demography" and that "their impact on colonial development has been exaggerated." See *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 22 and 99. Pritchard bases his argument on Jay Cassel's "The 'Troupes de la marine' in Canada, 1683-1760: men and materiel" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1987). On the other side of the argument are scholars like J. Hamelin who claims that military personnel played a "fundamental role" in New France. See Hamelin's *Economie et société en Nouvelle France* (Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1960), 84. William J. Eccles sides with Hamelin, as evidenced by his article, "The Social, Economic, and Political Significance of the Military Establishment in New France," *Canadian Historical Review* 52 (1971): 1-22. Louise Dechêne referenced Eccles' argument on the military in *Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth Century Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 37-43. She contended that the military impact was particularly poignant in Montreal. Peter Moogk also emphasized the importance of the military in Canadian society in *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada-A Cultural History* (East Lansing, 2000), 114-116. Pritchard has a point in that only a percentage of military personnel who entered New France remained there. However, numbers only tell part of the story. Officers and soldiers who made their homes in Canada settled land, raised families, and established vital relationships with various Indian groups. Additionally, they fought in the skirmishes and battles that shaped the colony. In these ways, the military had a significant impact.

The following chapter argues that settler and military life were intertwined in New France and uses Jumonville's family to demonstrate this historical reality. As settlers, Jumonville's relatives owned property in rural Canada and in Montreal. They also oversaw the agricultural development of their land by habitants. As military personnel, Jumonville's relatives participated in campaigns throughout New France. Unsurprisingly, many of them perished during these endeavors. This chapter opens a window into the "military settler" world in which Jumonville lived. Scholars, so focused on Washington, have hidden this world behind the national narrative. This chapter recovers it in all its complexity. This chapter is divided into four sections. Section One examines the military service of François Jarret, Jumonville's maternal grandfather, as well as the development of the military in New France. Section Two shows how François Jarret, his wife, and his children took root as "military settlers" in Canada. Section Three shows how even Jumonville's female relatives, who were living at the homestead, participated in military action. Section Four illuminates what life was like for Jumonville as he grew up and examines how he and his siblings continued the military legacy begun by their grandfather.

François Jarret and the Military Development of New France

Jumonville's family heritage of military service in New France began with François Jarret. He was born in France in 1641 and his parents, Jean de Jarret and Claudine de Pécaudy, raised him within the province of Dauphiné. In 1665, François joined the Carignan-Salières regiment. Louis XIV sent this "good regiment of infantry"

⁶ Moogk called such people "soldier-settlers." Moogk, 114.

to Canada to protect French settlements from Iroquois attack. These settlements were vulnerable due to their scant population; at this time, Canada had roughly 3,000 residents.⁷

The Carignan and Salières regiments had been merged in 1658. Both had participated in the Thirty Years War, among other conflicts, but neither had achieved military glory. The combined Carignan-Salières regiment of 1665 was composed of twenty companies. Each company had a captain, a lieutenant, an ensign, fifty enlisted men, two drummers, a fife player, and a surgeon. Captains recruited the soldiers for their own companies. Using funds from the minister of war, who acted on behalf of the king, captains provided their men with food, clothing, and wages. Altogether, 1,200 officers and soldiers composed the Carignan-Salières regiment. The first four companies sailed from La Rochelle in April 1665. Throughout the summer, the regiment's men arrived in Quebec. Among them was François Jarret, who served as an ensign in the company of his uncle, Captain Antoine Pécaudy de Contrecoeur.⁸

The residents of Quebec welcomed the Carignan-Salières soldiers, grateful for the protection that they offered. The sudden influx of these 1,200 men, however, created a strain on the settlement. Alexandre de Prouville, Marquis de Tracy, the king's lieutenant-general and the man in charge of establishing the royal government in New France, sought to relieve the tension. Tracy sent many of the troops to build forts in the strategically significant Richelieu Valley. These forts were to be bulwarks against

⁷ Pierre-Georges Roy, *La Famille Jarret de Verchères* (Lévis, 1908), 3-4; Jack Verney, *The Good Regiment: The Carignan-Salières Regiment in New France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 3-4 and 153-154.

⁸ Verney, 3-17 and 153-154.

Mohawks who hoped to disrupt French settlements and trade. François Jarret might have been one of the men who performed this task.⁹

The Carignan-Salières regiment's first military campaign occurred in 1666. That January, representatives from the Iroquois Confederation had engaged in peace talks with the French.¹⁰ The fort-building in the Richelieu Valley had alerted them to the potential danger that their neighbors posed. Notably absent from the proceeding were the Mohawks, the Iroquois nation that most directly threatened the French. Tracy, concerned about the implications of this absence, decided that a military campaign against the Mohawks was both justifiable and necessary.¹¹

Tracy placed the governor of New France, Daniel de Rémy de Courcelle, in charge of the assault. In the height of winter, Courcelle led roughly 500 soldiers, Canadian volunteers, and Indian allies into Mohawk Country. His incompetence as a military leader spelled ruin for the expedition. At one point in the journey, he refused to wait for Indian guides, causing his force to wander aimlessly in the severe weather. After marching for several weeks, the beleaguered men stumbled across several Mohawk cabins near the Anglo-Dutch settlement of Schenectady. They slaughtered the cabins' inhabitants, including a few old women. Mohawk warriors retaliated and a short skirmish ensued. The burgomaster of Schenectady arrived and halted the hostilities. After securing provisions from the burgomaster and returning the prisoners they had taken, Courcelle's party hobbled back to Canada. By the time they arrived home, around 400 of them had

⁹ Verney, 18-36; Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. and trans., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Company, 1896-1901), 50: 245.

¹⁰ At this time, the Iroquois Confederacy consisted of five nations: Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Cayuga.

¹¹ Verney, 37-42.

died, most on the march to and from Mohawk Country. The expedition was successful in one respect; it made both the Mohawks and the British aware that the French had a significant military presence on the continent.¹²

The next engagement of the Carignan-Salières regiment was more successful than the first. In September 1666, Tracy led 600 soldiers, 600 Canadian volunteers, and 100 Indian allies towards Mohawk Country. Tracy and his men found three of the Mohawk villages completely deserted. The fourth contained only a few older men and women and a child. The Mohawks had discovered that the French were pursuing them. However, they had only 300 or 400 warriors available to oppose this force. Rather than risk complete destruction, they had chosen to avoid the conflict by hiding in the woods. Unobstructed, then, Tracy and his men razed all four villages, burning buildings and food stores. This expedition was heralded as a triumph, though the Mohawks, essentially, escaped.¹³

The Carignan-Salières regiment succeeded in its task to secure the French settlements in Canada. This body's show of force convinced the Iroquois nations to treat for peace. This peace was enacted and ratified in Quebec during the summer of 1667. Having completed their mission, François Jarret and his fellow soldiers were free to return to France.¹⁴

Louis XIV and officials like Intendant Jean Talon enticed many of the regiment's men to settle in Canada. Sergeants who remained were apportioned either 150 *livres* or

¹² Verney, 37-53; Daniel Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 103; *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 50: 131-137.

¹³ Verney, 71-84; Richter, 103-104; *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 50: 141-145.

¹⁴ Verney, 83-91, 108-110; Richter, 104.

100 *livres* and rations for a year. Regular soldiers received a similar deal, either 100 *livres* or 50 *livres* and rations for a year. Louis XIV also endorsed Talon's suggestion that officers be given land grants called seigneuries. The new seigneurs would subgrant land to non-commissioned officers and soldiers in the regiment. Distributing land in this way would keep a military presence in Canada and foster agricultural development. Perhaps 350 men returned to France while roughly 446 settled in Canada. Of the 446 who stayed, approximately thirty were officers, twelve were non-commissioned officers, and 404 were regular soldiers. François Jarret was among them.¹⁵

To further bolster the military presence in New France, Louis XIV ordered in 1669 that all men in Canada between ages sixteen and sixty be organized into militia units. Each parish had its own unit which was headed by a captain. In larger parishes, a lieutenant and an ensign would also belong to the militia. The governor-general appointed *captaines de milice* to periodically gather the militias in their area, teach them basic discipline, and check that their weapons worked. These *captaines*, who were usually habitants, also maintained law and order by ensuring that the *ordonnances* passed by the intendant were followed. Service in the militias was viewed as an obligation. As such, neither officers nor men received monetary compensation. The development of these units made military service a part of every Canadian male's life.¹⁶ As an interesting side note, around 1708 Antoine de Lamothe Cadillac, the founder of Detroit, proposed that the Indian allies of the French be organized into companies. Cadillac's superiors

¹⁵ William Bennett Munro, *Documents Relating to the Seigniorial Tenure in Canada, 1598-1854* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1908), xxxiii-xxxv and 22-26; Verney, 110-111.

¹⁶ William J. Eccles, *Essays on New France* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), 112; W.J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), xviii.

nixed the plan because they believed that Indians, who “possess no subordination among themselves,” would never take orders from French officers.¹⁷

In 1683, the minister of marine provided additional military support for New France. He sent 150 soldiers from the *Troupes de la Marine* to Quebec to combat the renewed Iroquois threat. The *Troupes* were composed of regular soldiers from France who typically guarded naval bases. Their other function was to defend French colonies, hence, their assignment in Quebec. The *Troupes* were divided into *les compagnies franches de la Marine*. These companies were independent, meaning that they did not belong to a larger regiment like the Carignan-Salières. Each company had fifty soldiers and was commanded by a captain, a lieutenant, an ensign, a second ensign, and two cadets. Note that these companies did not always operate at full strength.¹⁸ By 1685, 1,600 troops, or roughly thirty companies, were stationed in Canada. During the early 18th century, the number of troops in the colony per year varied from 600 to 1,000.¹⁹

The officer corps of the *Troupes* became “a virtual caste” for Canada’s military elite. Before 1687, native Frenchmen were appointed captains and lieutenants. Jacques René de Brisbay, marquis de Denonville, then the governor-general of New France, altered this policy. He determined that Canadians were better able to fight battles and

¹⁷ “Part of Sieur d’Aigremont’s report to Count de Pontchatrain,” November 14, 1708, *Wisconsin Historical Collections (WHC)* 16: 250. See also “Part of a letter from Count de Pontchatrain to Sieur d’Aigremont,” July 6, 1709, *Wisconsin Historical Collections* 16: 261.

¹⁸ For more on the *Troupes de la marine*, see Jay Cassel, “The ‘Troupes de la marine’ in Canada, 1683-1760: men and materiel.”

¹⁹ Joseph L. Peyser, *Letters from New France: The Upper Country, 1686-1783* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 234; Eccles, *Essays*, 112-113; W.J. Eccles, *The French in North America, 1500-1783*, rev. ed. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998) 123-124; Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier*, 101; René Chartrand, *Monongahela 1754-1755: Washington’s Defeat, Braddock’s Disaster* (New York, 2004), 18-19; “Mémoire sur le Canada” in *Collection de Mémoires et de Relations sur L’Histoire Ancienne du Canada* (Quebec: William Cowan et Fils, 1840), 3-4; Dechêne, 39; Pritchard, 98.

direct expeditions on their native soil than newly-arrived Frenchmen. The minister of the marine agreed and after 1687, the governors-general of New France primarily appointed Canadians to official positions. They gave preference to the sons of Canadian officials. This explains why not only Nicolas Coulon de Villiers Sr., but also his sons became captains, lieutenants, and commandants. The Canadian military rewarded its most important members. The most distinguished and long-serving military families received *The Cross of St. Louis*. Several members of the Coulon de Villiers family earned this honor.²⁰

In an effort to expand trade as well as their influence on the continent, the French established military posts throughout the *pays d'en haut* (Upper Country/Great Lakes region). These posts became critical sites of exchange and of interaction between the French and neighboring native communities. Michilimackinac, for example, was founded in 1671 as a Jesuit mission and by 1683 it included a fort with garrisoned troops. Jean-Baptiste Jarret, Jumonville's maternal uncle, served as a commandant at this post.²¹ St. Joseph was also founded by Jesuits, but the post took on a military use. The first commandant was stationed there in 1720. Jumonville's father and several of his brothers commanded there as well. The French presence in the *pays d'en haut* was weak in regards to population numbers. However, the presence of the military in this region and the alliances made with various Indian groups became crucial for New France. Jumonville's family participated in this development.²²

²⁰ Chartrand, 18-19; Moogk, 177-191; Grenier, 196n2; Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier*, 123-125.

²¹ See Chapter 2 and 4 for more on Jean-Baptiste.

Military Settlers: Jumonville's Family in Verchères

François Jarret obtained a seigneurie named Verchères from the crown on October 29, 1672. Like the other Carignan-Salières officers, he accepted his lands *en seigneurie* (also called *en fief*). Of the various forms of land tenure in New France, *en seigneurie* was the most common.²³ Verchères was located in the government district of Montreal on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. It was situated between Guilladière and Bellevue, seigneuries belonging to M. Bournay de Grandmaison and M. de Vitré, both Carignan-Salières officers. Also nearby was the Contrecoeur seigneurie, which belonged to François' uncle and former captain. Initially, the dimensions of Verchères were one league by one league with one side situated along the St. Lawrence River. Seigneurs like François desired such river frontage because it gave them easy access to travel, trade, and communication. Verchères had good lands that produced grains and vegetables in abundance. The meadows bore fruit like *attoqua*, the Huron word for cranberry. In 1673 François added Île aux Prunes and Île Longue, both islands in the St. Lawrence, to his land grant. In 1678 François also added one league to the rear of the seigneurie.²⁴

²² Joseph L. Peyser ed., *Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre: Officer, Gentleman, Entrepreneur* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996), 1; George Paré and M.M. Quaipe, "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 13 (1926): 204.

²³ The other less common forms of land tenure were *en franc aleu noble*, *en franc aleu roturier*, *en franche aumône*, and *en arrière fief*. Usually, when the crown gave out land grants *en seigneurie*, seigneurs subgranted them *en censive*. William Bennett Munro, *The Seigneurial System in Canada: A Study in French Colonial Policy* (New York: Logmans, Green, and Co., 1907), 52.

²⁴ Munro, *Documents*, 113-114; Munro, *The Seigneurial System*, 70; Benjamin Sulte, C.E. Fryer, and Laurent-Olivier David, *A History of Quebec: Its Resources and People* vol. 1 (Montreal: The Canada History Company, 1908), 53; L'Abbé Cyprien Tanguay, *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes*, vol. 1 (Quebec: Eusèbe Senécal, 1871), 318; William Vondenvelden and Louis Charland, *Extraits des Titres des Ancienne Concessions de Terre, en Fief et Seigneurie* (Quebec: P.E. Desbarats, 1803), 78-79; *An Atlas of New France* (Les Presses de l'université Laval, 1968), 182; Roy, *La Famille Jarret de Verchères*, 3-6; *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)*, "Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères," vol. 3 (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 308-313.

After receiving his land grant, François had to carry out the typical duties of a seigneur. He had to perform the ceremony of *foi et hommage* (fealty and homage) upon acquiring his land and, subsequently, each time France crowned a new sovereign. In 1676 François first performed this ritual in Montreal in front of Intendant Duchesneau. François would have removed his hat, descended to one knee and professed his loyalty and devotion to King Louis. Another duty that François had to fulfill was to file an *aveu et dénombrement* in Quebec. The *aveu* was a general map of a seignury showing its location and boundaries. The *dénombrement* was a collection of data including the total acreage of the seignury and the terms of the land agreement. Whenever lands in the seignury changed hands or new habitants became subgrantees, seigneurs had to file an updated *aveu et dénombrement*.²⁵

Like most seigneurs, François subgranted his lands to habitants *en censive*. A typical land grant formed the shape of a parallelogram with one short side located along the river. Throughout Canada, habitants built their homes along the river frontage in their respective seigneuries. As a result, a traveler sojourning down the St. Lawrence would view what appeared to be “a never-ending, straggling village.”²⁶ By 1681, eleven censitaires (or habitants) had settled in Verchères: André Jarret de Beauregard, Toussaint Lucas, Mathieu Binet, Adrien Ponce, Jean Blouf, Pierre Geoffrion, André Balsac, François Chagnon, Jean Charlot, Pierre Bosseau, and Pierre Cicoyne. Beauregard, who was possibly François’ cousin, had also served as a lieutenant in the Contrecoeur Company of the Carignan Salières regiment. It remains unclear why he became a habitant

²⁵ Munro, *The Seigniorial System*, 55-58 and 76; *Rapport de l’archiviste de la Province de Québec pour 1921-1922* (A. Proulx: Imprimeur de Sa Majesté le Roi), 102.

²⁶ Munro, *The Seigniorial System*, 80-81.

rather than a seigneur. Lucas had served as a soldier in the Des Portes company of the Carignan Salières regiment. Collectively, these eleven censitaires possessed eighty-nine arpents of land.²⁷

According to the terms of their land tenure agreement, these eleven censitaires had to pay *cens et rentes* to François.²⁸ These annual payments were a combination of money and produce. Habitants in La Rivière Ouelle, located within the district of Quebec, paid their *cens et rentes* at their seigneur's manor house in late fall, near Michaelmas. Men, women, and children arrived in sleighs and carriages, bringing grains, poultry, and other foods tithes. The seigneur and his family received the annual tribute and commenced smoking tobacco and sharing news with their neighbors. François Jarret and his family probably presided over a similar scene each year in Verchères. Presumably, these meetings would have been cordial, possibly even friendly. At best, they fostered a sense of community, at worst they were reminders of the Jarret family's social superiority over their neighbors.²⁹

François and his counterparts enjoyed other duties from their habitants. The Custom of Paris, a code of law that became active in New France in 1664, gave *banal* rights to seigneurs. These rights allowed seigneurs to collect money in exchange for performing public services, such as building and maintaining grist mills. According to

²⁷ Munro, *The Seigniorial System*, 52; Roy, 9; Verney, 153-156.

²⁸ François also made money from trade. M. de Frontenac granted him a congé (trade license) in 1682. *Rapport de l'archiviste de la Province de Québec pour 1921-1922* (A. Proulx: Imprimeur de Sa Majesté le Roi), 190.

²⁹ Munro, *The Seigniorial System*, 85, 93, 95; William Bennett Munro, *The Seigneurs of Old Canada: A Chronicle of New-World Feudalism* (Toronto: Brook & Company, 1915), 96-97; L-Abbé Casgrain, *Une Paroisse Canadienne au XVIIIème Siècle* (Québec: Léger Brousseau, 1880), 173; *An Atlas of New France*, 182; Roy, *La Famille Jarret de Verchères*, 9.

this custom, François would have taken tolls from any habitants who ground their grain in the Verchères mill. Habitants were also required to pay a *lods et ventes* fine whenever they sold their farms or transferred them to persons who were not direct heirs.³⁰

Seigneurs usually donated land for the parish churches and enjoyed conspicuous privileges within them. Intendant Jacques Raudot made these contested privileges official in a 1709 ordinance. According to this ordinance, seigneurs and their families were reserved the first pew to the right of the high altar in the church. On Candlemas, seigneurs, followed by their male children, were the first to go to the balustrade to take candles. They were also the first to receive ashes and branches. When the occasion called for it, seigneurs were also the first to be sprinkled with holy water. They also, followed by their wives and children, were the first to receive holy bread. In the case of his absence, the seigneur's wife would take the rites first. François' children and grandchildren grew up receiving this special treatment.³¹

Over time, seigneurs lost some of their control over land distribution. Until the early 18th century, seigneurs could accept as many subgrantees as they desired and set the amount of dues that habitants had to pay. The Arrêts of Marly altered this system in July 1711. King Louis XIV believed that the seigneurs were too slow in settling their lands. In order to promote faster development, he declared that seigneurs who had not made sufficient progress in settling their grants in one year would lose them. In doing so, he intended to force them into taking on more habitants. To further encourage settlement, Louis also limited the dues that seigneurs could charge the habitants. François, who died

³⁰ Munro, *The Seigniorial System*, 31, 96, 101-103.

³¹ Munro, *Documents*, 88-90; Moogk, 211.

in 1700, did not live to see these changes. His progeny, however, lived with this reduction in seigneurial power.³²

The population in Verchères ebbed and flowed during the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1681, sixty-one people lived on the seigneurie, twenty-eight males and thirty-three females. Of these, eleven men and eleven women were married while the rest of the population was comprised of children and unmarried adults. The population in Verchères steadily declined throughout the 1690s. By 1698, there were only thirty-six people living in the seigneurie. The population rebounded over the next several years and in 1706 Verchères had eighty residents. By 1765, at the end of the French Regime in New France, Verchères' population had grown to 963. The Arrêts of Marly certainly aided in this growth.³³ Compared to Montreal and Quebec, the population in Verchères was minimal. However, other rural areas like Varennes had a similar number of settlers.³⁴

TABLE 1: Census Records for Verchères, 1681

Population	Males	Females	Married Males	Married Females	Children and Unmarried Males	Children and Unmarried Females	Widowed Males and Females
61	28	33	11	11	17	22	0

³² Munro, *The Seigneurial System*, 42-44 and 91-94; Roy, *La Famille Jarret de Verchères*, 10.

³³ Roy, *La Famille Jarret de Verchères*, 9.

³⁴ See Tables 1-4. These tables were compiled by the author from information found at “Statistics Canada.” For the full records, see <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4064824-eng.htm>. See also, *An Atlas of New France*, 182-183.

TABLE 2: Census Records for Verchères, 1692-1706

Year	Populat.	Males	Females	Married and Widowed Males	Married and Widowed Females	Children and Unmarried Males	Children and Unmarried Females
1692	48	26	22	7	10	19	12
1695	43	19	24	6	7	13	17
1698	36	17	19	6	6	11	13
1706	80						
1739	525 ³⁵						
1765	963	499	464	186	191	313	273

TABLE 3: Comparative Census Records, 1681

Location	Governmental District	Population
Montreal	Montreal	1,418
Boucherville	Montreal	179
Varenes	Montreal	71
Verchères	Montreal	61
Quebec	Quebec	1,345
Charlesbourg	Quebec	86
Lotbinière	Quebec	58
Trois-Rivières	Trois-Rivières	150
Bastican	Trois-Rivières	261

³⁵ In this year, the population in Verchères is combined with the populations of Le Marigot and St. Blain.

TABLE 4: Comparative Census Records, 1706

Location	Governmental District	Population
Montreal &banlieue	Montreal	2,025
Boucherville	Montreal	429
Varenes	Montreal	123
Verchères	Montreal	80
Quebec	Quebec	1,771
Trois-Rivières & banlieue	Trois-Rivières	203
Bastican	Trois-Rivières	352

François raised a large family in Verchères. He married Marie Perrot in 1669 and between 1670 and 1695 the couple had twelve children: Antoine, Marie-Jeanne, François-Michel, Marie-Madeleine (hereafter referred to as Madeleine), Pierre, Alexandre, Angélique (Jumonville’s mother), Catherine-Gabrielle, Jean-Baptiste, Louis, François, and Joseph. Several of the sons, including François-Michel and Pierre, served in the military. Jean-Baptiste eventually became the commandant of Michilimackinac. Several of the daughters married military men and raised families. Beyond their home in Verchères, the Jarrets also had a residence in Montreal. François purchased this home from René Alarie in 1691. The house, which had been built sometime between 1688 and 1690, was located on Rue Saint-Jean-Baptiste. It was a one-story wooden structure of 330 square feet. Perhaps François, Marie, and the children stayed in this house in the summer, enjoying the excitement of the city.³⁶

³⁶*Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec(BAnQ)*, Collection Centre d’archives de Québec, P1000, S3, D1024. The *Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec* has a searchable database online where these and numerous other documents have been scanned. I located all of the *BanQ* documents by searching this site, http://pistard.banq.qc.ca/unite_chercheurs/recherche_simple; Tanguay, 318; Roy, *La Famille*

After François died in 1700, his widow and their children took control of the seigneurie of Verchères.³⁷ This was a common situation, for wives often outlived their husbands and children frequently became heirs to the land. Typically, the widow took half of the land and the heirs split the remainder. Such was the case for the Jarrets. Marie Perrot became the owner of half of the lands. Because he was the eldest surviving son, Jean-Baptiste received half of the children's portion of land. His siblings Louis, Joseph, Madeleine, Angélique, and Marguerite, equally divided the remainder amongst themselves.³⁸ When Marie died in 1728, Jean-Baptiste and the other heirs were entitled to split her lands.³⁹

The system of land inheritance in New France was comparable to what existed in certain British colonies. In Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, when landowners died intestate, meaning without a will, the property was divided among the male children with a double portion going to the eldest son. This is essentially what occurred in the Jarret family. The notable difference was that the female children, including Jumonville's

Jarret de Verchères, 12-26; "Le Group de recherché sur Montréal, Adhémar: Bases de données du Groupe de recherché sur Montréal Propriété, bâti et population à Montréal, 1642-1805"
<http://www.remparts.info/adhemar_php/index.html> Accessed March 5, 2010. Le Group de recherché sur Montréal was founded and financed by the Centre Canadien d'Architecture and is supported by the Archives nationales du Québec.

³⁷ In 1700, shortly after her husband died, Marie Perrot became the official guardian for her underage children. Sieur Lacorne became their surrogate guardian. In these roles, they were able to act on the children's behalf regarding their land inheritance. *BAnQ*, Collection Centre d'archives de Quebec, P1000, S3, D1632 and Dechêne, 167 and 257. A 1708 procès-verbal states that the seigneurie of Verchères belonged to Marie Perrot. *BAnQ*, Fonds Grands voyers, E2, P9.

³⁸ This information comes from the 1723 *Acte de foi et hommage*. By this time Jean-Baptiste, Louis, Joseph, Madeleine, Marguerite, and Angélique were the only surviving children of François and Marie. Probably, when other children were still alive, the land was distributed amongst them all. See, *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S4, SS2, P290.

³⁹ Douglas Brymner, *Report on Canadian Archives* (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co., 1885), 28; *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S4, SS2, P290; *BAnQ*, Fonds Grands voyers, E2, P9; Munro, *The Seigniorial System*, 82; Dechêne, 166-167; Roy, *La Famille Jarret de Verchères*, 11.

mother Angélique, received land as well. Under this system, Angélique was able to maintain ties to her ancestral land. Her husband and her children also became rooted to Verchères and participated in its maintenance. Other British colonies, like Rhode Island and Virginia, employed primogeniture, meaning that all land passed to the eldest son. Younger siblings were forced to either live under the thumb of their eldest brother or to strike out on their own. This system of “inherited right” was abolished after the American Revolution.⁴⁰

In January 1737 Christophe-Hilarion Dulaurent, empowered by Jean-Baptiste’s wife Madeleine d’Ailleboust de Manthet, filed an *aveu et dénombrement* for Verchères.⁴¹ This document listed the property possessions of the Jarret de Verchères family. The family had twelve arpents⁴² of river frontage, four of which had belonged to Marie Perrot. The other eight arpents of river frontage belonged to Jean-Baptiste. On his land, Jean-Baptiste had a thirty foot by twenty-two foot house with a stone chimney. He also had a barn, a stable, a cowshed, and a stone windmill. His lands contained ten arpents of arable land and twenty-five arpents of meadowland. Louis had a twenty foot by nineteen foot house, also with a stone chimney. He had two barns, a stable, a cowshed, and a dairy. He had eighty arpents of arable land and five arpents of prairieland. Joseph had a thirty-three

⁴⁰ Richard B. Morris, “Primogeniture and Entailed Estates in America,” *Columbia Law Review* 27, no. 1 (1927): 24-25; Holly Brewer, *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 38-39; C. Ray Keim, “Primogeniture and Entail in Colonial Virginia,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (1968): 548-551.

⁴¹ Madeleine d’Ailleboust de Manthet was probably the “Madame Verchères” who held the ball in Montreal in December 1748. The famous Marie-Isabelle-Elisabeth Robert de la Morandière (Madame Bégon) was in attendance. *BAnQ*, Fonds Famille Bégon, P2, P27.

⁴² An arpent was a French unit of measure roughly equivalent to an acre. In Canada, an areal arpent was equal to 0.84485 acres or 36,810.3 square feet. A linear arpent was equal to 191.835 English feet. See Jay Dearborn Edwards and Nicolas Kariouk Pecquet du Bellay de Verdon, *A Creole Lexicon: Architecture, Landscape, People* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 11.

foot by twenty-four foot house, two barns, a stable, and a cowshed. He had ninety arpents of arable land and five arpents of prairieland.⁴³

This 1737 document also lists the property holdings of the habitants in Verchères. For example, François Chicoüanne's land was three arpents in length, along the river, and forty arpents in depth, a typical size for a land grant in this seigneurie. Like most of the habitants, he possessed a house, a barn, a stable, a cowshed, and a dairy. Roughly fifty arpents of his land was arable while ten arpents were prairieland. Habitants like François were each beholden to one of the Jarret siblings. François Chicoüanne paid his rent to Jean-Baptiste while Michel Bissonet paid to Madeleine. Pierre Dansereaux was beholden to both Joseph and Marguerite.⁴⁴

Jumonville's Female Relatives as Military Actors

Women in New France, including Jumonville's relatives, subscribed to the military ethos embedded within their society. In 1690 Jumonville's maternal grandmother Marie Perrot allegedly defended Verchères from Iroquois warriors. Her daughter Madeleine, Jumonville's aunt, supposedly performed the same feat in 1692 and became famous for this action. Madeleine also had a lesser known encounter with Abenakis in 1722.⁴⁵ The "valour and intrepidity" of these two women compelled Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, a French Jesuit, to call them "Amazons." Madeleine, in particular, came to epitomize the Canadian "warrior woman" ideal. Although the stories of

⁴³ *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S4, SS3, P256.

⁴⁴ *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S4, SS3, P256.

⁴⁵ On the website for the "Municipalité de Verchères," you can see the statue of Madeleine and read about her story. See http://www.ville.vercheres.qc.ca/histoire_madeleine_vercheres.htm.

Madeleine and her mother are exaggerated, they still show the dangerous realities that frontier women faced.⁴⁶

Relations between the French and their Indians neighbors, in particular the Iroquois, had been turbulent from the beginning. The French had entered the Iroquois world in earnest after 1608 when Samuel de Champlain built Quebec on the former Iroquoian town, Stadacona. The French then established settlements at Trois Rivières in 1634 and Montreal in 1642. The Five Nations of the Iroquois, living in present-day upstate New York, warred with them, as well as various native groups, throughout the mid-17th century. The reasons for these battles typically involved land, trade, and/or captive-taking. By 1667, however, all five Iroquois nations had negotiated peace with the French.⁴⁷

French Jesuits made inroads among a segment of the Iroquois population in the latter half of the 17th century. By the 1660s, significant numbers Iroquois had converted to Catholicism. To accommodate native converts, the Jesuits established mission settlements like Lorette, near Quebec. By 1675, three hundred native people lived at Lorette, more than fifty of whom were Iroquois. The Jesuits also founded Kahnawake, outside of Montreal. Hundreds of Iroquois populated the site in the 1670s and 1680s. In subsequent years, these “mission Indians” fought alongside the French, even when their fellow Iroquois were fighting with the British.⁴⁸ Kahnawake remains the most famous

⁴⁶ Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America*, vol. 1 (London: R and J Dodsley, 1761), 195-197; DCB, “Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères,” 308-313; Colin M. Coates and Cecilia Morgan, *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 17-19.

⁴⁷ Richter, 51 and 102; Allan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America* (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2000), 10-13.

native mission because it was the home of Kateri (Catherine) Tekakwitha, the Mohawk Saint. Baptized at Kahnawake in 1676, she was beatified by the Catholic Church in 1980.⁴⁹

Hostilities reopened between the French and the Iroquois towards the end of the 17th century. In 1687, Governor Denonville led 1800 French soldiers and 300 Christian Indians against the Senecas. Denonville's force only succeeded in destroying four deserted villages. In 1689 the Iroquois retaliated against the French by attacking Lachine. During King William's War (1689-1697), the French and the Iroquois continued to do battle, each side inflicting casualties. Marie Perrot's and Madeleine's encounters with the Iroquois occurred within this context.⁵⁰ Peace occurred in 1701 in Montreal when forty Indian nations, including the Iroquois, signed a historic treaty with the French.⁵¹

At the height of the violence between the French and Indians in the late 17th century, settlers in areas like Verchères relied on the forts at their seigneuries for protection. François Jarret constructed the fort at Verchères sometime before the 1690s. The rectangular structure was composed of palisades, which were twelve to fifteen feet high. There were bastions at each corner and one gate served as the only entrance/exit. Inside the fort were the Jarret's manor house, the parish church, a redoubt, and a building to house women, children, and animals in an emergency. At least one sentinel guarded

⁴⁸ Richter, 102 and 120; Greer, 11-14.

⁴⁹ For more on Kateri Tekakwitha, see Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵⁰ Richter, 162-189.

⁵¹ Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 51 and 55; Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, 63: 269-287; Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, 64: 87.

the fort, armed with one or two swivel guns.⁵² Charlevoix observed many such structures when he surveyed Canada's seigneuries in the 1720s. He reported that they stood in every parish and served as a place where "planters and others persons might take sanctuary on the first alarm."⁵³

Marie Perrot allegedly defended the fort of Verchères from an attack in 1690. Iroquois warriors had discovered that Marie's husband was absent. They planned to easily conquer the fort and take captives and goods. Marie caught sight of them as they approached and she escaped into the fort. As the warriors attempted to scale the palisades, Marie, aided by a few men, aimed her musket. She fired with such skill that she prevented the marauders from entering. The siege continued for two days, ending in her victory. Although this story was probably embellished, it demonstrates the real dangers that rural settlers faced.⁵⁴ If Marie did, almost single-handedly, protect Verchères from the attackers, she set a powerful example for her children and grandchildren.⁵⁵

Madeleine claimed that she repeated her mother's feat in 1692. She related her story in a letter to the Countess de Maurepas in 1699, the first record of Madeleine's famous defense of Verchères. Madame Maurepas was the wife of the Minister of the Marine, the French official who oversaw New France. Madeleine hoped that her letter would compel the Countess to speak on her behalf to the minister. She wanted either a

⁵² Charlevoix, vol. 1, 195; Munro, *The Seigniorial System*; DCB, "Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères," vol. 3, 308-313.

⁵³ Charlevoix, vol. 1, 194.

⁵⁴ The only evidence of this event comes from Charlevoix and from Claude-Charles Le Roy de La Potherie, a government official who mentioned it in his 1722 work on Canadian military history. Marie herself never left a record of this event. Her daughter, Madeleine, did not mention the incident in her appeal to Mme. Maurepas in 1699.

⁵⁵ Coates and Morgan, 21 and 31-32; Charlevoix, 195; DCB, "Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères," 308-313.

pension of fifty crowns, as an officer's wife would receive, or a promotion from cadet to ensign for one of her brothers. She cited her heroic action as well as her father's fifty years of military service to justify these favors. For good measure, she added that one of her brothers had been burned, presumably to death, by the Iroquois. Ultimately, Madeleine was successful. In 1701 the governor and the intendant of New France agreed to grant her a pension.⁵⁶

Of all of the accounts of Madeleine's actions in 1692, the version that she related to Maurepas was probably the most accurate.⁵⁷ In this version, she claimed that when she was about fourteen-years-old, she was outside of the fort of Verchères when she saw a band of Iroquois attacking the settlers; they captured about twenty people. Madeleine ran towards the fort and was pursued by an Iroquois warrior. He grabbed her neckerchief, aiming to stall her. She untied the scarf, leaving it in his hands, and hastened through the gate. The defensive force within the fort included Madeleine, one soldier, and a group of frightened women. Her father had been sent to Quebec by the governor of Montreal. Meanwhile, her mother was away in Montreal. The little seigneur's daughter took control, crying "To arms!" She donned on a soldier's helmet and moved about strategically in order to convince the Iroquois that several men were guarding the fort. She also shot the cannon in order to disperse the attackers and to alert nearby seigneuries.

⁵⁶ Richard, 6-7; Coates and Morgan, 35.

⁵⁷ I say this because this is the earliest account that exists and is more realistic than Madeleine's version from around 1726. Another account came from Claude-Charles Le Roy de La Potherie, a colonial government official who wrote a book about New France in 1702; the book was not published until 1722. La Potherie's narrative closely mirrors Madeleine's letter from 1699. This is probably because, as he asserted in his book, he helped her write this petition. The other versions of the event come from Gédéon de Catalogne and from Charlevoix. Coates and Morgan, 21-22.

Eventually, the warriors departed. They had already taken captives and were, apparently, uninterested in conducting a lengthy siege.⁵⁸

Madeleine placed her actions within the context of other “warrior women.”⁵⁹ In her letter to Maurepas, she asserted that “I am aware, madam, that there have been women in France during the late war who went forth at the head of their peasants to repel the attacks of enemies invading their provinces. The women of Canada would be not whit less eager to manifest their zeal for the king’s glory should the occasion arise.”⁶⁰ By portraying herself as the “Canadian Joan of Arc,”⁶¹ Madeleine sought to arouse Maurepas’ admiration and gain her support.

Word of Madeleine’s heroics spread during the 18th century. Gédéon de Catalogne, a royal surveyor, heard her tale when he visited Verchères in the 1710s and he included it in his official report in 1712. Charles de Beauharnois, the governor of New France, learned about her as well and he asked her to write a more detailed account of her story. She obliged and, around 1726, presented him with an embellished version of events. This iteration included, among other embroideries, elaborate quotations from others involved in the attack. Madeleine was hoping that this more detailed narrative would compel Beauharnois to extend her pension. In 1744 Charlevoix included Madeleine’s action as well as her mother’s in his *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France* (also called *Journal of a Voyage to North America*). He asserted that

⁵⁸ Edouard Richard, *Supplement to Dr. Brymner’s Report on Canadian Archives* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1901), 6-7.

⁵⁹ See Coates and Morgan, 17-40 for more on the “warrior woman” archetype and how Marie and Madeleine fit within it.

⁶⁰ Richard, 7.

⁶¹ Coates and Morgan, 41.

their stories were “famous in the Canadian annals.”⁶² Thus, Madeleine’s encounter with the Iroquois made both her and her hometown well-known in New France.⁶³

Years after her encounter with the Iroquois, Madeleine claimed to have had a violent episode with a group of Abenakis. In 1722, she was living in Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade, located within the district of Trois Rivières, with her husband Pierre-Thomas Tarieu de la Pérade.⁶⁴ She recounted that two Abenakis barged into the couple’s home, furious with Pierre-Thomas for an unknown reason. Pierre-Thomas shouted at them to leave, which they did. They soon returned, however, bearing weapons. One of them attacked Pierre-Thomas with a hatchet and would have killed him except that a neighbor intervened. The other Abenaki man rushed toward Pierre-Thomas, prepared to strike him with a tomahawk. Madeleine wrenched the weapon from his hand and struck him with it, causing him to fall. Suddenly, four Indian women, presumably Abenakis, attacked her; one grasped her by the throat, one seized her by the hair, and the other two grabbed her around her body and attempted to throw her into the fire. Madeleine’s twelve-year-old son Tarieu burst in and beat the women on their heads and arms until they released his mother. The women changed course and headed towards Pierre-Thomas. He seized one of the Abenaki men and was about to kill him, but the Indian begged for mercy. His

⁶² Charlevoix, vol. 1, 195-197.

⁶³ Richard, 7-11; Munro, *Documents*, 113-114; Coates and Morgan, 20-21.

⁶⁴ Thomas de Lanouguère, Pierre-Thomas’ father, had purchased the seigneurie of Sainte-Anne with Edmond de Suève in 1670. Lanouguère took the western half of the lands while Suève took the eastern half. In 1704, Pierre-Thomas became the owner of his father’s half, as well as other neighboring lands. In 1707, Edmond Chorel de Saint-Romain inherited Suève’s half. *DCB*, “Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères,” 308-313.

companions followed suit.⁶⁵ Madeleine's summed up saying "[t]hus it was that I saved my husband's life, and that my son...saved that of his mother."⁶⁶

This rather fantastic incident probably happened differently than Madeleine described. Young Tareu probably did not single-handedly thwart the four grown women attacking his mother. Madeleine likely helped to fight off the intruders, but it is unlikely that she alone toppled the Abenaki man whom she herself had referred to as a "giant." She included this story in her letter to Beauharnois; this was the same letter in which she exaggerated her triumph over the Iroquois. Likewise, she embellished this tale, emphasizing her courage in the face of danger. In doing so, she hoped to heighten her "warrior woman" persona and to convince the governor to reward her "heroic deeds."⁶⁷

The reason for the Abenaki attack remains unknown. That Madeleine and her husband would be attacked, however, is unsurprising. Their allegedly tempestuous natures drew the ire of habitants, clergymen, and others in Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade. That they angered this group of Indians is entirely probable. The dispute might have been related to money or it could have simply been a personality conflict. These Abenakis were probably from Odanak, or the village of St. Francis, located along the St. Lawrence River. This village was founded by the Sokokis, a group of Western Abenakis, in the 1660s. In 1701, the Jesuits at the Chaudière River moved their mission to the St. Francis River so that they could serve the growing population at Odanak.⁶⁸ So, the Abenakis who

⁶⁵ Richard, 11; Pierre-Georges Roy, "Madeleine de Verchères, plaideuse," *Transactions of The Royal Society of Canada* 15 (1921): 66.

⁶⁶ Richard, 11.

⁶⁷ Richard, 11; Roy, "Madeleine de Verchères, plaideuse," 66.

⁶⁸ These French-allied Indians participated in the famous raid against Deerfield in 1704.

attacked Madeleine's family had regular interactions with French settlers. That these interactions could turn violent further illuminates the precarious nature of Indian/French relations.⁶⁹

Growing up Military: Jumonville's Family Life

Jumonville grew up in a large, elite, military family. His parents were Angélique Jarret and Nicolas Coulon de Villiers and he had twelve siblings, all of whom were born and raised in Verchères. The military played a definitive role in Jumonville's life. His father was a soldier and Jumonville and all of his other brothers followed his example. When he was fifteen, his father and one of his brothers died in battle. This kind of loss was to be a common theme in their lives.

Jumonville's mother, Angélique, was born in her family's seigneurie of Verchères in 1684 and enjoyed the rights and privileges that accompanied being a seigneur's daughter. Jumonville's father, Nicolas, was born to a noble family in Mantes, France in 1683; Nicolas' maternal grandfather was Antoine de La Fosse, the seigneur of Valpendant. Nicolas immigrated to Canada in 1700 and began a military career. He was garrisoned in Montreal in 1703 and, in the ensuing years, he became acquainted with the Jarret de Verchères family. He recognized that connecting himself to this family would help to ingratiate him into Canadian society. He and Angélique married in 1705, both were in their early twenties. As was customary in Canada, the married couple formed a legal entity known as a "marital community" (*communauté de biens*), a "sort of two-

⁶⁹ Richard, 11; Roy, "Madeleine de Verchères, plaideuse," 66; Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, "Revisiting the Redeemed Captive: New Perspectives on the 1704 Attack on Deerfield," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (1995): 9-19.

person corporation.”⁷⁰ As a “corporation,” Angélique and Nicolas were able to own land, buy and sell goods, and participate in legal proceedings. Angélique had an equal share in this “community,” but her husband remained the head of it.⁷¹

Angélique and Nicolas settled in Verchères. As was previously mentioned, upon her father’s death in 1700, she inherited a portion of this seignury. By 1721 Nicolas was listed as a coinheritor.⁷² The couple raised their family on roughly eighty arpents of arable land, fifteen arpents of meadowland, and three arpents of river frontage. On this land, the family had a house, a barn, a stable, and a cowshed.⁷³ Nicolas became known by his connection to this land. In 1730, he was referred to as the “seigneur of Vercheres.”⁷⁴

Like other Canadian women, Angélique gave birth roughly every two years until menopause. Between the early 1700s and the late 1720s, she bore thirteen children, all of whom were born in Verchères. Her twin daughters Marie and Madeleine were born in either 1706 or 1707; Nicolas Antoine was born in 1708; Louis was born in 1710; François was born between 1712 and 1715; a son, whose name is unknown, was probably born in 1716 or 1717; Joseph (Jumonville) was born in 1718; Pierre was born in 1720; Charles-François was born in 1721; Marie-Anne was born in 1722, while Thérèse was

⁷⁰ Allan Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 69.

⁷¹ *DCB*, “Nicolas-Antoine Coulon de Villiers,” vol. 2 (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 156; Greer, *The People of New France*, 64 and 69-70; Dechêne, 240-244.

⁷² *Rapport*, 315-318 and 371-372.

⁷³ This is based on the *aveu et dénombrement* that was filed for Verchères in 1737. *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S4, SS3, P256.

⁷⁴ L’Abbé Cyprien Tanguay, *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes*, vol. 3 (Montreal: Eusèbe Sénécal, 1887), 167; *DCB*, “Nicolas-Antoine Coulon de Villiers,” vol. 2 (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 156; Brymner, 28; *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S4, SS2, P290; *BAnQ*, Fonds Grands voyers, E2, P9; Gosselin, 15-17; Munro, *The Seigniorial System*, 82; Dechêne, 166-167; Roy, *La Famille Jarret de Verchères*, 11.

probably born around 1724; Madeleine-Angélique was born in 1726; Marguerite was likely born in 1727 or 1728.⁷⁵ When Angélique was finished producing her offspring, she was in her early forties.⁷⁶

As a mother in New France, Angélique was responsible for giving her children a rudimentary education. Angélique could both read and write, skills that she likely learned from her mother. She shared her abilities with both her sons and her daughters.⁷⁷ This is evidenced by the fact that these children wrote letters and signed their names on official documents. These abilities served the Coulon de Villiers children well in their respective endeavors.⁷⁸

Angélique was responsible for the domestic duties in her household and she received assistance from at least one slave. He was an Aïouois (Iowa) named Pierre. He became the slave of the Coulon de Villiers family when he was eleven years old. Officially, he belonged to Nicolas Sr., but he probably spent most of his time with Angélique in Verchères. He was baptized at the seigneurie on April 27, 1727.⁷⁹ Like most

⁷⁵ It is also possible that Marguerite and Thérèse were the same person, making Madeleine-Angélique the youngest Coulon de Villiers child. See Gosselin, *Notes sur la Famille Coulon de Villiers*, 17.

⁷⁶ Greer, *The People of New France*, 65; Gosselin, 14-17.

⁷⁷ I have documented proof of most of the children's literacy. I assume that those who do not show up in the record were literate as well.

⁷⁸ See *BAnQ*, Collection Centre d'archives de Québec, P1000, S3, D1632; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D3577; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D5671; "Letter from De Villiers to Beauharnois," September 23, 1730, *WHC* 17: 113-118; Joseph L. Peyser ed., *Letters from New France: The Upper Country, 1686-1783* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1992), 210; "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 220-222; Din, 352-357; Greer 66-67.

⁷⁹ The record says that Pierre belonged to Lieutenant Nicolas Antoine Coulon de Villiers. This must refer to Nicolas Sr., who became a lieutenant in 1715, rather than his son Nicolas Jr., who did not become a lieutenant until 1734. It is possible that Pierre served Nicolas when he commanded the St. Joseph post. However, since Angélique's need for assistance was greater than her husband's, it is more likely that Pierre stayed with her. Marcel Trudel, *L'esclavage au Canada Français: Histoire et Conditions de L'esclavage*

of the other slaves in New France, both Indian and black, Pierre probably cooked, cleaned, and did laundry.⁸⁰ Verchères would have been an isolating place for the young boy from the western lands. Only ten Indian slaves ever lived in Verchères' throughout the seigneurie's history and none of them were Aïouois. For example, an Indian slave belonging to Antoine Boisseau was baptized in Verchères in 1735, but he was a Panis Blancs.⁸¹ When Pierre entered the Coulon de Villiers household, Joseph (Jumonville) was near to him in age. Perhaps the boys became playmates, but Pierre could not forget that in his new community, he was considered his friend's inferior.⁸²

Slaveholding was common amongst military families. Throughout the history of New France, at least 164 military officers owned both Indian and black slaves. Angélique's sister Madeleine provides an example of this trend. While living in Saint-Anne-de-la-Pérade, she and her husband owned thirteen Indian slaves.⁸³ Jumonville and his siblings might have visited their Aunt Madeleine in Saint-Anne-de-la-Pérade. The experience would have further normalized Indian slavery for them.⁸⁴

(Québec: Les Presses Universitaires Laval, 1960), 67; *DCB*, "Nicolas-Antoine Coulon de Villiers," 156; *DCB*, "Nicolas-Antoine Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3 (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 149-150.

⁸⁰ Trudel, 168. See the following for examples, *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D502 ; *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1342 ; *BAnQ*, Fonds Prévôté de Québec, TL1, S11, SS1, D99, P953 ; *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1928.

⁸¹ Panis Blancs is the French designation for the Wichita tribe in Kansas. George E. Hyde, *The Pawnee Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 32.

⁸² Trudel, 65, 67, and 126-128.

⁸³ Trudel, 42, 128, and 145-146; *DCB*, "Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères," 308-313.

⁸⁴ For more on slavery in New France, see Chapter 4.

The Coulon de Villiers family owned a house in Montreal on Rue Notre Dame.⁸⁵ This house was likely similar to those of other military families. Pierre Legardeur de Repentigny, like Nicolas Sr., was a high-ranking military official. He owned several homes during his years in Montreal, one on Rue Capitale and two on Rue St. Paul. One of his homes on Rue St. Paul, which he inherited in 1721, was 630 square feet (French feet), had two floors, and was made of stone.⁸⁶ The Coulon de Villiers home probably had similar dimensions and was cozy enough for Angélique and her family when they visited.⁸⁷

When visiting their home in Montreal, the members of the Coulon de Villiers family experienced the excitement of this diverse and bustling city. As they traversed the streets, they saw not only their fellow Canadians, but also Indian and black slaves. Indeed, Montreal had the largest slave population in Canada. The city itself was visually pleasant. Charlevoix visited Montreal in the 1720s and reported that “[t]he city of Montreal has a very pleasing aspect, and is besides conveniently situated, the street well laid out, and the houses well built.” He continued that “[t]he beauty of the country round it, and of its prospects, inspire a certain cheerfulness of which every body is perfectly sensible.”⁸⁸ The river divided Montreal into the lower and upper towns. The lower town

⁸⁵ The 1741 census of Montreal refers to this home as the “maison des héritiers de M. de Villiers.” Thus, Nicolas built or purchased the house sometime before his death in 1733. E.Z. Massicotte, “Un recensement inédit de Montréal, en 1741,” *Mémoires de la Société Royale du Canada* 15 (1921): 19.

⁸⁶ Adhémar, <http://www.remparts.info/adhemar_php/bio18.php?I_NUMERO=LEG0004> Accessed March 17, 2010.

⁸⁷ Many owners of homes in Montreal were absent and had tenants. The Coulon de Villiers children followed this pattern after they inherited their parents’ home on Rue Notre Dame. One of their tenants was Jacques Laselle, along his wife. They were inhabiting the house when census takers visited in 1741. Massicotte, 19.

had the hospital, royal-magazines, and the place of arms. Most merchants lived in this area. The upper town had the seminary, parish church, the convent of the Recollets and other religious houses, the governor's residence, and many officers' homes. This was the area of town in which the Coulon de Villiers family resided.⁸⁹

Despite occasional trips to Montreal, the Coulon de Villiers family primarily lived in Verchères. This changed somewhat when Nicolas Sr. moved to the *pays d'en haut* to serve as a commandant. Throughout his marriage to Angélique, Nicolas had remained in the military. He was promoted to lieutenant in 1715 and, apparently, spent most of the next decade in Verchères with his growing family.⁹⁰ Then in 1725 he was appointed commandant of the post at St. Joseph, near Lake Michigan. He moved there some time before August. He and Angélique's eldest sons Nicolas Jr. and Louis, ages seventeen and fifteen, relocated with him and served as cadets under his command. Nicolas Sr. served at St. Joseph until 1731, when he was appointed the commandant at Green Bay, in Wisconsin. His sons, now including Joseph (Jumonville) who also became a cadet, settled there with him. Angélique remained firmly planted in Verchères with her younger children, the responsibility for maintaining them fell squarely upon her shoulders. Post commanders, despite their important position, received small salaries. Angélique had to

⁸⁸ Charlevoix, vol. 1, 213.

⁸⁹ Charlevoix, vol. 1, 213-215; Trudel, *L'esclavage au Canada Français*, 127; Statistica Canada, "New France, Lower Canada, Quebec," <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4064824-eng.htm>> Accessed April 4, 2010.

⁹⁰ There is no concrete evidence regarding Nicolas' whereabouts between 1715 and 1725. Queen Anne's War had ended in 1713, so he was not fighting any battles. Angélique got pregnant several times in these years, so he was spending time in Verchères.

maintain herself and her children with these limited funds. Thankfully for her, she was able to bolster her income with revenue from tenants and crops.⁹¹

With Nicolas absent, Angélique took charge of his affairs. Commandants often gave power-of-attorney to their wives before departing for their posts. Nicolas and Angélique were no exception. He probably imbued her with this legal authority before he departed for St. Joseph.⁹² Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, who commanded at Chagouamigon (La Pointe) beginning in 1729, gives an example of what being a power-of-attorney entailed. Before he left for his post, as he was unmarried, he gave his power-of-attorney to his brother-in-law Charles Nolan Lamarque. Charles had several duties to fill in this capacity. According to the official document, it was Charles' obligation to represent Jacques in court and to collect all money due him. Also, he was to "send the Shipments of merchandise which will be necessary for the said Constituent in the said Upper Country."⁹³ As her husband's *procuratrice*, these responsibilities also fell upon Angélique's shoulders. In this way, she was similar to other women in Early America, including those in the British colonies.⁹⁴

⁹¹ *DCB*, "Nicolas Coulon de Villiers," vol. 2, 156; *DCB*, "Nicolas Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3, 149-150; "Louis Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3 (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 148-151; *DCB*, "François Coulon de Villiers," vol. 4 (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 177-178; "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 209, 210, 212, and 220-221; *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S1, P3642; Gosselin, 14, 17-19, 22, and 36; R. David Edmunds and Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 177-178; Peyser *Jacques Legardeur*, 8; Beauharnois and Hocquart to the French Minister, November 11, 1733, *Wisconsin Historical Collections* 17: 188-190; Roy, 20.

⁹² A 1729 legal document refers to Angélique as her husband's *procuratrice*. She had probably served in this capacity since 1725. *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D3602.

⁹³ Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 16.

⁹⁴ Women in the British colonies also took on the role of "power of attorney" for their husbands. In 1716, in Essex County, Virginia, William West left his wife Elizabeth to do "all my business whatsoever Relating to me as though I my self was pr[e]sent." Women like Elizabeth managed property and legal matters throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries. Linda Sturtz, "As Though I My Self Was Pr[e]sent: Virginia

Angélique sent supplies to her husband at his various posts in the *pays d'en haut*. Each year, in late spring/early summer, she received permission to do so from high-ranking government officials like Charles Lemoine de Longueuil, governor of Montreal. For example, on May 31, 1726, Longueuil gave her permission to send three boats and fourteen men to St. Joseph. In 1727 and 1729, Charles de Beauharnois, governor of New France, also allowed her to send boats and men to this post. In June 1732 and June 1733, Beauharnois permitted her ship supplies to Nicolas at Green Bay. The boats that Angélique sent were laden with food, clothing, and presents for trade with Indians. As such, they were crucial for Nicolas' sustenance and for the maintenance of his posts.⁹⁵

Like others in the military elite, Nicolas used his position to further his sons' careers. In the 1730s he focused on helping his eldest son and namesake. In September of 1730, Nicolas Sr. sent Nicolas Jr. in a canoe to Quebec to meet Governor Beauharnois. He was fresh from his victory against the Foxes and he needed a courier to relate the news. He chose his son for the task, hoping to endear him to the head of New France's government. Nicolas Sr. cared dearly for his son, as evidenced by his plea towards the end of the letter. He told the governor, "I take the liberty, Monsieur, of begging your protection for [Nicolas Jr.]. I have no more urgent desire, than to Send Him to you that he

Women with Power of Attorney," in *The Many Legalities of Early America*, ed. Christopher Tomlins (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 250.

⁹⁵ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P201; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P227; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P275; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P1042; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P1092. *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D3577; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D3602.

may have The honor of bringing you this News.”⁹⁶ As a commandant, Nicolas was in a position to make connections for his children and he did not hesitate to do so.⁹⁷

The Coulon de Villiers family suffered an upheaval in 1733. In September of that year, Nicolas Sr., an unnamed son, and his son-in-law, François Duplessis-Faber, were killed in Green Bay while fighting the Sac and Fox tribes. Undoubtedly, Angélique was devastated at these deaths and, from that time on, she probably lived in fear of when she would lose her next family member. Government officials sympathized with the widow. Governor Beauharnois and Intendant Hocquart united in asking the French Minister for “a pension for Madame de Villiers, to provide for her subsistence and that of her numerous family, Since [sic] she is a widow with 10 children.”⁹⁸ The Conseil de Marine awarded her this pension of 300 livres on April 13, 1734. This was the only payment that she received since she died in December of that same year.⁹⁹

After Angélique’s death, her brother Jean-Baptiste helped to settle her estate by authorizing an auction of her belongings.¹⁰⁰ Presumably, the benefits went towards her debts and the rest was probably dispersed among her children. Jean-Baptiste Decoste, the

⁹⁶ “Villiers to Beauharnois,” September 23, 1730, *WHC* 17:117.

⁹⁷ In addition to handing over letters to Beauharnois, Nicolas Jr. had another task as well. He was supposed to travel to France and meet with the Minister (of the Navy, probably) and inform him of the Fox defeat. While there, he was also supposed to deliver a Fox slave to Monsieur de Belamy. Monsieur des Noyelles, the commandant at the Miami post, sent the slave to Belamy on behalf of the Miamis. Nicolas never made the trip because his ship, *le Beauharnois*, suffered an accident. “Hocquart to the French Minister,” November 14, 1730, *WHC* 17: 120; “Hocquart to the French Minister,” January 15, 1731, *WHC* 17: 130.

⁹⁸ “Letter of Beauharnois and Hocquart to the French Minister,” November 11, 1733, *WHC* 17: 191.

⁹⁹ Gosselin, 14; Roy, 20; *DCB*, “Nicolas Coulon de Villiers,” vol. 2, 156; *DCB*, “François Coulon de Villiers,” vol. 4, 177-178.

¹⁰⁰ In 1741, Jean-Baptiste Jarret and his wife Madeleine d’Ailleboust de Manthet had a home on Rue St. Paul, where the infamous fire of Montreal occurred in 1734. This was the same street as the Governor-General’s residence. Massicotte, 1-60; *DCB*, “Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas-Roch de Ramezay,” vol.4, 650-652.

bailiff, helped to facilitate the auction which occurred in Montreal in January 1735. The items sold were probably all from the house on Rue Notre Dame. Lisette de Ramezay paid ten *livres* for two window curtains and two rods (*vergettes*), presumably to hold up the curtains. Pierre Crepeau paid sixty-two *livres*, fifteen *sols* for a mirror in a gilt frame. L'Esperance Peruguier paid two *livres* for various kitchen utensils. Others purchased candlesticks, handkerchiefs, and various other household items. One particularly expensive item was a damask dress that Sieur de Godefroy purchased for 113 *livres*. Ultimately, the auction raised 1,187 *livres*, 17 *sols*.¹⁰¹

The deaths of their parents certainly affected Jumonville and his siblings. They devoted the rest of their lives to building upon the military legacy of their father and grandfather. To that end, they participated in memorable campaigns and achieved high honors. Along with this success, however, came loss. In addition to Jumonville, several other Coulon de Villiers brothers died in warfare. Their sister, Madeleine, married a military man and endured loss as well.

Nicolas Jr., achieved success in his military career. At age seventeen, he served as a cadet under his father at St. Joseph. He became a second ensign a few years later. In 1733, he fought in the battle that killed his father. In recognition of his familial losses and his bravery under fire, he was quickly promoted to lieutenant. In 1739, he became the commandant of St. Joseph, his father's former post. He remained in this position until 1742 and in 1744, when he was thirty-six, he was promoted to captain. Two years later, with the outbreak of King George's War, Nicolas was stationed in Acadia. While serving there in 1747, he successfully led a force of French and Indian soldiers against New

¹⁰¹ BAnQ, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D4198.

England troops at Grand Pré.¹⁰² This impressive victory earned him respect and acclaim in New France.¹⁰³

Louis, called *Le Grand Villiers*, was as successful as his brother Nicolas. He too began as a cadet under their father's command. Also like Nicolas, he received a commission as compensation for his father's death, becoming a second ensign. In 1739 in Louisiana, he participated in Le Moyne de Bienville's campaign against the Chickasaws. From 1742 until 1745, he continued the family legacy and commanded St. Joseph. In 1748, at age thirty-eight, he was promoted to lieutenant. With this new rank, he commanded the post of the Miamis for roughly three years, beginning in 1750. He finally became a captain in 1753. Best known for his campaigns during the French and Indian War, Louis took Fort Necessity in 1754 and served at Niagara in 1755. In 1757, he also helped the French to overtake Fort William Henry, the site made famous in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*.¹⁰⁴

François, who survived the wars that killed his father and brothers, enjoyed the longest career. He became an ensign in 1736 when he was around twenty-four. Subsequently, he began serving in the Illinois Country. In 1746 he was promoted to lieutenant and in 1754 he became a captain. He fought in battles throughout the French and Indian War and was even taken prisoner in 1759. Following his release, he traveled to New Orleans. He remained in Louisiana for the rest of his life.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² For more on this battle, see Chapter 3.

¹⁰³ *DCB*, "Nicolas Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3, 149-150; Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 228; Gosselin, 22-35.

¹⁰⁴ Gosselin, 47-68; *DCB*, "Louis Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3, 148-149; Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 228.

François effectively adapted to the Spanish takeover of Louisiana following the Treaty of Paris (1763).¹⁰⁶ From the first Spanish governor of Louisiana, Antonio de Ulloa, François secured a post as the interim commandant at Natchitoches. While in Natchitoches in 1768, members of the French Creole population in New Orleans revolted against the Spaniards. François, like most French army officials, did not participate. The Spanish put down the rebellion and François reaped the benefits of choosing the winning side. For example, in 1771 and 1777, he was allowed to serve as a municipal judge in New Orleans.¹⁰⁷

Jumonville's career progressed much as his brothers' had. Like Nicolas and Louis, he began as a cadet, serving under his father. He also participated in Bienville's 1739 campaign alongside Louis. In 1745, when he was twenty-seven, he was promoted to a second ensign. He participated in King George's War, fighting in Acadia and New York. However, he never had a significant victory like his brothers. Rather, he remains most famous for his death in 1754. Had he lived past age thirty-six, he probably would have received additional promotions and become a commandant.¹⁰⁸

Pierre participated in military campaigns as well. In the fall of 1745, during King George's War, Lieutenant Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre was ordered to attack rural New York. Along with Lieutenant Paul Marin de La Malgue, Saint-Pierre led a force of 600 French and Indian fighters. Pierre, also called Lespiney, served as a cadet in this

¹⁰⁵ *DCB*, "François Coulon de Villiers," vol. 4, 177-178; *Din*, 345-357.

¹⁰⁶ This treaty ended the French and Indian War. In it, France ceded Louisiana to Spain.

¹⁰⁷ *DCB*, "François Coulon de Villiers," vol. 4, 177-178; *Din*, 348-349.

¹⁰⁸ E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. 10 (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers, 1858), 164 and 168; *DCB* "Joseph Coulon de Villiers de Jumonville" vol. 3, 150-151; Gosselin, 28.

detachment. He fought alongside French soldiers as well as Iroquois, Nipissings, and Algonquins. That November, they destroyed Saratoga, killed roughly thirty settlers, and took about 100 prisoners.¹⁰⁹

The Coulon de Villiers sons achieved high honors for their accomplishments. Only the most distinguished and long-serving military families received *The Cross of St. Louis*, an award that included a generous gratuity. Included on the list of 18th century recipients were several prominent families, including the Coulon de Villiers family. Nicolas Jr. received the award after his 1747 victory in Acadia. Louis received the award after his service at Fort Necessity and at Fort William Henry. François received it after fighting in the French and Indian War and surviving captivity. Receiving these honors further cemented the Coulon de Villiers family's social status.¹¹⁰

The Coulon de Villiers brothers improved their social positions through marriage. François married two women from successful military families when he lived in the Illinois Country. First was Élisabeth Groston de Sainte-Ange, whom he wed around 1740. Her father, Robert Groston de Sainte-Ange, was a military officer and her brother, Louis, was both a captain and a commandant. Next, François married Marie-Madeleine Marin, daughter of a captain named Paul Marin. François found his last wife in Louisiana and she provided him with a financial as well as a social boost. She was a wealthy New Orleans plantation and slave owner named Marie-Geneviève Énault de Livaudais. The

¹⁰⁹ Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 75-81.

¹¹⁰ *DCB*, "Nicolas-Antoine Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3, 149-150; *DCB*, "Louis Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3, 148-149; *DCB*, "François Coulon de Villiers," vol. 4, 177-178; Moogk, 187-188.

couple wed in 1762 and had a son named Charles-Philippe, also known by his Spanish moniker, Carlos.¹¹¹

Like their father, the Coulon de Villiers brothers left widows. Louis, for example, married Marie-Amable Prud'homme in Montreal on December 29, 1753. They had one child, Louise, who was baptized in June 1755. The child died that September. Then, in 1757, Louis himself died. His widow, left in dire financial straits, was granted a pension of 150 *livres*. Jumonville married Marie-Anne-Marguerite Soumande in Montreal on October 11, 1745. The couple had five children, two of whom died in infancy.¹¹² Jumonville left his wife a widow and his children fatherless in 1754. Marie-Anne, who was pregnant with Charlotte-Amable when her husband died, received a pension of 150 *livres*.¹¹³ She married another soldier in 1755 and was widowed again in 1760.¹¹⁴ Charlotte-Amable was educated at the "House of Saint Cyr," a convent school near Paris that was dedicated to educating ladies from noble, but destitute, families.¹¹⁵ In 1775, she petitioned Louis XV for financial assistance and, "in consideration of her father's

¹¹¹ François' son Charles-Phillipe followed in his father's footsteps. In 1777, at the age of thirteen, he became a cadet in the Spanish army. In 1788, he became a lieutenant. Eventually, he would serve in West Florida and, probably Cuba. Charles-Phillipe honored his father in more than his career choice. Two of his sons, from his first marriage, took the surname Coulon de Jumonville de Villiers. His other two sons, from his second marriage, simply used the surname Jumonville de Villiers. In this way, Charles-Phillipe paid homage to his father's brother. Din, 349, 350 and 350n14; *DCB*, "François Coulon de Villiers," vol. 4, 177-178. *DCB*, "Louis Groston de Saint-Ange," vol. 4, 315-316; *DCB*, "Robert Groston de Saint-Ange," vol. 2, 267-268; Din, 349-350; Gosselin, 22-35, 47-68, 84, and 217; Moogk, 181-185.

¹¹² Gosselin, 64.

¹¹³ Another source claims that she received 300 *livres*. See L'Abbé H.R. Casgrain, *Extraits des Archives des Ministères de la Marine et de la Guerre: Correspondance Générale, MM. Duquesne et Vaudreuil* (Québec: L.J. Demers & Frère, 1890), 24.

¹¹⁴ Gosselin, 46-47.

¹¹⁵ The Maison royale de Saint-Louis (Saint Cyr) was founded in 1686 by Madame de Maintenon, the second wife of Louis XIV. See also Thomas Adolphus Trollope, *Sketches from French History* (London: Bickers & Son, 1878), 175-180.

services, the King has been pleased to grant her a gratuity of 600 livres as a contribution to the expenses of her trousseau, which her profession of religion requires.”¹¹⁶ Clearly, the women whom the Coulon de Villiers brothers left behind had to rely on outside assistance to survive.¹¹⁷

Jumonville’s sister Madeleine endured the same losses as her mother and her sisters-in-law. She married François Duplessis-Faber in 1727 or 1728 when she was in her early twenties. He hailed from a prominent military family as well.¹¹⁸ As previously mentioned, Duplessis-Faber served as a cadet under Madeleine’s father and died alongside him in the 1733 battle against the Sac and Fox tribes in Green Bay. The couple had had one child, Geneviève, but she died as an infant.¹¹⁹ Unlike her mother, who died shortly after her husband, Madeleine remarried twice. She wed Claude Marin, Sieur de la Perrière in 1737 in Montreal. Around 1746, the couple had a daughter named Marie. Taking no chances with the health of their offspring, the parents sent Marie to be wet-nursed in Sainte-Foy, within the district of Quebec. While there, the child lived in the home of Antoine Samson. She died there in 1748.¹²⁰ Claude Marin died in the summer of 1752. Madeleine remarried in Quebec in 1754, this time to Joseph Damours, Sieur des Plaines. The couple had no children.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ *Report Concerning Canadian Archive for the Year 1905* vol. 1 (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1906), 417.

¹¹⁷ *Report Concerning Canadian Archive for the Year 1905* vol. 1, 203 and 417; Gosselin, 46 and 64.

¹¹⁸ Extract of a letter from the Marquis de Beauharnois and Monsieur Dupuy to the French Minister, September 25, 1727, *WHC* 17: 17n1; Gosselin, 87-88.

¹¹⁹ Gosselin, 87-88; Beauharnois and Hocquart to the French Minister, November 11, 1733, *WHC* 17: 188-190.

¹²⁰ There is some dispute regarding the identity of the girl interred at Sainte-Foy in 1748. She might have been the daughter of Joseph Marin and Charlotte De Fleury. Gosselin, 87-88; *An Atlas of New France*, 182.

Throughout her second marriage, Madeleine lived in the *pays d'en haut*. As a result, she and her husband had regular interactions with Indians. The couple first settled at St. Joseph. While they lived there, Madeleine's brothers Nicolas Jr. and Louis both served as commandants of this post. Her husband was a trader and he continued his business at St. Joseph. This business required him to have significant contact with Indians. For example, in March 1743, Claude Marin and his cousin/partner equipped sixty Ottawa and Ojibwa warriors for a campaign against the Chickasaws. Marin probably devoted considerable time and energy to negotiating the deal with these warriors. Various Indian communities lived in or near St. Joseph. Madeleine probably had regular interactions with Ottawa, Ojibwa, Illinois, Miami, and Potawatomi men and women.¹²²

By 1747, Madeleine and her husband had moved to the post at Michilimackinac. Like St. Joseph, Michilimackinac had a significant population of Indians, many of whom were Ottawa. Madeleine and her husband were able to have regular interactions with these native communities. They had the most intimate relationship with their unnamed female slave.¹²³ They might have purchased her in St. Joseph or in Michilimackinac. Perhaps Indian warriors had captured her and traded her to Claude Marin in exchange for goods. Either way, she ended up in the Marin de la Perrière household, most likely as a domestic. Madeleine herself served as the woman's godmother in September 1747.

¹²¹ Gosselin, 87-88; Letter of La Galissonnière and Hocquart to the French Minister, October 7, 1747, *WHC* 17: 471n2; Beauharnois and Hocquart to the French Minister, November 11, 1733, *WHC* 17: 188-190; Greer, 64.

¹²² "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 212-213 and 221-223; *DCB*, "Claude Marin de la Perrière," vol. 3, 432. For more on kinship, see Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounters in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

¹²³ For more on Madeleine and her experiences with slavery, see Chapter 4.

Owning an Indian slave placed Madeleine and her husband comfortably within the military community in Michilimackinac.¹²⁴

Conclusion

Jumonville grew up in a large family that was deeply affected by the military life. His father and his siblings participated in various skirmishes, battles, and wars. Even his female relatives participated in military actions, defending their homestead from the Iroquois. Jumonville experienced loss at a young age; the death of his father as well as other family members certainly influenced his life. He witnessed the system of slavery, though one can only guess his opinions on it. As a soldier, he traveled throughout the continent, interacting with diverse native communities. He started his own family, but, like his father had, he left them too soon. To them, George Washington was irrelevant. The most important aspect of the skirmish of 1754 was that it resulted in yet another tragedy for the Coulon de Villiers family.

This chapter has shown that the stereotype of New France as an undeveloped colony is inaccurate. Certainly, New France had a smaller population than the British colonies. Numbers, however, only tell part of the story. Jumonville's family members, as military-settlers, demonstrate the depth of colonization that the French implemented in New France. They cultivated the lands of Verchères while also serving as commandants, establishing crucial bonds with native groups. Chapter 2 will provide greater detail

¹²⁴ Gosselin, 87-88; "Register of Baptisms of the Mission of St. Ignace de Michilimakinak, 1695-1821," *WHC* 19: 22; "The Census of the Indian Tribes," October 12, 1736, *WHC* 17: 245; "Speech of Monsieur the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor General of New France, to the Outaouacs of Missilimakinac," July 8, 1741, *WHC* 17: 351-353; "Speech of the Outaouacs of Missilimakinac, of the band of la fourche, Sinagos, and Kiskakons to Monsieur the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor General of New France," June 16, 1742, *WHC* 17: 372-373.

regarding how Jumonville's relatives created alliances with their Indian neighbors. This chapter, by relating the story of the Coulon de Villiers and the Jarret de Verchères family, has presented a fresh perspective on the process of French settlement in North America.

CHAPTER II

From Godparentage to Gift-Giving: Diplomacy at the St. Joseph Post

On November 25, 1730, at the post of St. Joseph in Michigan, Commandant Nicolas Coulon de Villiers Sr. became a godfather. His new godchild, Susanne, was the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Baron, a voyageur from the parish of Boucherville, and Marie Catherine Ouekeoulou, an Illini woman. Jean-Baptiste and Marie Catherine, who was also called Sagatchioua, moved to St. Joseph around 1727 and caused a minor scandal. Some acquaintances from Illinois spread “evil reports” that Marie Catherine had not been baptized. These assertions caused such a ruckus in the small community that Father C M Mesaiger had to “rebaptize” her. Several years later, with the matter resolved, Nicolas was willing to join himself in fictive kinship to Marie Catherine’s multicultural family.¹

As a commandant, Nicolas Sr.’s primary job was to maintain alliances with various Indian groups. The French presence in the Upper Country was weak in regards to population numbers. In order to defend their posts, the French crucially needed native allies. Commandants used a variety of diplomatic tools to secure relationships with their Indian neighbors, godparentage being one of them. By serving as Susanne’s godfather, Nicolas bonded himself to her Illini mother and trader father, both of whom had connections to native communities. This connection, he hoped, would translate into lucrative alliances.²

¹ “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register,” 213.

This chapter demonstrates that Jumonville's family members, while serving in the Upper Country, forged relationships with native people using a variety of diplomatic tools. Nicolas Sr.'s sons, who also became commandants at St. Joseph, grew up watching his diplomatic efforts with local Indians and mirrored his behavior in their own careers. This chapter continues the process of re-contextualizing the Jumonville Affair by demonstrating that in Jumonville's world, complex intercultural interactions were a daily occurrence.

Commandants in the Upper Country

Before discussing the diplomatic efforts of Jumonville's relatives, it is necessary to further explain the role of commandants in the Upper Country. By the 1730s, posts in the *pays d'en haut* included, among others, St. Joseph, Michilimackinac, and Detroit in Michigan and Green Bay in Wisconsin. These western posts were sites of military and trade activity. They were also places where the French interacted with a diverse array of Indian groups. Commandants, then, had to be not only military leaders, but also ambassadors and trade facilitators.³

Commandants were the appointed heads of the western posts, which were, essentially, military bases. A relatively modest number of soldiers served under them. For example, in 1715 Michilimackinac was assigned a garrison of twenty soldiers. Other posts probably had garrisons of a similar size.⁴ Intendant Claude Michel Bégon explained

² Sleeper-Smith, 41-46.

³ "Letter from Ramezay to the French Minister," November 3, 1715, *WHC* 16: 325; "1718: Description of Michilimackinac; Indian Tribes of that Region, Relation of Sieur de Lamothe Cadillac," *WHC* 16: 362.

the importance of these military personnel, remarking that without “a garrison of trained soldiers...no commandant could succeed.”⁵ The king paid the salaries of the officers and soldiers at the posts and also supplied their clothing. Commandants were responsible for all other expenses incurred by their men.⁶

As they were military leaders, commandants were often called upon to assist in warfare. Nicolas Jr., for example, supported the 1739 offensive against the Chickasaws while he commanded St. Joseph.⁷ The Chickasaws, who favored the British as trading partners, had threatened French Louisiana since at least the 1720s. During this time, and into the 1730s, they performed raids and killed French traders. Their actions hampered commerce on the Mississippi. In 1736, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, the governor of Louisiana, led an unsuccessful campaign against the Chickasaws. He renewed his efforts in 1739 and Nicolas Jr. offered his assistance. His desire to be involved was in part due to the fact that his brothers, Louis and Joseph (Jumonville), were participating in the campaign.⁸

During that summer, Nicolas Jr. furnished supplies for the French and Indian forces heading south with Bienville. In late June he received items for the war effort from

⁴ “Extracts from letters from Ramezay and Bégon to the French Minister; dated Sept. 13 and 16, 1715,” *WHC* 16: 314.

⁵ “Memorial written by the Intendant of Canada,” September 20, 1713, *WHC* 16: 295.

⁶ This was the case at Detroit and probably applied to the other posts as well. “Letter of the Intendant Dupuy to the Minister,” October 20, 1727, *WHC* 16: 472.

⁷ For a firsthand account of this offensive, see John Francis Hamtramck Claiborne, *Mississippi, as a Province, Territory, and State* vol. 1 (Jackson: Power & Barksdale, Publishers and Printers, 1880), 64-85. See also Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre*, 47-48 and 114-115.

⁸ Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 159-160 and 164-167; R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatamis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 39-41; Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 82-85.

the merchants Hamelin and Gastineau. Among these goods were musketballs, lead, powder, and wampum. In July, Nicolas, in conjunction with the commandant at Michilimackinac, hired two gunsmiths named Durivage and Dehaîtres. These gunsmiths fixed a pistol for a Nipissing warrior named Lotino and made a guncock for a Canadian named Limbé.⁹

Commandants frequently worried about the British making inroads with Indians and expended considerable effort to prevent it. In 1742 in an attempt to keep the Ottawas at Michilimackinac from trading with the British, Jean Baptiste Jarret¹⁰ sent men among them to help them clear their lands for planting. He also sent a blacksmith from Michilimackinac to the Ottawas of Saguinan. When even these gestures seemed insufficient, Jean-Baptiste, on the governor's orders, sent the second officer in command to live among the Ottawas of Saguinan every winter.¹¹

Trade policy, which directly affected commandants and their posts, was ever-changing in New France. Throughout most of the 17th century, royal policy prohibited fur trading in the *pays d'en haut*. Able-bodied Frenchmen were supposed to settle and farm in Canada, not go gallivanting in the western lands. Meanwhile, Indians were expected to travel to Canada each year to trade their wares, not wait for the French to approach them.

⁹ Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 164-167.

¹⁰ Jean-Baptiste Jarret de Verchères, Jumonville's maternal uncle, commanded Michilimackinac in 1737. He also was the commandant of this site from 1742 until 1745 and again, briefly, in 1747. "Beauharnois to the French Minister," October 16, 1737, *WHC* 17: 274; "Speech of the Outaouacs of Missilimackinac, of the band of la fourche, Sinagos, and Kiskakons to Monsieur the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor-General of New France," June 16, 1742, *WHC* 17: 372-373; "Reply of Monsieur the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor-General of New France, to the speech of the Outaouacs of Missilimackinac, of the band of la fourche, Sinagos, and Kiskakons," June 23, 1742, *WHC* 17: 374-375; Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 91 and 96-97; *DCB*, vol. 3, 99-100; "The Mackinac Baptismal Register," 11.

¹¹ "Beauharnois to the Outaouacs of Michilimackinac," June 23, 1742, *WHC* 17: 374-376; "Beauharnois to the French Minister," September 5, 1742, *WHC* 17: 410.

Nevertheless, *coureurs de bois* continued to travel west and trade their goods among Indian communities.¹² In order to curb this practice, the king instituted the congé system in 1681. Under this system, the governor, with the intendant's approval, would issue twenty-five trade permits, or congés, each year. The owner of a permit could send a three-person canoe to trade with the western Indians. This regulation failed to halt illegal trading. In 1696 Louis XIV abolished the congés altogether and the next year, he closed all western posts. After Louis XIV's death in 1715, the posts were reinstated. The system of twenty-five annual congés was reestablished in 1716 only to be abolished again in 1723. They were not reestablished until 1728. Although trading in the Upper Country was often illegal, independent minded *coureurs de bois* continued their sojourns to Indian villages and defiantly engaged in trade.¹³

The issue of trade could become violent for commandants. In 1737, while he was the commandant of Michilimackinac, Jean-Baptiste Jarret faced a serious threat from the *coureurs de bois*. On June 27 of that year, Jean-Baptiste wrote a panicked letter to Governor Beauharnois. He stated that "in the Vicinity of his fort there were nearly thirty *coureurs de bois* armed with Swords, guns, and Pistols wherewith to fight those who might oppose their passage." The traders were not fighting alone, but had "many Savages" battling with them. Jean-Baptiste contended that he did not have the military support necessary to thwart them.¹⁴ Beauharnois, hoping to diffuse the situation, asked

¹² The *coureurs de bois* were unlicensed traders. They were ubiquitous figures on the fur trading scene. Their unwillingness to abide by the government's trading laws caused tension in the Upper Country.

¹³ Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 6-8; "Letter of Father Carheil to the intendant of Canada, J.B. de Champigny," August 30, 1702, *WHC* 16: 216; "Letter from Governor Vaudreuil to the Minister," October 11, 1723, *WHC* 16: 437; "Resumé of French relations with the Foxes, from 1715 to 1726," April 27, 1727, *WHC* 17: 7.

the French Minister to grant amnesty to the *coureurs de bois*. He knew that fresh troops would soon arrive from France and he planned to send them to the western posts. With these reinforcements, the *coureurs de bois* would pose less of a threat in the future.¹⁵

Commandants were somewhat immune from trade restrictions, often receiving special permission to stock their posts. During Nicolas Sr.'s tenure at St. Joseph, the post received fresh provisions at least once a year.¹⁶ In 1725, when he first became commandant, the governor permitted him to send to the post three canoes equipped with four men and laden with the items that he deemed necessary. In subsequent years, Angélique, his wife and power-of-attorney, received this permission on his behalf. The numbers of boats and men that she was able to send fluctuated. For example, in 1726, Angélique was allowed to send three boats and fourteen men to St. Joseph. This increase in manpower indicates an increase in the amount of supplies that the boats were carrying. These resupplies were crucial for the sustenance of Nicolas and his men.¹⁷ The goods regularly delivered to St. Joseph would have included flour, corn, peas, bacon, brandy, and wine, various types of cloth and thread, muskets, musket balls, flint, powder, tobacco, and wampum.¹⁸

¹⁴ "Beauharnois to the French Minister," October 16, 1737, *WHC* 17: 274-275.

¹⁵ "Beauharnois to the French Minister," October 16, 1737, *WHC* 17: 275.

¹⁶ The Jesuit mission at St. Joseph also received goods. *Rapport*, 217-218.

¹⁷ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P201; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P227; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P275; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P1042; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S34, P1092. *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D3577; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D3602; *Rapport*, 209, 218.

¹⁸ These were items that were delivered to Michilimackinac in 1747. The supplies to St. Joseph were probably similar. Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 94-95.

Commandants were able to gain financially from their position. Joseph L. Peyser convincingly demonstrated this fact with his study of Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre. According to Peyser, “[t]he post commanders and other officers who held the rights to trade at the posts became partners in small fur-trading companies with Montreal merchants, voyageurs, or *marchands-voyageurs*.”¹⁹ Between 1722 and 1734, roughly thirty-six percent of post commanders had become partners in a fur-trading company.²⁰

Nicolas Sr. benefitted from his role as a commandant by pursuing his own trade interests. In 1728 he received a congé that allowed him to send out five boats, each equipped with five men. This congé was a step beyond the permits that he received allowing him to restock his post.²¹ Also, during Nicolas Sr.’s command of St. Joseph, one observer contended that the trade in brandy and merchandise was “notorious” because the commandant had “bought” this post. This comment indicates that Nicolas was directly involved in and a beneficiary of trade at St. Joseph. He was probably included in the thirty-six percent of post commandants who were official partners in the fur trade.²²

Life at the St. Joseph Post

Nicolas Coulon de Villiers Sr. was appointed the commandant of St. Joseph in 1725 and served there until 1731. His sons Nicolas Jr. and Louis, aged seventeen and

¹⁹ Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 7.

²⁰ Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 7.

²¹ I say this because the permits that he and other commandants usually received specifically mentioned that they were to restock their posts. This “congé” does not make this specification, implying that it was for Nicolas’ private interests. *Rapport*, 215.

²² Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 6-8; “Letter of Father Carheil to the intendant of Canada, J.B. de Champigny,” August 30, 1702, *WHC* 16: 216; “Letter from Governor Vaudreuil to the Minister,” October 11, 1723, *WHC* 16: 437; “Resumé of French relations with the Foxes, from 1715 to 1726,” April 27, 1727, *WHC* 17: 7.

fifteen, accompanied him to the post and served as cadets. In subsequent years both boys commanded St. Joseph themselves; the former served from 1739-1742, the latter from 1742-1745. At St. Joseph, the Coulon de Villiers men interacted with the small community of military families and traders living at the post. They also formed relationships with their Indian neighbors. During the years that the Coulon de Villiers family inhabited St. Joseph, it was a diverse place to live.²³

St. Joseph began as an Indian mission. The Jesuit Father Claude Allouez began proselytizing to the native communities in the St. Joseph River valley around 1682. Louis XIV officially awarded the Jesuits a land grant to establish a mission there in 1689. Allouez died that year and Father Claude Aveneau succeeded him. The Jesuits remained at St. Joseph throughout the 18th century, baptizing, marrying, and burying Indians from various tribes.²⁴

In 1718 Philippe Rigaud de Vaudreuil, the governor of New France, decided to make St. Joseph a military post as well as a mission.²⁵ He oversaw the building of Fort St. Joseph, which was placed at the St. Joseph-Kankakee portage.²⁶ Traders often used this portage on their journeys to the Mississippi River Valley. Thus, St. Joseph became a

²³ “St. Joseph Baptismal Register,” 204; *DCB*, “Nicolas-Antoine Coulon de Villiers,” vol. 3, 149-150; Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 228; Gosselin, 22-35 and 47-68; *DCB*, “Louis Coulon de Villiers,” vol. 3, 148-149.

²⁴ See *WHC* 16: 127, 161, 161n1, 99n1, and 208; Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 43-44 and 78-80; See “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register,”; Peyser, 1; George Paré, “The St. Joseph Mission,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17, no. 1 (1930): 24-54.

²⁵ There is some question about when Fort St. Joseph was built. An earlier version of the fort might have been constructed in 1697. Daniel McCoy, *Old Fort St. Joseph; or, Michigan under Four Flags* (Lansing: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Co., State Printers, 1907), 4.

²⁶ A portage is a land route between two water bodies. In this case, traders would sail the St. Joseph River, unload and carry their boats to the Kankakee, then proceed down the Illinois to the Mississippi River.

regular stop on the French fur trade circuit.²⁷ Father Charlevoix visited the post in 1721 and described it in this way:

The commandant's house, which is but a very sorry one, is called the fort, from its being surrounded with an indifferent pallisado, which is pretty near the case in all the rest, except the forts Chambly and Catarocouy, which are real fortresses. There are however in almost every one of them some few cannons or patereroes, which in the case of necessity are sufficient to hinder a surprize and to keep the Indians in respect.²⁸

By Charlevoix's estimation, Fort St. Joseph was visually unimpressive and minimally defended.

St. Joseph was not the only mission that the Jesuits established in the Upper Country that developed into a military post. Father Jacques Marquette established Saint-Ignace de Michilimackinac in 1671. This mission was located near an Ottawa village on the north side of the straits that connect Lakes Michigan and Huron. Because they exhausted the soil at their village, the Ottawas moved to the south side of the straits around 1710. The Jesuits followed them in 1714 and rebuilt their mission there. In 1715, the French built Fort Michilimackinac near the new Ottawa village and the Jesuit mission. Fort Michilimackinac, composed of twelve-foot high cedar posts, was square shaped with four bastions. Enclosed within this structure were forty houses, most of which were composed of upright posts which were held together by clay. The fort also contained a church, a house and yard for the Jesuits, a blacksmith's shop, and a garden. Next to the fort were baking ovens, and an icehouse.²⁹ Over the years, Michilimackinac

²⁷ Sleeper-Smith, 38-43 and 45-54; Edmunds, *The Potawatamis*, 32; "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 201.

²⁸ Pierre François Xavier Charlevoix *Journal of a Voyage to North America* vol. 2 (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1923), 86.

became a central warehouse for goods, particularly furs being transferred from Montreal to Quebec.³⁰

Agricultural abundance surrounded St. Joseph. One visitor described the region as “the best place that could be found for getting a living and cultivating the soil. There are in this place pheasants, as in France; quails and paroquets; the finest vines in the World, which yield a great abundance of excellent grapes both white and black...It is The best region in all that country.”³¹ Besides being located near other French posts like Michilimackinac and Green Bay, St. Joseph was also within the vicinity of native villages like Le Roché and Chicagou.³²

The Indian villages at St. Joseph were central to the post. As Charlevoix reported in 1721, “[w]e have here two villages of Indians, one of the Miamis and the other of the Poutewatomies, both of them mostly Christians.”³³ These Miamis³⁴ and Potawatomis³⁵

²⁹ This description comes from Ensign Michel Chartier de Lotbinière, who visited Michilimackinac in 1749. Timothy J. Kent, *Rendezvous at the Straits: Fur Trade and Military Activities at Fort de Buade and Fort Michilimackinac, 1669-1781* vol. 2 (Silver Fox Enterprises, 2004) 336-342.

³⁰ Peyser, *Jacques Legardeur*, 1; “The Census of the Indian Tribes,” October 12, 1736, *WHC* 17: 245; “Speech of Monsieur the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor General of New France, to the Outaouacs of Missilimakinac,” July 8, 1741, *WHC* 17: 351-353; “Speech of the Outaouacs of Missilimakinac, of the band of la fourche, Sinagos, and Kiskakons to Monsieur the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor General of New France,” June 16, 1742, *WHC* 17: 372-373; The Mackinac Baptismal Register, 22-23; David A. Armour and Keith R. Widder, Mackinac State Historic Parks, “A Brief History of Michilimackinac,” <<http://www.mackinacparks.com/history/index.aspx?l=0,1,4,32,41,46>> March 4, 2009.

³¹ “1718: Memoir on the Savages of Canada as far as the Mississippi River, Describing their Customs and Trade,” *WHC* 16: 372-373.

³² “1718: Memoir on the Savages of Canada as far as the Mississippi River, Describing their Customs and Trade,” *WHC* 16: 372-373; “1718: Description of Michilimackinac; Indian Tribes of that Region, Relation of Sieur de Lamothe Cadillac,” *WHC* 16: 361-362.

³³ Charlevoix, vol. 2, 86.

³⁴ The Miamis had formerly lived in Wisconsin, along the upper Fox River. Father Marquette sojourned to this site in 1673. Of all the native groups living there, he was most favorably impressed by the Miami. In the ensuing years, the Iroquois threatened the region, compelling several groups to relocate. By 1681, some Miamis, in addition to some Mascoutens and Kickapoos, had moved to the opposite side of Lake Michigan

were not the only native people at St. Joseph. There was a Sac community nearby where the chief White Cat lived in the 1730s. Ottawa and Illinois individuals also appeared at the post.³⁶ Leaders of these groups attended councils with the commandant at his residence. Piremon, a Potawatomi chief, and Wilemek, a Potawatomi orator, attended such a meeting in 1721. Charlevoix was in attendance and contended that these two “said a great many very fine things to us.”³⁷ Nicolas Sr. and his sons undoubtedly presided over similar meetings while they commanded St. Joseph. The native community at St. Joseph was so integral to the post’s identity that it was often referred to as simply “the Miamis.”³⁸

During the commands of Nicolas Sr. and his sons, St. Joseph was home to a small community of military families. Claude Collet, a soldier in *les compagnies franches de la*

(Lake of the Illinois), near the St. Joseph River. Allouez founded the Jesuit mission shortly thereafter. W.A. Titus, “Historic Spots in Wisconsin,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 5, no. 4 (1922): 382-388; *Jesuit Relations* 58: 23; *Jesuit Relations* 59: 101 and 103; Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et établissement des français dans l’ouest et dans le sud de l’Amérique Septentrionale (1614-1754): Voyage des Français sur les Grands Lacs et Découverte de l’Ohio et du Mississipi (1614-1684)* vol. 1 (Paris: D. Jouaust, 1876), 505. “1681-83: Fur Trade; Wisconsin Indians atone to Jesuits for the murder of their servants,” *WHC* 16: 99; “1718: Memoir on the Savages of Canada as far as the Mississippi River, Describing their Customs and Trade,” *WHC* 16: 372 ; “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register,” 207, 221, and 223.

³⁵ Their ancestral home was in Michigan, but they relocated to Wisconsin and established villages at Green Bay. Around 1670, Father Allouez founded the mission of Saint Francis Xavier near one of their large villages. The Potawatomis had been trading with the French for several years by this time and they eventually became dependent upon their allies’ goods. In the 1690s and the Potawatomis began migrating back to Michigan. One group settled in the St. Joseph River valley where the Jesuit mission had officially opened. Other Potawatomis moved to Detroit when that post opened while still others remained in Wisconsin. Over the next several decades, the Potawatomis solidified their connections with the French at St. Joseph by receiving baptism at the mission, intermarrying with traders, and fighting alongside them in war. Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 3-32; “Charlevoix visits Wisconsin; His description of the tribes,” *WHC* 16: 409; “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register,” 207, 212, and 213.

³⁶ “St. Joseph Baptismal Register,” 209-212, 213n21; “Speech of the Illinois Indians, defending themselves, and accusing the Foxes,” *WHC* 16: 456-463.

³⁷ Charlevoix, vol. 2, 98.

³⁸ *WHC* 16: 127, 161, 161n1, 99n1, and 208; Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 43-44 and 78-80; See “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register.”

Marine, resided at the post during Nicolas Sr.'s tenure as commandant. Collet, who probably served in the garrison that protected the post, was accompanied by his wife Marguerite Faucher and their daughter Marie Magdelaine. Marie Magdelaine was baptized at St. Joseph in 1725 and young Nicolas Jr. served as her godfather. One can imagine that after the ceremony, Nicolas Jr. invited the little family back to the commandant's residence for a celebratory meal. Collet and his wife must have felt honored to have attained a connection to the ruling family at the post.³⁹ Gabriel Bolon, also a soldier, and his wife Susanne Menard must have felt even more thrilled when Commandant Nicolas Sr. served as the godfather to their daughter Susanne in 1726.⁴⁰

Various traders also resided at the post. In the 1730s, René Bourassa the elder, a well-known trader, lived there. Bourassa was born in Lachine, Quebec in 1688. As a young man, he engaged in the illicit fur trade between Montreal and Albany, a lucrative pursuit since the British at this time paid twice as much for beaver pelts as the French. He was caught and fined in 1722. In the next several years, he entered the western trade, partnering with Nicolas Sarrazin and François Duplessis-Faber. While at St. Joseph, Bourassa was able to establish new trade connections. He also interacted with the local community, serving as a godfather in 1735 to Marie Anne Deshestres. She was the daughter of Antoine Deshestres, a New Englander and an in-demand blacksmith (probably the same man whom Nicolas Jr. used for the Chickasaw campaign) married to Charlotte Chevalier.⁴¹

³⁹ "St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 209-212.

⁴⁰ "St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 211-212. Bolon and his family were living in Michilimackinac in 1745, the same time that Jean-Baptiste Jarret was the commandant. "Mackinac Baptismal Register," *WHC* 19: 11 and 14.

The Réaumes were one among several trading families at St. Joseph. Jean-Baptiste Réaume began his career in Montreal; he was an interpreter in the king's employ along with his brother Simon. Both brothers left Montreal for the west and worked as traders in the Illinois Country. Jean-Baptiste's marriage to Simphorose Ouaouagoukoue, an Illini woman, secured him and his brother access to the fur trade as well as protection as they traveled. These perks were a common reason for intermarriage between French traders and Indian women. Jean-Baptiste and Simphorose moved to St. Joseph in 1720 and raised several children, including Marie Madeleine. She remained in St. Joseph during her adulthood and married Augustin L'archevêque, another man who had traded in Illinois. While at St. Joseph, Marie Madeleine often served as a godmother.⁴²

Multicultural families were not unique to St. Joseph. They were common at Michilimackinac where Jean-Baptiste Tellier de la Fortune married a Nipissing woman named Marie Josephe in July 1747. The couple already had six children, who were legitimized by the formal Catholic ceremony. Also at Michilimackinac, Charles Hamelin, formerly a voyageur, married a Saulteux woman named Marie Athanasie in February 1748. In August 1749 Jean Manian l'Esperance and a Saulteux woman named Rose wed. The couple already had three children, all of whom attended the ceremony and were legitimized by it.⁴³

⁴¹ *DCB* "René Bourassa dit La Ronde" vol. 4, 77-78; *Rapport*, 218; "St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 214-215.

⁴² *Rapport*, 219; Sleeper-Smith, 45-53 and 185-186.

⁴³ "Mackinac Marriage Register," *WHC* 19: 474-476.

Diplomacy through Godparentage

While they served as commandants at St. Joseph, the Coulon de Villiers men employed various tactics to gain and maintain relationships with Indians. These tactics included serving as godparents, holding councils, and giving gifts. By becoming godparents to Indian and mixed race people and serving as godparents alongside mixed race Indians, Nicolas and his sons created bonds of kinship that they hoped would translate into strong alliances.

Kinship was integral to the social, political, and economic lives of Indian communities. In the Algonquin-speaking Anishinaabe societies of the Great Lakes, the *nindoodemag*, or kinship network, served as the primary means of social and political organization.⁴⁴ According to their creation stories, humans were birthed from the corpses of the Beaver, the Otter, and other “first beings.” Those people who possessed the same animal ancestor belonged to the same kinship group. The Anishinaabe *nindoodemag* eventually included the *Amikwa* (beaver), the *Monsoni* (moose), and the *Outchougai* (heron). In these patrilineal Anishinaabe communities, people gained their kinship identity from their fathers. Family units within a kinship network included brothers, their wives, and their children. They resided together for life while their sisters married into families outside of their *nindoodemag*.⁴⁵ According to Susan Sleeper-Smith, “[t]his was a face-to-face world in which people were identified by their relatives and where the individual was suspect...It was the reputation and prominence of kin networks that

⁴⁴ The Anishinaabe included the Potawatomi, the Ottawa, the Ojibwe (Chippewa), and the Algonquian.

⁴⁵ Heidi Bohaker, “*Nindoodemag*: The Significance of Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes, 1600-1701,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2006): 23-52.

defined social acceptance and prominence.”⁴⁶ Kinship ties became especially important during times of conflict. For example, when the Foxes became refugees in the 1730s, they depended upon the Sacs for support. The Sacs obliged because of their kinship ties.⁴⁷

The Catholic kin network allowed the French to incorporate themselves into the Indian kinship system. Through the ritual of baptism, Jesuits throughout French North America intended to bring Indians into the fold of the Catholic Church. They baptized infants, who were often at the point of death, as well as adults. The Jesuits required each baptismal candidate to take a godmother and a godfather. These two people, at least in theory, became responsible for the spiritual growth of their godchild.⁴⁸ Godparents became the fictive kin of their godchildren and this position gave them social, economic, and political access to Indian communities. Fur traders and their wives, who were eager for such access, often served as godparents to Indians. This system became “firmly entrenched” in the Upper Country by 1720. Commandants in the Upper Country also participated in the Catholic kin network. They hoped to solidify relationships with the Indians whom they relied upon for military support.⁴⁹

Prior to Nicolas the elder’s tenure at St. Joseph, commandants only marginally participated in Catholic kinship networks. His predecessors were Second Ensign Martin Rémy de Montmidy, who served from 1720-1722, and Captain Etienne de Villedonné,

⁴⁶ Sleeper-Smith, 43.

⁴⁷ R. David Edmunds and Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 174-175.

⁴⁸ See “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register.”

⁴⁹ Sleeper-Smith, 43-46.

who served from 1722-1725.⁵⁰ Montmidy only served as a godfather once. His godchild was Joseph, the son of a French voyageur named Albert Bonne and his wife Marianne Sancer-Ferron. Villedonné, however, began to establish kinship ties through his connection with Marguerite Couc. Couc was a métis, meaning that she had both French and Indian ancestry. Her parents were Marie Miteameg8k8e and Pierre Couc and she married a voyageur named Sieur Michel Massé.⁵¹ In 1722 Villedonné and Couc served as the godparents to Bonne and Sancer-Ferron's daughter, Marie Joseph. Then in 1723, Villedonné made Couc and his brother Pierre-Etienne the godparents to his daughter, Marie Joseph. By serving as a godparent alongside Couc and then allowing her to be the godmother to his child, Villedonné bound his family in fictive kinship to the métis woman. He must have hoped to benefit from her connections.⁵²

Nicolas Sr. chose his godchildren based on their parents' ability to strengthen his position among the neighboring Indian communities. As previously mentioned, in 1730 he served as the godfather to the daughter of Jean Baptiste Baron and Marie Catherine Ouekeouloué. On January 13, 1731, he became the godfather to Marie Catherine, the daughter of Marie Réaume and Augustin L'archevesque. By allying himself with two families with deep ties to trade, Nicolas strengthened his position as a commandant. He also laid the groundwork for establishing Indian alliances. Prior to his connection with

⁵⁰ Nicolas had three additional predecessors, but the St. Joseph Baptismal Register begins in 1720, when Montmidy is Commandant. Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 228.

⁵¹ Marguerite's sister Elizabeth was the famous interpreter Madame Montour. Montour's son Andrew became an equally skillful interpreter and negotiator in the British colonies. *DCB*, vol. 3, (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 147.

⁵² Cyprian Tanguay and Armand H. Demers. trans., *Searching Through the Old Records of New France for all of those Precious Genealogical Details*, Revised ed. (Rhode Island: Quintin Publications, 2003), 60; Simone Vincens, "Pierre Couc, Colonist in New France in the Seventeenth Century," *Mémoires de la Société Généalogique Canadienne-Française* 30 (1979), 39 and 41; *DCB*, vol. 3, 147; "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 205 and 207-209.

Marie Catherine Ouekeouloue, his son Louis had also formed a fictive kin tie with her. On March 7, 1729, he had served as the godfather to her son Joseph. The godmother was Marie Reaume. Serving as a godparent alongside her also built a bond to her trading family.⁵³

While Louis Coulon de Villiers was commanding at St. Joseph, his sister Madeleine also participated in Indian kinship networks.⁵⁴ On June 5, 1745, she served as the godmother to a Miami man named Mekabika8nga. Her husband Marin de la Perriere served as his godfather. Mekabika8nga was around fifty-years-old and took Pierre as his baptismal name. The same day as his baptism, Pierre Mekabika8nga married Marie, a Miami woman of about fifty-years-old. Mekabika8nga's adult children followed in his footsteps and took their baptisms as well. For example, in 1752 his widowed daughter Temagas8kia was baptized at around twenty-six-years-old. She took the name Marguerite, likely as a gesture of respect towards her Saki godmother, Marguerite. Through godparentage, Madeleine Coulon de Villiers bonded her family to Mekabika8nga's. This connection built upon the bonds that her father and brother established with other Indian families. Since her brother was commanding the post, these kinship bonds were essential.⁵⁵

Few documents exist that can give the Indian perspective on baptism and godparentage. The bulk of the source material available on the subject comes from either

⁵³ "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 210-214.

⁵⁴ Madeleine and her twin sister Marie were born in either 1706 or 1707. They were the eldest siblings in the Coulon de Villiers family. Gosselin, 173-174.

⁵⁵ "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," 212-213 and 221-223.

baptismal registers or *The Jesuits Relations*.⁵⁶ These sources reveal limited information on why Indians chose to be baptized or have their children baptized. By reading these documents closely, perhaps these answers will begin to appear.

Indians often agreed to have their children baptized out of desperation. *The Jesuit Relations* offer several examples of parents seeking out the Jesuits when their children were near death. Paul Le Jeune recorded such a story in 1636 when he was stationed in Quebec. According to Le Jeune, a man named Attikamegou, whom the French called “the Prince,” sent for one of the Jesuit Fathers. His son was dying and he wanted the boy to be baptized. The Father hurried to Attikamegou’s home and brought the baptismal water with him. He arrived to find the child’s mother unwilling to allow the baptism, for she believed that everyone who was baptized would die. Her husband argued that their son was already dying and baptism was clearly not the cause. He pleaded that even if baptism did not cure their son, at least God would have pity on the boy’s soul. Eventually, the mother began to relent, but this quick turnaround troubled the Jesuit Father. He knew that “this woman gave consent to the baptism of her child only in the hope of his recovery; and that, consequently, if the child died...she would be certain to greatly decry this Sacrament.”⁵⁷ The Jesuit feared that her negative report would dissuade other Indians from baptism.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ During their tenure in North America, the Jesuits kept detailed records of their missionary activities. They lived among Indian groups like the Iroquois and the Huron in the 17th and 18th centuries. They also founded mission towns like Kahnawake where converted Indian could live. Each year, the Jesuits sent reports of their progress back to France. The result is *The Jesuit Relations*, a multivolume compilation of these reports.

⁵⁷ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 9: 11.

⁵⁸ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 9: 7-9.

According to Le Jeune, the mother required still more persuading until she agreed to let her son be baptized. When the Father asked if she and her husband would allow him to instruct their son should he recover, he confirmed one of her fears. Alarmed, she accused him of wanting to steal her boy. Eventually, after further appeals, the mother accepted the baptism. Because the boy's situation was so dire, the Father skipped the full ceremony, including the naming. He said the holy words and poured water on his head. Immediately, the boy recovered. The miraculous news spread among the Indians and the French. The parents later brought the child to the Church of Quebec for the formal ceremony. His new godparents named him François Olivier, applied consecrated oils upon him, and gave him the other holy rites.⁵⁹

This story illustrates how Indians approached the issue of baptism in early New France. Clearly, Le Jeune framed the narrative to show the triumph of Catholicism among the "barbarians." Yet, his depiction of the mother's hesitations appears reasonable. Indians had no reason to automatically trust the Jesuits and their foreign rituals. Their fears about these Frenchmen's motives are also legitimate. The severity of her son's condition and the assurances of her husband probably compelled this mother to accept baptism.

The *St. Joseph Register* gives further evidence that even in the 18th century, Indians allowed their children to be baptized primarily to save their lives. Throughout their time at St. Joseph, the Jesuits baptized very ill children. For example, in 1722 the Jesuit J.C. Guymonneau recorded that "I baptized in the course of the summer 4 Potawatomi children who were at the point of death. They died the same day or shortly

⁵⁹ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 9: 11-15.

after.”⁶⁰ Then in 1727, while Nicolas Sr. was the commandant, C.M. Mesaiger noted a similar episode: “I baptized 3 dying children, one a daughter of () an illinois who died, a child of ouistouia’s wife dit () and a child of megouik.”⁶¹ Desperate parents were willing to try any means to cure their sick children.

The system of godparentage also offered an opportunity for native people to improve their access to French goods. Marie Catherine Ouekeoulou and her voyageur husband Jean-Baptiste probably had this idea in mind when they allowed Nicolas Sr. to become their daughter’s godfather. They recognized that as the commandant Nicolas controlled the flow of merchandise into the post. He would consider it his duty, they hoped, to ensure that his goddaughter and her family had all of the food and supplies that they needed.⁶²

The members of the Coulon de Villiers family participated in Indian kinship networks by engaging in the Catholic system of godparentage. It is no coincidence that their engagement in these networks occurred when one of the Coulon de Villiers men was serving as a commandant. To fulfill their job requirements, they did all they could to establish and maintain strong relationships with neighboring Indians.

⁶⁰ “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register,” 207.

⁶¹ “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register,” 211.

⁶² “The St. Joseph Baptismal Register,” 213.

Diplomacy through Councils

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, French governmental and military officials as well as missionaries held council meetings with various Indian groups. Upper Country Indians visited Montreal each year to meet with the governor. They also attended less formal gatherings at the western posts. Nicolas Sr. oversaw such conferences while he commanded at St. Joseph. These engagements allowed him to maintain communication with allies and potential allies.⁶³

In 1727 a Fox chief named Sekima8esimme traveled to St. Joseph to meet with Nicolas Sr. Tensions between the French and the Foxes were escalating yet again. This time, the point of contention was the establishment of the Sioux post. The previous year, the French, the Foxes, and other neighboring Indian groups signed a peace treaty. The Foxes also asked the French to establish a post near them and to assign a commander to live among them. Presumably, they wanted the post and commander to facilitate trade and act as a peace negotiator between themselves and their Indian enemies. Governor Beauharnois, however, made contrary plans. He ordered that a new post be established, but among the Sioux, a bitter enemy of the Fox people. The Foxes felt betrayed and rumors spread that they had killed some French people at the Sioux post. Sekima8esimme sought out Nicolas to address these rumors.⁶⁴

Sekima8esimme delivered an impassioned speech during the council at St. Joseph, a speech that he knew Nicolas would relate to the governor. The Fox chief tried to

⁶³ “Extract from Letter of Governor de Vaudreuil to Count Pontchartrain,” November 14, 1703, *WHC* 16: 220.

⁶⁴ Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 117-118.

convince Nicolas and Beauharnois that the young war chiefs were truly to blame for the hostilities against the French. He explained:

Onontio thinks that we have eaten His children who Are among the sioux, but Here is One [of the Frenchmen] who can say Whether we have done any harm to them...It is our young men who have no Sense at all who Go so far as to commit these evil deeds against You. That is why I Parted company with them. I speak to You by means of this Belt to tell you my father, that if I can not Master the young men, and if they commit any misdeeds, then it is all over I reject them and come to throw myself upon your land...⁶⁵

By this talk, Sekima8esimme revealed the fissure between the Fox peace chiefs and the war chiefs. According to him, the younger war chiefs were ignoring the 1726 peace treaty by violently expressing their frustration with the Sioux post. He sought to distance himself from them and avoid French retaliation. Even before this speech, Nicolas probably knew enough about the political structure of native groups to recognize the limits of Sekima8esimme's authority. From observing the Indian communities at St. Joseph, he would have seen that no single chief was all powerful and no single chief could compel his people to remain loyal to the French. If the hotheaded war chiefs truly were bent on punishing them for establishing the Sioux post, then there was little that Sekima8esimme and the other peace chiefs could do to prevent it. Therefore, Nicolas learned from this parley that the Foxes were fractured and that the French needed to be prepared for further aggression.⁶⁶

Throughout the speech, Commandant Villiers witnessed the rituals associated with Indian councils. Firstly, Sekima8esimme referred to Nicolas as "my father." Indians often referred to French officials this way. By calling them "father," they did not mean to

⁶⁵ Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 118.

⁶⁶ Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 117-118.

imply that they were subordinate to them. Rather, they were establishing a fictive kinship bond that made the French responsible for protecting and providing for them. Secondly, the Fox chief called Beauharnois *Onontio*, the term that Indians frequently used for French governors. Thirdly, Sekima8esimme displayed and referenced a wampum belt. Wampum brought “ceremonial importance” to any speech and was always present during councils. The wampum belt was made of different colored shells that were organized into patterns. These patterns depicted war, peace, and other messages. In his role as a commandant, Nicolas must have become accustomed to the protocol of these meetings and familiar with the diplomatic rituals of Indians. This knowledge was a necessary element for intercultural negotiations.⁶⁷

Nicolas Sr. presided over another council involving the Foxes in 1731. He had already decimated this nation on the Illinois Grand Prairie.⁶⁸ Those Foxes who had remained out of the fray had settled a new village in Wisconsin in modern Richland County. A war chief named Kiala led this village, which contained roughly 350 Foxes, only fifty of whom were warriors. After the massacre in Illinois, the Foxes in Kiala’s village recognized their vulnerable position and desired peace with the French. They sent two warriors from the village to parley with Nicolas Sr. at St. Joseph. Both had met the commandant at the post in 1729 and hoped that he would remember them favorably. They traveled to the post but only secured the meeting through the efforts of

⁶⁷ Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 118, 122n30, and 122n31.

⁶⁸ See Chapter 3.

Meguesiliguy, the Potawatomi brother-in-law of one of the warriors. Meguesiliguy maintained a lodge at St. Joseph and apparently had a good relationship with Nicolas.⁶⁹

During the meeting, the two Fox emissaries pleaded for Nicolas' clemency. In their council speech, they contended that although some Fox warriors had unjustly antagonized the French, they themselves had interceded on behalf of several French captives. They swore that the surviving Foxes would remain loyal to the French. As a show of good faith, they offered to remain at St. Joseph as hostages.⁷⁰

Nicolas' reply was contradictory. He stated that he believed in the "good heart" of the remaining Foxes. He also promised that Onontio would grant them mercy if they remained peaceful. Yet, it is clear from the instructions he gave next that he distrusted his new "friends." He ordered Kiala and his counselors to journey to St. Joseph, surrender as prisoners, and travel to Montreal to meet with Beauharnois. They would remain there as hostages in order to compel the remaining Foxes to maintain their obedience. The implied threat was that to refuse would give Nicolas justification to subdue them once again. The emissaries returned to their village and relayed the commandant's message. Kiala did not immediately agree to the terms and it was the two messengers who journeyed back to St. Joseph and surrendered rather than the chief.⁷¹

A delegation of St. Joseph Indians accompanied Nicolas and his two Fox prisoners to Montreal in summer of 1731. Captain Jacques Testard de Montigny, then the commandant at Michilimackinac, saw the delegation as they journeyed eastward:

⁶⁹ Edmunds and Peyser, 159-160.

⁷⁰ Edmunds and Peyser, 159-160.

⁷¹ Edmunds and Peyser, 159-162.

“Monsieur de Villiers Passed by Several Days Ago. He is Taking The Fox to Montreal Where he is Going to ask The [governor] General to grant the Foxes their lives, accompanied by several people/from each nation in the Vicinity of the St. Joseph River.”⁷² These St. Joseph Indians probably included Miamis and Potawatomis. Montigny noted that some Ottawas and Sacs from his post also joined the traveling party. In Beauharnois’ words, “[t]he joy the defeat of that nation has caused to all the others has been so great that this Summer savages from all parts came to Montreal to express the satisfaction they felt, and to assure me of their fidelity to the French.”⁷³ It seemed that the entire upper country was waiting to see how the great Fox saga would end.⁷⁴

Beauharnois spoke condescendingly to the Fox envoys when they arrived in Montreal, but he agreed to spare their lives. He warned them that if Kiala and his advisors did not appear the next summer to “throw themselves at Onontio’s feet,”⁷⁵ he would destroy the rest of the Foxes. It is unclear what role Nicolas played in the actual negotiations. However, he fulfilled his duty as a commandant by organizing and leading this expedition. After the council in Montreal, Beauharnois sent him to command at Green Bay. Kiala did eventually arrive in Montreal and Beauharnois sent him to Martinique as a slave.⁷⁶

⁷² Peyser, *Legardeur*, 20.

⁷³ “Letter of Beauharnois to the French Minister,” October 11, 1731, *WHC* 17: 139.

⁷⁴ Edmunds and Peyser, 160-162 and 180; “Letter of Beauharnois to the French Minister,” October 11, 1731, *WHC* 17: 139-141; Beauharnois and Hocquart to the King, October 7, 1734, *WHC* 17: 210.

⁷⁵ Edmunds and Peyser, 161.

⁷⁶ Edmunds and Peyser, 160-162 and 180; “Letter of Beauharnois to the French Minister,” October 11, 1731, *WHC* 17: 139-141; “Beauharnois and Hocquart to the King,” October 7, 1734, *WHC* 17: 210.

Diplomacy through Gift-giving

Another way that Nicolas Sr., as well as other French officials, engaged in diplomacy was through giving presents. Susan Sleeper-Smith, explains that “[u]nlike Britain, France lacked a sufficient population to appropriate and colonize Indian lands. Left with little choice, the French learned to negotiate the cultural landscape of an Indian world where friendships and alliances were sealed through the exchange of gifts.”⁷⁷ The French recognized that in order to make strides with native people, they had to practice gift-giving. Because Indian allies were so vital to them, they were willing to engage in this cultural ritual.

The French handed out gifts in a variety of ways. In Quebec in 1697, for example, Governor Frontenac distributed gifts among the various tribes attending his council speech.⁷⁸ In 1720, Governor Vaudreuil, “sent from Montreal, in the month of August last, Sieur Dumont, half-pay Ensign, accompanied by Sieur Simon Reaume, a former Voyageur, who has a reputation among the Savage nations, with two Canoes to bring presents to the Miamis, in order to pacify that nation and prevent them from being deceived by the Intrigues of Those Chiefs who favor the English....”⁷⁹ The French emissaries in both cases hoped that alliances bloomed from their gift-giving efforts.⁸⁰

Gift-giving became commonplace at the western posts. Over time, missionaries complained that “[Indians] will now do nothing except in return for presents; and that

⁷⁷ Sleeper-Smith, 41.

⁷⁸ “1697: Northwestern Indians at Quebec; Frontenac’s policy toward them,” *WHC* 16: 172.

⁷⁹ Governor Vaudreuil to Council, October 22, 1720, *WHC* 16: 395.

⁸⁰ Sleeper-Smith, 42; Edmunds and Peyser, 144; “Letter of Hocquart to the French Minister,” November 14, 1730, *WHC* 17: 119-120

they will learn to employ all sorts of stratagems and intrigues in order to secure these presents, and to cheat the commandants in every possible manner.”⁸¹ Despite this alleged situation, or perhaps because of it, commandants continued to distribute gifts. Constant le Marchand de Lignery, who commanded at Michilimackinac, reported spending 200 livres in 1715 for presents.⁸²

Presents could be more ceremonial than functional. For example, in 1732 King Louis XV wanted to reward certain Indians chiefs for their loyalty. He sent out twelve medals, which had been created at the birth of *le dauphin*, to be distributed among them. By these tokens, he hoped to further endear these chiefs to the French cause.⁸³

Losing the friendship of their Indian allies was a real threat to commandants and made gift-giving crucial. For example, although the Miamis and the Potawatomis at St. Joseph were allied to the French, they traded with the British at Albany and Philadelphia. They contended that the goods at these sites were cheaper and more suitable to their tastes; for example, they preferred English rum to French brandy (*l'eau de vie*). This trading had been going on since at least the early 1700s. To prevent a serious defection, Nicolas and his sons had to supply their allies with the goods that they wanted.⁸⁴

While he was the Commandant at St. Joseph, Nicolas Sr. gave presents. When he restocked his post each year, goods for Indians were included in his supplies. He probably gave these items to the Potawatomis and Miamis in the neighboring villages as

⁸¹ “Letter of Father Carheil to the intendant of Canada, J.B. de Champigny,” August 30, 1702, *WHC* 16: 215-216.

⁸² “1719: Account of de Lignery for expenses incurred by him,” *WHC* 16: 383-384.

⁸³ Edmunds and Peyser, 44-45; 1732: “The King’s Memoir,” April 22, 1732, *WHC* 17: 159.

⁸⁴ “Letter of Father Jean Mermet to Cadillac,” *WHC* 16: 211-213.

well as to leaders like White Cat.⁸⁵ The specific items that Nicolas supplied to his Indian allies remain unknown, but they were probably similar to those gifts given to a delegation of Potawatomis, Illinois, Sacs, Miamis, and Menominees in Montreal in 1747. This delegation included seventy-eight warriors, each of whom had helped the French to raid various New England settlements. In recognition of their efforts, and in order to maintain their allegiance, the French prepared a panoply of gifts for them to take with them back to their villages at Michilimackinac. These presents included 144 ells of cadis (a kind of coarse wool), twenty-four ells of Beaufort, seventy-two ells of serge, forty marks of imitation braid, and three lbs of sewing thread from Rennes. When used together, these items were meant to create twenty-four outfits for as many chiefs. Also included in the gifts were fabrics necessary to create fifty-four hooded coats. Among these were 187 ells of serge, 110 ells of Dourgne cloth, thirty-five marks of imitation braid, and four lbs of Rennes thread. This collection of gifts also contained blankets, shirts, leggings, breechcloths, powder, lead, knives, awls, kettles, vermilion, tobacco, sewing needles, fishing lines and hooks, bacon, lard, peas, and corn. These were the kind of items that the St. Joseph Indians likely desired as well. In order to maintain their friendship, Nicolas and his sons had to provide them.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Peyser, *Letters from New France*, 227; BAnQ, TL4, S34, P158; BAnQ, TL4, S34, P244.

⁸⁶ Peyser, *Legardeur*, 91-92.

Conclusion

The men of the Coulon de Villiers family served as able commandants in the complex world of the Upper Country. Their primary function as commandants was to establish ties with Indians. While they served at St. Joseph, they used a variety of diplomatic techniques in order to accomplish this task. They recognized that these relationships were crucial for their survival at the post. They also knew that for these bonds to succeed, the Indians needed to see the benefit in them. For this reason, tactics like gift-giving were vital.

The Coulon de Villiers family had substantial experience interacting with a variety of native people. St. Joseph was home to Miamis, Potawatomis, Illinois, as well as other groups. Nicolas Sr., Nicolas Jr., Louis, and Madeleine all had individual encounters with their Indian neighbors, often through godparentage. By illustrating these occurrences, this chapter has illuminated the diverse world in which Jumonville lived. This is the world that historians have obscured by their selective attention to Early American history.

CHAPTER III

Battles in the Borderlands: Warfare and the Coulon de Villiers Family

On May 30, 1748, during the tumultuous years of King George's War,¹ Joseph Coulon de Villiers, sieur de Jumonville was sent on a mission. Jumonville, a second ensign, was ordered to depart from Montreal and lead a war party against the British. Probably, the party's destination was upstate New York. Serving alongside Jumonville were three cadets, an ensign, and several Canadian soldiers. However, his most crucial allies on this expedition were sixty Iroquois and nine Upper Country Indians. Jumonville knew what all military leaders in New France knew: Indian allies were crucial to ensure victory in battle. The assembled war party successfully attacked a band of British soldiers, killing about fifteen men. They themselves lost two Iroquois warriors and one cadet in the skirmish. Jumonville and his allies returned to Montreal on June 26, carrying five British scalps as evidence of their triumph.²

Military officers in New France often needed Indian allies in order to achieve success. Jumonville and his family members lived this reality as they served from the Upper Country to Acadia. For example, Nicolas Sr., could not have won his famous 1730 battle without the assistance of native warriors. Indians did not blindly follow the French into battle. As evidenced by Nicolas Jr.'s experience in 1747, Indians participated to further their own ends.

¹ King George's War lasted from 1744 until 1748. It was part of the larger War of Austrian Succession in Europe. As in previous North American Wars, this conflict pitted the French and British against each other. The war ended with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

² E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. 10 (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers, 1858), 164 and 168.

This chapter argues that, as military leaders in New France, the Coulon de Villiers men had to learn to build coalitions with native people. These Indian allies were vocal partners, not silent actors, who joined with the French to further their own interests. This chapter is divided into two parts. Part 1 shows how Nicolas Sr. formed a coalition with native warriors during the Fox Wars. Without these allies, he could not have won the battle in 1730, which garnered him considerable recognition. The French massacred the Foxes during this battle and afterwards they attempted to completely annihilate them as a people. These actions show that the French were not as “benign” towards Indians as historians have implied. Part 2 examines how Nicolas Jr. secured Indian allies in 1747 for the Battle of Grand Pré. Mi’kmaq warriors fought alongside him not because they were blindly loyal to the French, but because they desired to rid themselves of the British.

Part 1: The Fox Wars

On August 6, 1730, Nicolas Coulon de Villiers Sr., who was then commanding at St. Joseph, received urgent news from two Mascouten messengers. They reported that the Fox tribe, fearing for their survival in Wisconsin, had abandoned their villages. They were headed eastward, hoping to make a new home among the Iroquois. During their exodus, the Foxes had crossed through the Illinois Country where their numerous Indian enemies had descended upon them. Now, the Mascouten messengers arrived at the heart of the matter. Their chiefs had sent them to Nicolas to request his assistance in this final battle against the Foxes.³

³ “Villiers to Beauharnois,” September 23, 1730, *WHC* 17: 113-114.

Nicolas sprang into action. He notified French officials at the Miami and Detroit posts about the situation. Then, he began rallying his own forces at St. Joseph. He departed on August 10, “with the French Who were then in a condition to March, and with all the savages here, including Poutouatamis, Myamis, and Saquis and proceeded to the place where the renards [Foxes] were. On the way I took with me The quikapoux and maskoutins, making about 300 men in all.”⁴ Nicolas and his men marched southward, bent on destroying the Foxes. The commandant could not have known, though he surely hoped, that he was heading towards the greatest victory of his military career.⁵

Fox Wars

The events in the summer of 1730 happened within the context of the Fox Wars. The Fox Wars encompass the numerous conflicts between the Fox tribe, their native enemies like the Illinois, and the French from the 1710s until the 1730s. The Wars ended with the massacre of the Foxes.⁶

Originally, the Fox tribe lived on the Atlantic coast, but conflicts with other native groups drove them westward. By 1669, nearly 2,000 Foxes resided at Ouestatimong, near the Wolf River in Wisconsin. Others lived with Sacs, Potawatomis, and Winnebagos in three villages on the western coast of Green Bay. During the first several decades of the 18th century, the Foxes resettled in villages near Lake Butte des Morts, Lake Winnebago, and the Wisconsin River. Typically, Foxes remained in large “summer villages” such as

⁴ Ibid, 114-115.

⁵ “Beauharnois and Hocquart to the Minister,” November 2, 1730, *WHC* 17: 109-112.

⁶ For a full account of these wars, see Edmunds and Peyser, *The Fox Wars*.

these during the warm months. They sustained themselves with vegetables like corn, beans, and squash as well as with meat from deer, ducks, and wild turkeys. During the winter, they divided into smaller kinship bands and built temporary settlements in the forests. While there, they subsisted on wild game as well as food harvested and saved from the summer.⁷

In Fox society, power was disseminated in a decentralized manner. Each village had war chiefs, usually chosen from the Wahgohagi (Fox) clan.⁸ These leaders were successful warriors whose deeds had earned them a following. As the title suggests, these chiefs only served during wartime. Most often, village and peace chiefs bore the mantle of leadership, serving as advisors and mediators.⁹

Conflicts between Foxes and their Indian neighbors occurred throughout the 17th century. For example, they battled with groups like the Ojibwes and the Sioux over hunting lands. Around 1680 warriors from these nations joined forces and assaulted Foxes in east-central Wisconsin, killing at least fifty and taking several children captive. The Foxes retaliated by attacking the Ojibwe in Michilimackinac. During the battle, they decapitated several warriors and took fourteen women and children hostage. Even after the Great Peace of Montreal in 1701, the Fox nation's relationships with their Indian neighbors remained tense.¹⁰ This prolonged period of conflict caused Fox war chiefs to

⁷ Edmunds and Peyser, 9-10, 33-36, and 61.

⁸ By the early 1700s, the Fox tribe contained at least eight patrilineal clans. Among them were the large and influential Mucqua (Bear) and Wahgohagi (Fox) clans. The smaller and less powerful clans were the Neneemekee (Thunder People), the Mowhay (Wolf), the Pukkee (Partridge), the Ahawuck (Swan), the Meshaway (Elk), and the Ashegunuck (Bass). Edmunds and Peyser, 48-49.

⁹ Edmunds and Peyser, 48-52.

¹⁰ For a detailed account of this important treaty, see Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal*.

remain in power. Simultaneously, the Kiyagamohag, a warriors' society composed of young and eager men, grew in influence. As a result, the actions of the Foxes became increasingly pugnacious throughout the 18th century.¹¹

The Fox tribe originally encountered the French via the Jesuits. Father Claude Allouez founded the mission of St. Marc in 1670 at the Fox village of Ouestatimong. Initially, Foxes absorbed the symbols of the Catholic religion. Warriors "marked their shields with this adorable sign [the cross]; every morning and evening they made it on themselves, without fail; and on meeting the enemy, the first thing they did was to make the sign of the Cross, after which they gave battle so confidently that they happily won the victory."¹² Foxes also incorporated Catholic practices, like fasting during Lent, into their own traditions. They hoped that embracing the spiritual power of Catholicism would imbue them with strength to defeat their enemies. When this "medicine" did not protect them from an epidemic that ravaged their population from 1675 until 1676, Foxes lost confidence in Catholicism's power. This created an early sense of distrust among them towards the French.¹³

The Fox nation's early trade interactions with the French worsened their relationship. As French goods filtered into the *pays d'en haut* in the 17th century, the Foxes became increasingly dependent upon them. Items like muskets, lead, and powder became essential for warfare, particularly since their enemy tribes possessed them. Also, brass pots and kettles as well as hatchets and knives became necessary tools. In exchange

¹¹ Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 4-5; Edmunds and Peyser, 9-22, 48-52; Brett Rushforth, "Slavery, the Fox Wars, and the Limits of Alliance," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2006): 53-80.

¹² Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 56:145.

¹³ Edmunds and Peyser, 8-16.

for these goods, the Foxes, like other groups, traded beaver and other animal furs. However, French traders rarely journeyed to Fox villages. Instead, they devoted their energies towards groups like the Potawatomi, with whom they had already established close ties. When traders did visit the Foxes, they often overcharged them for goods, creating tensions that stunted trade relations. These experiences further distanced the Foxes from the French.¹⁴

The Foxes were disliked, but they were also respected. According to a French observer in 1730, Fox warriors were “[f]eared by all nations for their valor and speed, capable of going 25 to 30 leagues [60 to 72 miles] a day without any food other than plants and leaves from the woods.” The observer continued that “[e]ver since they have been at war with the French, almost all the nations have been doing their hair Fox-style. If they have a shirt, they wear it as a breechcloth when they have to fight.”¹⁵ These assertions, though probably exaggerated, show that the Foxes were held in awe by their enemies.

In 1710 Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac invited Foxes, Sacs, Kickapoos, and the Mascoutens to settle in Michigan. Two Fox villages, led by Makkathemangoua, Oninetonam, Lalima, and Pemoussa, accepted Cadillac’s offer. One village camped at the St. Joseph and Grand Rivers in western Michigan while the other settled in Detroit. Cadillac founded the French settlement at Detroit in 1701, initially bringing with him about 200 French and Indian migrants. After initially expressing resistance to the idea, tribes like the Ottawa, the Huron, and the Miami eventually moved to the area. As

¹⁴ Edmunds and Peyser, 44-49.

¹⁵ Edmunds and Peyser, 124.

Cadillac planned, the settlement of all of these groups helped to make Detroit a center of the fur trade.¹⁶

Trouble began almost immediately after the Foxes relocated to Michigan. Firstly, Cadillac was reassigned to a post in Louisiana and was replaced by Jacques-Charles Renaud Dubuisson, no friend to the Fox tribe. Next, Foxes at the St. Joseph and Grand Rivers started to quarrel with the Illinois, yet another one of their bitter rivals. Meanwhile, the Foxes at Detroit, led by Makkathemangoua and Oninetonam, antagonized French settlers by stealing their livestock. Some Foxes at Detroit even bragged that they planned to trade with the British. By 1711, Governor Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil recognized that the situation was deteriorating. He held a meeting in Montreal for Fox, Kickapoo, and Mascouten leaders. Vaudreuil urged the Foxes to abandon Michigan and return to Wisconsin. They turned a deaf ear to this request. Back in Detroit, Makkathemangoua and Oninetonam continued to goad the French by claiming that they had close ties with the British. In 1712, however, they became weary of the situation and led some of their followers to live among the Senecas.¹⁷

The Battle of Detroit, the opening action in the Fox Wars, began shortly after Lalima and Pemoussa replaced Makkathemangoua and Oninetonam at Detroit in April 1712. The two Fox leaders built an encampment near Fort Pontchartrain and began antagonizing French settlers as well as nearby Ottawas and Hurons. A group of

¹⁶ “1701: Cadillac’s Detroit Colony; Approved by Jesuits,” *WHC* 16: 204-206; “1703: The Hurons refuse to go to Detroit,” *WHC* 16: 217-218; “1703: Importance of Post at Detroit,” *WHC* 16: 218-219; “1703: Conference of Indian Envoys with Governor Vaudreuil,” *WHC* 16: 221-227; Edmunds and Peyser, 54-62.

¹⁷ “Official Report, made by the commanding officer, Mr. Dubuisson, to the Governor General of Canada, of the war which took place at Detroit, in 1712, between the French and their allies, and the Ottagamie and Mascouten Indians,” June 15, 1712, *WHC* 16: 267-287; William A. Hunter, “Refugee Fox Settlements among the Seneca,” *Ethnohistory* 3 (Winter 1956): 11-20; Edmunds and Peyser, 62-65.

Mascoutens from the St. Joseph River, fleeing from an attack led by the Ottawa chief Saguima, soon joined them. Convinced that the French had aided the Ottawas in the assault, the Foxes and Mascoutens laid siege to Fort Pontchartrain.¹⁸

Dubuisson, with only thirty French soldiers to defend the fort, quickly sent for help. In mid-May, he welcomed Jean-Baptiste Bissot, sieur de Vincennes and his reinforcements, a mere seven French traders. The roughly 600 Indians who arrived shortly thereafter saved the French from disaster. Led by Saguima, these warriors included Ottawas, Hurons, Potawatomis, and Illinois who “feared and hated” the Foxes because of their “arrogance.”¹⁹ Initially, Dubuisson and Vincennes seemed to favor an accommodation with their assailants. However, the Hurons particularly considered it “absolutely necessary to destroy them, and to extinguish their fire.”²⁰ The French acquiesced to their allies and their combined forces began to lay siege to the Fox villages. Two weeks of fighting and failed attempts at peacemaking passed. On May 30, while their enemies had taken refuge from a violent thunderstorm, Pemoussa led Fox and Mascouten men, women, and children away from Detroit under cover of darkness. However, the French and their Indian allies overtook them and forced them to surrender. Then, they took the Fox and Mascouten women and children as captives.²¹

¹⁸ “Dubuisson, to the Governor General of Canada,” June 15, 1712, *WHC* 16: 267-287; Edmunds and Peyser, 65-75.

¹⁹ “Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, translated from *Collection de Manuscrits relative à la Nouvelle France*,” *WHC* 16: 293.

²⁰ “Dubuisson, to the Governor General of Canada,” June 15, 1712, *WHC* 16: 271.

²¹ Edmunds and Peyser, 69-75; “Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, translated from *Collection de Manuscrits relative à la Nouvelle France*,” *WHC* 16: 295; “Extracts from letter of Vaudreuil and Bégon to the Minister,” November 15, 1713, *WHC* 16: 298.

Dubuisson had expended significant effort to maintain the favor of his allies during the Battle of Detroit. According to Dubuisson's records, he had equipped his allies with powder, balls, flints, and butcher-knives. In a show of respect for their war rituals, he also provided them with three pounds of vermilion to use as war-paint. He also gave them sixty pounds of corn for their subsistence. Dubuisson also listed certain items that he gave his allies specifically to maintain their support. He cited, "5 guns to give to five chiefs, in order to attach them to the interests of Mr. Dubuisson." He also supplied blankets, shirts, and leggings to "certain principal Indians" who died in action. Lastly, Dubuisson purchased "100 lbs tobacco to be ready to be given to the Indians at all times." Clearly, Dubuisson recognized the necessity of maintaining his Indian allies. His efforts proved worthwhile, for his allies secured his victory against the Foxes.²²

After the Battle of Detroit, Pemoussa and some of the Fox warriors escaped their conquerors and informed their kinsmen in Wisconsin about what had occurred. Over the next few years, the Foxes periodically attacked French traders and their Indian enemies in retaliation. This constant warfare terrified the residents of the *pays d'en haut* and impeded the fur trade. Groups like the Ottawas and the Hurons pushed the French to launch a campaign against the Foxes, whom they still considered a threat. The French recognized that their standing among their allies was at stake. If they failed to act, they might lose the respect and support of these vital friends.²³

²² "Official Report, made by the commanding officer, Mr. Dubuisson, to the Governor General of Canada, of the war which took place at Detroit, in 1712, between the French and their allies, and the Ottagamie and Mascoutins Indians," June 15, 1712 and October 14, 1712, *WHC* 16: 287-288.

²³ "Extract of letters from Ramezay and Bégon to French Minister," October 23, 1714 and November 12, 1714, *WHC* 16: 310-311; "Proceedings in French Council of Marine," March 28, 1716, *WHC* 16: 338-340; Edmunds and Peyser, 75-77.

To allay their allies' fears, the French supported another attack on the Foxes. In the summer of 1716, Louis de La Porte de Louvigny led a party of over 800 merchants, traders, and allied Indians towards Wisconsin. The Foxes, still led by Pemoussa, were then camped at a fortified village on Big Lake Butte des Morts, near the Fox River. After four days of fighting, the Foxes negotiated a cease-fire with Louvigny, much to his Indian allies' displeasure. The Foxes agreed to make peace with French-allied Indians and to support the fur trade.²⁴ To appease his Indian allies, Louvigny included a provision in the agreement that required the Foxes to "go to war in distant regions to get slaves, to replace all the dead who had been slain during the course of the war."²⁵ Presumably, these allies planned to either adopt these slaves or ritually kill them. The Foxes agreed to the terms, but for the next decade, young warriors continually disregarded the advice of elders like Ouachala and sporadically assaulted their enemies anyway. Governor Beauharnois became convinced that the Foxes again needed to be subdued.²⁶

The second stage of the Fox Wars began in 1727, the year that the French established the Sioux Post. That summer two Jesuits, including Father Michel Guignas, as well as several traders traveled through Fox lands to reach Sioux territory. The Sioux, eager to gain easier access to French trade, allowed them to build Fort Beauharnois on their hunting grounds near Lake Pepin. Pierre Boucher, sieur de Boucherville served as

²⁴ "Letter of Governor de Vaudreuil to Council of Marine," October 14, 1716, *WHC* 16: 341-344; Edmunds and Peyser, 78-86.

²⁵ "Letter of Governor de Vaudreuil to Council of Marine," October 14, 1716, *WHC* 16: 343.

²⁶ "Speeches of the Foxes at a Council held at the house of Monsieur de Montigny, in the presence of the missionary," September 6, 1722, *WHC* 16: 418-422; "Part of a letter written by Vaudreuil to the commandant Boisbriant," May 20, 1724, *WHC* 16: 441; "Letters from Du Tisé," January 14, 1725, *WHC* 16: 450-451; "Letter of Beauharnois and Dupuy to the Minister," October 25, 1727, *WHC* 16: 476-477; "Letter of Governor Vaudreuil to Council," October 22, 1720, *WHC* 16: 393.

the commandant for the Sioux Post. In September of 1728, Boucherville received word about the failure of Constant Marchand de Lignery's failed but destructive campaign against the Foxes that summer.²⁷ Concerned that the Foxes would retaliate and that the Sioux would not protect them, Boucherville led Father Guignas and several traders away from Fort Beauharnois. They reached as far as eastern Iowa before a band of Kickapoos and Mascoutens intercepted them. These warriors took the French as captives to a Kickapoo village, but did them no harm. The Kickapoos hoped that keeping the French among them for the winter would prevent an attack by French-allied Indians.²⁸

The Foxes soon complicated the situation. In November, ten Fox warriors, led by the war chief Kansekoe, arrived in the Kickapoo village. They demanded the release of the French captives to them. In order to prevent the Kickapoos from acquiescing, Boucherville, "won the young men by a barrel of powder, 2 blankets, 2 pounds of vermilion, and other presents."²⁹ Kansekoe responded by convincing Pechicamengoa, a Kickapoo war chief with kinship ties to the Fox tribe, to kill Father Guignas. The plot failed and the Kickapoos increased their safeguards for the French. Eventually, Boucherville and the Kickapoos gave Kansekoe presents to compensate for the losses the Foxes had suffered from Lignery's campaign in 1728. Kansekoe departed, but thirty other Foxes came soon after also seeking reparations. The Kickapoos still refused to hand over the French and the travelers departed in anger. After sojourning for three days, these

²⁷ For a full account of this expedition, see "Lignery to Beauharnois, being the official report of his expedition," August 30, 1728, *WHC* 17: 31-35.

²⁸ "Memorandum about the Sioux," April 27, 1729, *WHC* 17: 7-9; "Articles of the trading company for the post among the Sioux," June 6, 1727, *WHC* 17: 10-15; Edmunds and Peyser, 119-122.

²⁹ "Narrative of de Boucherville," *WHC* 17: 43.

Foxes came across one Kickapoo and one Mascouten who were hunting. Unadvisedly, the thirty Fox warriors killed the two men and brought their scalps back to their village.³⁰

The Kickapoos and Mascoutens were shocked and confused by the Foxes' behavior. Not only had they intermarried with the Fox tribe, but they had also fought alongside them on numerous occasions. Fox elders desperately attempted to repair the damage done by their "foolish young men." After considering their options, the aggrieved Kickapoos and Mascoutens decided to send Boucherville and an emissary to the Illinois, a group with whom they had been warring since 1718. The Illinois, eager to strike at the Foxes, treated their guests with exceptional hospitality. They pledged that "we will help you to avenge your dead."³¹ Boucherville sent a message from the Kickapoos and the Mascoutens to Charles Henri Desliettes de Tonty, the commandant at Fort de Chartes in the Illinois Country. In a significant defection, the Kickapoos and Mascoutens asked Desliettes to send Frenchmen to aid them against the Foxes. Desliettes expressed solidarity with their cause and encouraged them to avenge themselves, saying "[y]ou may rest assured that that wicked nation can live no longer. The King wishes their death."³² Losing the friendship of the Kickapoos and the Mascoutens would prove devastating to the Fox tribe.³³

After the Kickapoo and Mascouten defection, various other groups agreed that the time had come for one final action against the Foxes. In May 1729, Beauharnois assured the French minister of the marine that the Kickapoos and Mascoutens had definitely

³⁰ "Narrative of de Boucherville," *WHC* 17: 47; Edmunds and Peyser, 122-125.

³¹ "Narrative of de Boucherville," *WHC* 17: 49.

³² "Narrative of de Boucherville," *WHC* 17: 50.

³³ "Narrative of de Boucherville," *WHC* 17: 50; Edmunds and Peyser, 126-127.

turned their backs on the Foxes. He contended that they were prepared to go to battle against them, but they were not alone. That year, an entire delegation of Upper Country Indians had gathered in Montreal to discuss the situation with Beauharnois: Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Hurons came from Detroit; Potawatomis and Sakis came from St. Joseph; Miamis, Nipissings, and additional groups came from other areas in the *pays d'en haut*. According to Beauharnois, they were all prepared to wage war against the Foxes. Some older Fox chiefs, recognizing their dire situation, attempted to make peace with the French. They traveled to St. Joseph, met with Commandant Nicolas Antoine Coulon de Villiers Sr., and convinced him of their “docility.” Their enemies were not swayed and a band of Ottawas, Ojibwes, Winnebagos, and Menominees attacked a Fox village, killing at least 100. Fox warriors retaliated, laying siege to a Winnebago village. Paul Marin de la Malgue, a military officer stationed in the region, rushed to the Winnebagos’ aid. The Foxes, accepting defeat after a month-long siege, escaped during the night of March 24, 1730. They were running out of options.³⁴

In the summer of 1730, the Foxes took one of the only steps that remained to them and they abandoned Wisconsin altogether. Their enemies easily outnumbered their friends and it was only a matter of time before they would have to surrender. The Foxes preferred to leave their homes rather than live under such conditions. In early June, after the Sioux and the Iowas refused them refuge, they sent emissaries to the Senecas. They requested to settle on their lands, 800 miles away in upstate New York. The Foxes had good reason to expect the Senecas to agree. They had maintained relations with the tribe

³⁴ “Letters of Beauharnois to the French Minister,” May 16 and May 19, 1729, *WHC* 17: 60-61; “Letter from Beauharnois to the French Minister,” July 21, 1729, *WHC* 17: 62-64; “Letter from Beauharnois to the French Minister,” October 12, 1729, *WHC* 17: 81; Edmunds and Peyser, 127-134.

since at least the late 17th century.³⁵ Also, shortly before the siege of Detroit in 1712, the Senecas had provided sanctuary to the Fox leaders Makkathemangoua and Oninetonam and some of their followers. In this case, however, the Seneca seemed reluctant to incite French ire. Nevertheless, the Foxes retained the impression that they would be welcomed among them. They decided to head southward into Illinois, turn east, and then proceed towards New York.³⁶

The Foxes left their villages in early June. Their party consisted of 300 warriors and 600 women and children. About 300 women, children, and elderly people remained in Wisconsin under the leadership of the chief Kiala. As the migrating group journeyed through Illinois County, an Illinois hunting party happened upon them and a skirmish ensued. News of the Fox migration spread in Illinois and then throughout the Upper Country. Potawatomis, Mascoutens, and Kickapoos rushed to the fray. The animosity between the groups was evident after their first action against each other: “The renards [Foxes] cried out to the quiquapoux [Kickapoo] And the Mascouten that they would make their Supper off them, but mandiché, the great chief of The poux [Potawatomi] replied to them that it was they who would Serve as food for all the tribes.”³⁷ By these violent words, each side hoped to intimidate and horrify its enemy. The situation became even more dangerous when the French and their Indian allies arrived.³⁸

³⁵ In 1718, Cadillac remarked that “[The Foxes] do not war against the Iroquois. On the contrary there is some sort of alliance between them.” See “1718: Description of Michilimackinac; Indian Tribes of that Region, Relation of Sieur de Lamothe Cadillac,” *WHC* 16: 360-361.

³⁶ Hunter, “Refugee Fox Settlements among the Seneca,” 11-20; Edmunds and Peyser, 15, 65 and 133-136.

³⁷ Letter of commandant at Detroit to Beauharnois, August 22, 1730, *WHC* 17: 101.

³⁸ Edmunds and Peyser, 136-144, and 159; “Letter of commandant at Detroit to Beauharnois,” August 22, 1730, *WHC* 17: 100.

Nicolas Coulon de Villiers in the Fox Wars

On August 10, 1730, as was previously mentioned, Nicolas and a body of 300 Sac, Potawatomi, Miami, Kickapoo, Mascouten, and French fighters departed St. Joseph. Nicolas had been cultivating relationships with his native allies since 1725. His diplomatic efforts helped him to build this military coalition.³⁹ Roughly a week after leaving St. Joseph, they all reached the battle site on the Illinois Grand Prairie. Robert Groston de St. Ange, the commander at Illinois, arrived on the same day, bringing with him a force of about 500 French and Illinois soldiers and warriors. On August 17, a band of twenty-eight French and 400 Weas and Piankashaws arrived, led by the seasoned trader Simon Réaume.⁴⁰

Nicolas and the 300 men who accompanied him busied themselves by undermining the Foxes' defenses. The Foxes had constructed a makeshift fort in a small grove of trees on the bank of a river. Nicolas related that "I camped, with my savages and the Frenchmen who had joined me, on the right side of their fort, where I erected two others, with a Cavalier in each to beat them back into their own And prevent them from descending into the ditches they had outside."⁴¹ Nicolas also had a trench constructed close to the enemy's fort. This so alarmed the Foxes that "[a]s soon as they saw that the earth was being excavated, a shower of gun-shots fell in good fashion."⁴² Additionally, Nicolas attempted to set fire to the Fox fort, but was apparently unsuccessful. He and his

³⁹ Refer to Chapter 2.

⁴⁰ "Villiers to Beauharnois," September 23, 1730, *WHC* 17: 114-117; Edmunds and Peyser, 144-146.

⁴¹ "Villiers to Beauharnois," September 23, 1730, *WHC* 17: 115.

⁴² *Ibid*, 115.

men, along with the various other French soldiers and Indians warriors present, laid siege to the Foxes for twenty-three days.⁴³

During the siege, certain Indians ignored the desires of French military officials in order to serve their own interests. For example, several Weas developed a plan to meet with an ally they had in the Fox camp. They explained to Nicolas that a visit to this man would give them an opportunity to free some Illinois captives. Nicolas agreed to the plan on the condition that “I should see no other meat Come out of that village than my own.”⁴⁴ Nicolas knew that restoring the captives would please the Illinois warriors; in turn, this would strengthen their alliance with the French. To Nicolas’ chagrin, the Weas’ Fox ally exited the village rather than the Illinois captives. This ally brought with him four slaves and a wampum belt on behalf of the Foxes.⁴⁵ Nicolas, irked that the Weas had disregarded his orders, refused to listen to their ally. Undaunted, the Fox man continued to visit the commandant and eventually brought him the “Illinois flesh” he desired. The Weas had blatantly ignored Nicolas’ wishes, apparently still hoping for a peaceful solution to the situation. Perhaps, their ally was not the only Fox whom they knew. They might have had kinship ties to other in the camp and were trying to protect them. Either way, their actions showed that French-allied Indians pursued their own motives.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ibid, 114-117; Edmunds and Peyser, 144-146.

⁴⁴ “Villiers to Beauharnois,” September 23, 1730, *WHC* 17: 116.

⁴⁵ For more on the ceremonial significance of slaves, see Chapter 4.

⁴⁶ Nicolas also experienced recalcitrance from the Sacs who snuck food to the Foxes, compelling him to fire upon them. “Villiers to Beauharnois,” September 23, 1730, *WHC* 17: 116.

At times during the siege, Nicolas and his allies also disagreed about the best way to destroy the Foxes. Several of the allied tribes proposed an “act of treachery” to the commandant:

Their design was that I should promise [the Foxes] their lives, that I should make them come out And that they would fall on them. It was in nowise their intention to do so; their only object was to secure captives. I opposed this, seeing that it could only result in sparing the lives of those wretches, who would undoubtedly Continue on their way to The iroquois.⁴⁷

Nicolas’ experiences as a commandant taught him that Indians placed tremendous importance upon taking captives. Possessing captives was how young warriors earned respect and how native societies replaced deceased family members. Since there was a demand for Indian slave labor among the French, taking captives was also profitable. According to Nicolas, some of his allies cared more for attaining captives than destroying the Foxes. What he seemed to miss was that in his allies’ eyes, taking them as captives was equivalent to destroying them. Nicolas, however, considered physical annihilation the best method for obliterating the tribe.⁴⁸

The Foxes tried to compel Nicolas to negotiate. They continually visited his camp, trying to reach an accord. Even when they brought him wampum and showed him their children, who were probably hungry and sick, he remained unmoved. In his words, “although they had been pale, I made them turn as if painted red, by telling them that all their words were in vain....” He warned them to “not come back again.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid, 116.

⁴⁸ Brett Rushforth, “A Little Flesh We Offer You”: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60 (2003): 780-785; Rushforth, “Slavery, the Fox Wars, and the Limits of Alliance, 53-80.

The stalemate finally ended on September 9. The previous day, a violent rainstorm had pummeled the Prairie. The Foxes knew that the storm would slow down their enemies, so under cover of darkness they stole out of their fort. The next day Nicolas, helping to lead the French and Indian forces, attacked the fleeing Foxes. The ensuing battle was brief, for the Foxes were hopelessly outnumbered. Over 200 Fox warriors and about 300 Fox women and children died in the conflict. These figures are sobering considering that the Foxes had begun their exodus with 300 men and 600 women and children. Perhaps fifty warriors escaped the massacre and the remaining men, women, and children became prisoners and slaves.⁵⁰

Nicolas received accolades for his triumph. Beauharnois and Intendant Gilles Hocquart wrote to the French minister of the marine on November 2, 1730 regarding the victory. They called the battle, “a brilliant action, which sheds great honor on Sieur de Villiers, who, through it, may flatter himself as having...the honor of your protection in the promotion which is to take place.”⁵¹ Nicolas received this “promotion,” which was a captaincy, in April 1733.⁵² King Louis XV and the Minister were also elated with Nicolas’ accomplishment. They declared that “[n]othing can add to the Satisfaction felt by His Majesty on receiving the confirmation of the news of the almost Total defeat of the Renards...by the detachment Under the Command of the Sieur de Villiers and of the

⁴⁹ Nicolas probably learned this phrase, “painted red,” from his native allies. It might refer to peace and war colors. The Fox came to him in a peace color, but he turned them away as if they were painted for war. Villiers to Beauharnois, September 23, 1730, *WHC* 17: 116.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 116-117; Edmunds and Peyser, 149-157.

⁵¹ “Beauharnois and Hocquart to the Minister,” November 2, 1730, *WHC* 5: 107-108.

⁵² *DCB*, “Nicolas Coulon de Villiers,” vol. 2, 156.

Sieur de St. Ange.”⁵³ Missing from these assessments was an acknowledgment that Nicolas’ Indian allies had played a crucial role in the victory. By sheer force of numbers, they had helped to overwhelm the Foxes; it is improbable that the French could have won without them.⁵⁴

Although the Foxes were defeated, Louis XV sought to ensure their complete destruction. In his 1732 instructions to Beauharnois and Hocquart, the King expressed his desire that the tribe would never again “trouble the Colony.” The best way to ensure that outcome was to “disperse those who remain among the other Nations.”⁵⁵ He reiterated his desire to further reduce the Foxes in his 1733 Memoir.⁵⁶ Beauharnois wholeheartedly took up this charge. In July 1733, he reported to the French Minister that he had just met with Captain Coulon de Villiers in Montreal. Nicolas had brought four Foxes, including Kiala, to the city. Beauharnois had then given him orders to return to Green Bay, find all remaining Foxes, and bring them back to Montreal. With alarming zeal, he gave Nicolas these harrowing instructions: “If that Wretched Remnant will not obey...kill Them without thinking of making a single Prisoner, so as not to leave one of the race alive in the upper Country If possible.”⁵⁷ Beauharnois planned to send the refugees to France and then distribute them in the French islands, probably as slaves.⁵⁸

⁵³ “1732: The King’s Memoir,” April 22, 1732, *WHC* 17: 154-155.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 156.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 155.

⁵⁶ “1733: Memoir of the King,” May 12, 1733, *WHC* 17: 177.

⁵⁷ “Beauharnois to the French Minister,” July 1, 1733, *WHC* 17: 183.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 182.

In September 1733, Nicolas Sr. set out to fulfill his orders. This time, his expedition would end in disaster. He gathered a force of Ottawa, Ojibwe, and Menominee warriors in Michilimackinac. Together, they headed to the fortified Sac village in Green Bay where the Fox refugees were living. Nicolas Jr., along with two of his brothers, accompanied his father on this expedition. Nicolas Sr. sent Nicolas Jr. with a party of ten Frenchmen and fifty Indians, to the other side of the village. He was to prevent the Sacs from retreating up the Fox River. What happened next forever changed the Coulon de Villiers family:⁵⁹

When Monsieur De Villiers arrived at the Door of the fort he asked the Sakis for the Renards. He found there some armed Sakis who told him to withdraw, And when he tried to enter a Savage approached Him with uplifted Tomahawk and at The same moment three gun-shots were fired, one of which killed one of the Sieur De Villiers' sons at his side.⁶⁰

The anguished father shot back. In the midst of the fire fight, a twelve-year-old Sac boy named Makautapenase set his sights on the Captain. He took aim and shot Nicolas in the heart, killing him. In the course of one brief assault, the Coulon de Villiers family patriarch and one of his sons, whose name remains unknown, perished.⁶¹

Beauharnois sought revenge after this incident. He continued to persecute leaders like Kiala, whom he eventually sold into slavery. The remaining Foxes continued to suffer hardships. Their population was small and, over the next several years, they still faced conflict from the French and their Indian enemies. Through their torment, they forged a strong bond with the Sac tribe. By 1750, both groups were living together on the

⁵⁹ Edmunds and Peyser, 176-178.

⁶⁰ "Beauharnois and Hocquart to the French Minister," November 11, 1733, *WHC* 17: 189.

⁶¹ Edmunds and Peyser, 177-178.

lower Rock River. The Fox Wars had ended, and the ever resilient Foxes had managed to survive.⁶²

The actions of the French during the Fox Wars dispel the myth of them as “benign colonizers.” As the previous chapters have shown, the French developed relationships with groups like the Mohawks and the Potawatomis at Jesuit missions and at military posts. Intermarriage was also a typical occurrence, particularly between Indian women and French men. As a result, scholars have often characterized the French as kinder, gentler colonizers than their British counterparts. Edward Watts even contended that the French, unlike the British, were “white people who refused to rule the ‘lower’ races [Indians].”⁶³ The evidence of the Fox Wars, however, paints a different picture. French leaders, from the king to the commandant, advocated for the “extermination” of the Fox tribe. The massacre in 1730 brought them close to this goal. This shows that the French could behave as ruthlessly towards their Indian enemies as any of their European counterparts.

Part 2: The Battle of Grand Pré, 1747

Today in the town of Grand Pré, located in Kings County, Nova Scotia (formerly Acadia), there stands a stone monument. This monument, entitled, “The Attack at Grand Pré,” commemorates the battle in 1747. Two plaques, one written in French and the other in English, explain the event:

⁶² Edmunds and Peyser, 169 and 180-200.

⁶³ Watts, 12.

On February 11, 1747, Grand Pré was the scene of a surprise attack on Col. Arthur Noble's detachment of British Troops from Massachusetts who were billeted in the houses of the inhabitants. A French and Indian force under Coulon de Villiers broke into British quarters at 3 A.M. during a blinding snowstorm, and in the close fighting, Noble and about 70 of his men were killed. On the 12th the British capitulated on the condition that they be allowed to return to Annapolis Royal. The French departed soon after; and the British resumed their uneasy possession of mainland Nova Scotia.⁶⁴

This monument speaks of Captain Nicolas Coulon de Villiers Jr. as well as the British commanders. It frames the battle as a tragedy for the British, worthy of remembering. However, there is no monument for nor is there more than a cursory mention of the Mi'kmaq who participated in this battle. They too fought and died in this conflict and yet their contributions remain ignored. This section demonstrates their role in the Battle of Grand Pré and shows what this encounter meant from their perspective.

The Battle of Grand Pré in 1747 serves as a significant example of co-operation between native groups and the French. As they had during the Fox Wars, the French sought out Indian allies and benefitted from their presence. For this battle, which occurred in Acadia during King George's War, Mi'kmaq warriors joined with Captain Nicolas Antoine Coulon de Villiers, Jr. to fight against the British. They were enraged at the British for stealing their lands and readily accepted the opportunity to strike at this enemy. Meanwhile, the French wanted to regain the control in Acadia that they had lost to the British in 1710. The action commenced on February 11, 1747 and concluded with a French and Mi'kmaq victory. These allies had succeeded in weakening their mutual foe.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Grand Pre 1747 Monument, "Attack at Grand Pre, 11 February 1747, 2007, 260th Anniversary: Photographs of Monument," <<http://www.ns1763.ca/kingsco/attack1747.html>> Accessed February 3, 2011.

The Mi'kmaq/French coalition at the Battle of Grand Pré was based upon mutual interest.⁶⁶ The Mi'kmaq did not ally with the French out of blind loyalty, but rather to further their own objectives. From the perspective of this native group, they were not fighting for the French in King George's War. Rather, they were fighting for themselves in a war for their survival.

Foundations of the Mi'kmaq/French Relationship

The Mi'kmaq have lived in Acadia, present-day Nova Scotia, for 10,000 years. Long before contact with Europeans, they had organized their territory into seven districts: Kespukwitk, Sipekne'katik, Eskikewa'kikx, Unama'kik, Epekwitk Aqq Piktuk, Siknikt, and Kespek. Each district possessed a chief and a council of elders. These district governments could "make war or peace, settle disputes, and apportion hunting and fishing areas to families."⁶⁷ The seven district chiefs formed the "Grand Council," a body whose primary role was to mediate disputes. The seven chiefs selected from among themselves a "Grand Chief" who always resided in the head district of Unama'kik (Île Royale). Each district possessed villages of varying sizes, anywhere from 50 to 500 people.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Collection de Documents Inédits sur le Canada et L'Amérique, Publiés par le Canada-Français*, vol. 2 (Quebec: L.-J. Demers & Frère, 1889), 11; O'Callaghan, 91-93; "Boston, March 2," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 16 March 1747; DCB, "Nicolas Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3, 149-150.

⁶⁶ Past scholarship has taken for granted that Indians simply fought alongside Europeans during the Colonial Period. However, the "new Indian history" examines native motives. In the 1970s and 1980s scholars like Francis Jennings, Neal Salisbury, and William Cronon helped to create the "new Indian history."

⁶⁷ Daniel N. Paul, *We Were Not the Savages: A Micmac Perspective on the Collision of European and Aboriginal Civilizations* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1993), 5.

The Mi'kmaq ordered their lives according to the seasons. In the summer, they established villages along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, the Bay of Fundy, and the St. Lawrence River. They sustained themselves in these villages by fishing. In the winter, they broke into smaller hunting bands and subsisted on wild game. While the men held responsibility for fishing and hunting, women and children prepared the food and farmed.⁶⁹

The French entered the Mi'kmaq world in the 16th century. Since at least the 1560s, Frenchmen had fished along the coasts of the Acadian peninsula and Île Royale. From spring to fall, Frenchmen caught quantities of cod at sites like Canso. They, along with other Europeans, set up “fish-drying camps” where they prepared their catches for transport back to Europe. While settled at these camps, they interacted with Mi'kmaq communities and began trading with them for beaver, otter, marten, seal, moose, and deer fur. Back in Europe, these furs were converted into waterproof coats and hats. As demand for furs increased, the French began to send expeditions specifically to attain these valuable commodities.⁷⁰

The first permanent settlement that the French established in Acadia was Port Royal in 1606. They built their post near a Mi'kmaq community of several hundred people. The *sagamore*, or leader, of this group was Membertou. Membertou, recognizing the value of French trade goods, behaved amiably towards the newcomers. He and his

⁶⁸ Paul, 5-7; William C. Sturtevant, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 110.

⁶⁹ Paul, 13-14 and 23; Sturtevant, 109-117.

⁷⁰ Marcel Trudel, *The Beginnings of New France, 1524-1663* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973), 56-57, and 86; John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 1-13.

people, as well as Mi'kmaq from other regions, began to supply furs to the French in exchange for goods like copper kettles, awls, knives, and hatchets as well as cloaks and blankets.⁷¹

Disease became a devastating consequence of Mi'kmaq interactions with the French. In both the 16th and 17th centuries, illnesses like smallpox and cholera decimated Mi'kmaq communities. By 1700, disease had reduced the Mi'kmaq population to 2,000, an eighty to ninety percent decline. Nevertheless, the Mi'kmaq continued to trade with and live with French settlers.⁷²

Through their participation in Catholic rituals, the Mi'kmaq and the French settlers, who called themselves Acadians, shared significant social interactions. For example, at St. Jean-Baptiste Church in Port Royal, Acadians frequently participated in Mi'kmaq baptismal ceremonies. In November 1702, a Mi'kmaq couple named Claude and Marie Depeirs baptized their daughter Marguerite. Two Acadians, Jean Chrisostomme Lapinot and Marguerite Landry served as the child's godparents.⁷³ In April 1727, a one year-old Mi'kmaq girl named Marie was baptized. Her father Jean Baptiste, referred to as a chief at Cape Sable, and her mother Magdelaine chose a diverse pair of godparents. Jean Kovaret, a Mi'kmaq, and Marie Robichaux served as Marie's godfather and godmother. Robichaux, probably an Acadian, was married to the major surgeon of Annapolis Royal. The fact that couples like Jean Baptiste and Magdelaine traveled from Cape Sable to Annapolis Royal for these ceremonies demonstrates their

⁷¹ Faragher, 1-13.

⁷² Faragher, 13-14.

⁷³ These parish records usually note when an individual is Indian, English, etc. If the records offer no ethnic description of a person, I presume that s/he is Acadian.

significance for the Mi'kmaq. Probably, they incorporated rituals like baptism into their existing belief system and, thereby, gave them importance.⁷⁴

By 1748, the Acadian population had grown to at least 9,150. Primarily, they lived in six parishes: Beaubassin, Port Royal, Pisiquid, Grand Pré, Cobequid, and Rivière aux Canards. Beaubassin was located within the Mi'kmaq district of Sikniqt at a site called Chiquiniktouk. By 1748, the Acadian population there reached 2,500. By comparison, the population in Grand Pré at this time was 1,000. Acadians also lived in missions like Chegekkouk, Maligouèche, Ministiguesch, Cap de Sable, and Tebok.⁷⁵

By the mid 18th century, the Mi'kmaq spent regular intervals at Acadian missions. For example, in 1748 it was reported that 300 to 400 Mi'kmaq regularly gathered at Shubenacadie on All Saints' Day and on Pentecost. This mission, which was founded in 1722 about twelve leagues from Cobequid, was then presided over by l'abbé Le Loutre. Meanwhile, each June the Maligouèche mission, founded in 1724,⁷⁶ hosted 300 to 400 Mi'kmaq. These native people fellowshiped with the twenty Acadian families residing at the site. During August, 200 to 300 Mi'kmaq assembled at the Peaubourcoup (Cap de Sable) mission. They too were joined by twenty Acadian families. Thus at specified times of the year, some Mi'kmaq lived with Acadians. Those who did not live near a mission traveled considerable distances to engage in Catholic ceremonies. For example, on June 26, 1726, two Mi'kmaq named Pierre Chegneau and Marguerite Baptiste traveled from

⁷⁴ Public Archives of Nova Scotia, "An Acadian Parish Remembered: The Registers of St. Jean-Baptiste Annapolis Royal, 1702-1755," <<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/cap/acadian/>> Accessed February 3, 2011.

⁷⁵ *Collection de Documents Inédits sur le Canada et L'Amérique, Publiés par le Canada-Français*, vol. 1 (Quebec: L.-J. Demers & Frère, 1888), 44-47; Paul, 5-7.

⁷⁶ For the founding of the missions, see the maps on the unnumbered opening pages of Plank's work as well as page 19.

Cape Sable to Annapolis Royal to wed at St. Jean Baptiste church. Although they lived with the Acadians, they did not accept all of their neighbors' habits. According to one report, the Mi'kmaq refused to eat bread when they came among the French.⁷⁷

So, by the time of the Battle of Grand Pré, Mi'kmaq communities had been interacting with the French for centuries. First, the French came to Acadia as fishermen, then traders, then settlers. The Mi'kmaq became accustomed to French iron products and textiles and were willing to form relationships with the French in order to attain these goods. Thus, by the 1740s, the dynamics between the Mi'kmaq and the French were well established. The Mi'kmaq had an altogether different relationship with the British, who were less interested in cooperation than the French.

The Mi'kmaq/British Conflict

The British did not gain a foothold in Acadia until the early 18th century. During the previous century, the British had only a fleeting presence on the peninsula. However, in 1710, during the War of Spanish Succession, they conquered Port Royal and renamed it Annapolis Royal. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 ended the war and, from the European perspective, formalized British possession of Acadia, which they renamed Nova Scotia. Mi'kmaq communities and French-speaking Acadians suddenly faced British occupation. Meanwhile, the British faced the quagmire of populating the colony while maintaining peaceful relations with indigenous groups. They realized that they could not attract English-speaking settlers without guaranteeing them land and protection. However, they lacked the military strength to force Indian groups into submission. Thus, for several

⁷⁷ *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol. 1, 46-47; "An Acadian Parish Remembered," <<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/cap/acadian/>>.

years after the conquest, they attempted to both build up the colony and maintain peace. Ultimately, though, they supported British settlements on stolen land at the expense of their relationship with Indians.⁷⁸

An example of the British undermining Indian land claims occurred in 1719. That year, the Board of Trade instructed the new governor of Nova Scotia, Richard Philipps, to enact measures that would incorporate the Mi'kmaq into British society. The Board encouraged him to use "Algonkian diplomacy" which entailed "negotiating and trading with Mi'kmaq bands as groups, thereby respecting Mi'kmaq autonomy."⁷⁹ Philipps failed, primarily because he allowed New England fisherman to build settlements on Mi'kmaq land along the Atlantic coast. The enraged Mi'kmaq battled back in 1722. The conflict came to a tenuous end with two treaties, one signed in Maine in 1725 and the other in Annapolis Royal in 1726. Because these treaties failed to determine territorial boundaries, they set the stage for continued conflict.⁸⁰

Relations between the British and the Mi'kmaq remained strained, partly due to the Indians' affiliation with the French. Colonel L. Armstrong expressed British discomfort over this connection. In late 1725, Armstrong wrote that there were "a great many Missionary Priests who dayly draw over the Indians of the Country to the Romish Religion, and has Inculcated a hatred inexpressible against the English." He further lamented that French governors in other colonies continued furnishing the Indians with "arms and ammunition" as well as other goods. In return, the Indians supplied them with

⁷⁸ Plank, 3-4, 10-13, 19-20, and 40-41.

⁷⁹ Plank, 70.

⁸⁰ Plank, 70 and 79.

furs. The result was to “make those Indians the Instruments of all the Robberys & mischiefs that is Committed against the Subjects of Great Brittain.”⁸¹ Armstrong’s solution to this problem was to build imposing forts that would “Strike such a Terror into the french and Indians that they will not dare to give the Brittish Subjects the least disturbance....”⁸²

Armstrong’s concerns regarding the Mi’kmaq/French relationship were well founded. After they had lost Acadia in 1713, the French had maintained their presence in the region. In 1714, they founded Louisbourg on Île Royale and made the site their new base of operations. From this location they continued to cultivate their bonds with indigenous groups into the 1740s. Missionaries facilitated Indian participation in the various war efforts against the British. In 1743-44, Abbé Le Loutre led Abenaki warriors against Annapolis Royal, killing many and destroying property. In May 1746 Father L’Estage, a Recollet at Restigouche, was ordered, to send the Mi’kmaq at his mission to Beaubassin. From there, the warriors would join with a Canadian detachment. That same month the Duke d’Enville ordered Father Maurice Lacorne to accompany the Mi’kmaq at his Miramichi mission to Beaubassin. They would rendezvous with the Canadian detachment as well. Prior to performing this task, Lacorne had also carried goods to Miramichi, a crucial site where Indians could obtain supplies. French officials considered it essential that their Indian allies be able to purchase goods. They recognized that their relationship with groups like the Mi’kmaq was based upon mutual benefit. If the French failed to provide what their allies required, the relationship would deteriorate. To prevent

⁸¹ *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol. 1, 173.

⁸² *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol. 1, 174.

such a catastrophe, missionaries like Lacorne, in addition to serving as military organizers, also became trade facilitators.⁸³

The bonds between the Mi'kmaq and the French translated into an alliance in King George's War. This conflict lasted from 1744 until 1748 and included the Battle of Grand Pré. The Mi'kmaq had a vested interest in ensuring that the French were victorious. While they had maintained a workable relationship with the French for centuries, they had endured continual antagonism from the British. The British had allowed settlers to move onto their land and showed scant interest in creating social relationships. These experiences demonstrated to the Mi'kmaq that living alongside the French would be preferable to living with the British.⁸⁴

Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts, an active participant in King George's War, viewed the Mi'kmaq as a threat and he devised a plan to counter them. On October 16, 1744 he wrote to the Lords of Trade that he would "give a Bounty of Scalp-money for every Indian of either of those Tribes [Mi'kmaq or Maliseet], that shall be kill'd." He concluded the letter by expressing his hope that this proclamation would "rid the Government of Annapolis Royal of the Cape Sable Indians [Mi'kmaq] at least."⁸⁵ To ensure this outcome, on October 19 Shirley declared war against the "Cape Sable" (Mi'kmaq) and the "St. John's" (Maliseet) Indians. To justify this declaration, he contended that these groups had attacked and killed numerous "English subjects." Most

⁸³ H.H. Miles, *The History of Canada under French Régime, 1535-1763* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1872), 486; Plank, 2; O'Callaghan, 5, 43, and 74.

⁸⁴ Plank, 70.

⁸⁵ Charles Henry Lincoln, ed., *Correspondence of William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts and Military Commander in America, 1731-1760*, vol. 1 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), 151.

treacherously, according to him, they had assisted the French in attacking Annapolis Royal.⁸⁶

Despite Shirley's disturbing proclamation, or perhaps because of it, Mi'kmaq warriors throughout Acadia continued to fight alongside the French. For example, in the summer of 1746 about 200 Mi'kmaq were in Port-la-Joie on Île Saint-Jean. While there they successfully overcame a party of forty to fifty British settlers of whom thirty were soldiers. They killed or made prisoners of the entire group. After commandeering oxen and cattle, they departed. The French officer who had fought with them in this action, M. Croiselle de Montesson, had requested that they remain. However, the Mi'kmaq had already gained their objectives; they had taken captives and gathered provisions. Their decision to depart, despite Montesson's orders, demonstrates their independence. They were allies of the French, not subordinates.⁸⁷

The Mi'kmaq and French Coalition during the Grand Pré Campaign

By 1747, the Mi'kmaq had established a co-operative relationship with the French. They even had a history of fighting together in battle. For them, the Battle at Grand Pré offered them another chance to strike against the British, who were threatening their lands and their lives. The French benefited from the fact that they and the Mi'kmaq shared an enemy. Nicolas Coulon de Villiers gratefully accepted assistance from these allies.

⁸⁶ Samuel G. Drake, ed., *A Particular History of the Five Years French and Indian War in New England and Parts Adjacent, From Its Declaration by the King of France, March 15, 1744, to the Treaty with the Eastern Indians, Oct. 16, 1749, Sometimes Called Governor Shirley's War* (Boston: Samuel G. Drake, 1870), 61-62.

⁸⁷ O'Callaghan, 57.

The story of this battle begins in Beaubassin, miles from Grand Pré. Captain Commandant Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas-Roch de Ramezay and his detachment of Canadian soldiers were camping at this settlement for the winter. In early January 1747, an Acadian named Arceneau informed him that several hundred British had arrived in the Minas region in November. They were camped at Grand Pré and planning to build two blockhouses. Desiring to halt British influence in the region, Ramezay sent a contingent after them. Due to a leg injury he was unable to lead them, so he bestowed the command upon Captain Nicolas Coulon de Villiers.⁸⁸

Many of the French soldiers were ill, so Ramezay recruited Mi'kmaq to join the war party. First, he wrote to Father Lacorne at Miramichi. He asked him to convince the warriors at the mission to again participate in a campaign with the French against the British. Ramezay requested the same of Father Maillard at Shubenacadie and Curé Girard at Cobequid. On January 22, Captain Coulon and the other officers led their detachments to Baye Verte where twenty-six Mi'kmaq and Maliseets soon joined them. Eventually, their party would include sixty of these men.⁸⁹

During the campaign, Captain Coulon's Indian allies readily expressed their opinions regarding his leadership. For example, on January 23, the combined French and Indian forces departed from Baye Verte and began heading towards Grand Pré. The next day, the French soldiers began complaining about marching in the freezing temperatures. Captain Coulon responded to the unrest by halting their march at noon. The Mi'kmaq and Maliseet, annoyed by this indulgence, demanded that the Captain refrain from any further

⁸⁸ O'Callaghan, 89-90; *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol. 2, 58-59.

⁸⁹ It is unclear if these Mi'kmaq and Maliseet came from the missions or if Ramezay recruited them separately. *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol. 2, 11 and 59.

delays in their progress. Clearly, the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet viewed themselves as equal partners with the French in this expedition. Captain Coulon took their opinions seriously and the next day he resumed the march only an hour after sunrise.⁹⁰

On February 10, when the French and Indian party arrived in Pisiquid, Captain Coulon enacted his battle plan. He divided his 250 French and sixty Indian fighters into ten detachments. He placed roughly thirty Mi'kmaq and Maliseet fighters in Cadet Morin's detachment; the other thirty were in Cadet Bailleul's. Captain Coulon led one of the larger detachments of fifty men. He planned that each division would simultaneously attack the houses in which the 500 British troops resided. They marched through the night and, at three o'clock on the morning of February 11, they prepared to strike.⁹¹

As Captain Coulon had planned, all ten detachments attacked the houses where Colonel Arthur Noble's detachment of British troops lay sleeping. These houses were "scattered about a Mile and a Half Distance from one End to the other." The French and Indians surrounded "almost every Officer's Quarters within a few Minutes of the same Time, and after Killing the Sentries, rushing into several of the Houses, and destroy[ed] many in their Beds...." Apparently, the sentries had survived long enough to call the British to arms. Despite this warning, and the ensuing fire-fight, the British could not repel their attackers. The French overtook nine of the ten houses.⁹²

The house that was not taken had been assigned to one of the detachments of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet fighters. Four Mi'kmaq in this division had been either killed or

⁹⁰ *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol. 2, 60,

⁹¹ *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol. 2, 11 and 65; O'Callaghan, 91.

⁹² "Boston, March 2," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 16, 1747.

wounded in the opening exchange of fire. Therefore, their detachment had depleted numbers when they attacked their assigned house. Unlike the other houses, this one was loaded with cannon that, presumably, the British fired at them. These two factors, plus the fact that a cadet rather than an experienced officer led them, prevented the native warriors from completing their task. After they failed to take the house, the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet probably joined the general fray and participated where they could.⁹³

Captain Chevalier de la Corne negotiated a ceasefire at around three o'clock that afternoon. He had taken over duties from Captain Coulon, who had retired after taking a musket ball to his left arm early in the engagement. According to the French, they had killed 130 men, wounded thirty-four, and taken fifty-three prisoners.⁹⁴ They themselves had lost six men, including the two Mi'kmaq who had died in the opening fire. The wounded, who numbered fourteen, included both Captain Coulon and Cadet de Lusignan. The next day, Captain Benjamin Goldthwait, the British Commandant, met with Captain de la Corne and agreed to capitulate."⁹⁵

The Capitulation primarily addressed the concerns of the Europeans, but there were items that benefited the Mi'kmaq. The articles demanded that the British retreat to Annapolis Royal while the French would take possession of Grand Pré as well as all shipping, provisions, and artillery they had obtained. The French would also keep the Britons they had taken prisoner. According to Article 4, the Mi'kmaq were allowed to keep all the goods that they had taken. The exact wording was "As pillage was committed

⁹³ *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol. 2, 65-66; O'Callaghan, 91.

⁹⁴ The British contend that the French had killed seventy, taken sixty prisoners, and wounded many others. "Boston, March 2," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 16, 1747.

⁹⁵ O'Callaghan, 91-92.

only by the Indians, the booty cannot be restored.” This implies that the British had attempted to retrieve goods that the Indians had attained. The French, wary of angering their allies, refused to take the items from them. So, the Mi’kmaq gained this victory as well as the victory in battle.⁹⁶

The Battle at Grand Pré ultimately did not change the outcome of the war. Nevertheless, it provided the Mi’kmaq with a means to strike at their enemy. By participating in this battle, they had taken another step towards protecting themselves and their homes from the British.

Nicolas Coulon de Villiers and the Mi’kmaq after Grand Pré

Nicolas Coulon de Villiers faced both suffering and success after the Grand Pré expedition. His injury from the musket ball continued to haunt him. In May 1747, Ramezay reported that “Mr Coulon suffers considerably from his arm, which utterly incapacitates him from rendering any assistance when occasion requires.”⁹⁷ As a result, Ramezay asked to replace him. His request was granted and on June 13, Captain de Fouville headed to Beaubassin to relieve Nicolas. In October, Nicolas sought treatment at a thermal spa in France. In 1748, while still abroad, he was awarded the Cross of Saint Louis. No doubt, his success during at the Grand Pré expedition played a role in securing this high military honor. Unfortunately, his career was faring better than his health. In

⁹⁶ O’Callaghan, 78.

⁹⁷ O’Callaghan, 106.

1749, he returned to Canada where his wounded arm was amputated. He died during the operation and was buried in Montreal on April 4, 1750.⁹⁸

The Mi'kmaq, like Nicolas, faced difficulties after Grand Pré. The terms of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which ended King George's War in 1748, restored Louisbourg to France. However, it also maintained the British in Acadia. The vitriol between the Mi'kmaq and the British worsened in the ensuing years.⁹⁹

An indicator of Mi'kmaq and British tensions was their social separation. This separation becomes clearly evident by examining baptismal, marriage, and burial records. The records at St. Paul's Church in Halifax, an Anglican congregation, clearly demonstrate this separation. Between 1749 and 1768, 6,026 baptisms, marriages, and burials occurred at St. Paul's.¹⁰⁰ Only a few Indians appear in these records. For example, John Tray, "an Indian," was buried at St. Paul's in August, 1750. Henrietta, a fifteen year old Mi'kmaq, was baptized in September, 1754. With these two rare exceptions, it seems that Indians were not welcomed into the St. Paul's community. This had not been the case at French missions. The disinterest was likely mutual. By this time, the Mi'kmaq had experienced violence and disrespect from the British for decades. They probably had no desire for cultural exchange. This dynamic of mutual exclusion supported an environment of conflict.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ O'Callaghan, 106-107; *DCB*, "Nicolas Coulon de Villiers," vol. 3, 150.

⁹⁹ George F.G. Stanley, *New France: The Last Phase, 1744-1760* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1968), 32.

¹⁰⁰ Note that this register includes some entries from other churches like St. John's, Lunenburg. Jean M. Holder and Grace L. Hubley, compilers, *Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1749-1768, St. Paul's Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia, 1983), 6.

¹⁰¹ Holder and Hubley, 20 and 62.

The British stoked the fires of conflict when they founded a controversial settlement at Halifax in 1749. In April 1749, *The Pennsylvania Gazette* reported that a “great transportation [from England] is fitting out to bring over inhabitants, who are to sail the beginning of April, with two regiments to guard them.”¹⁰² Given that two regiments were sent to accompany the settlers, it is clear that British officials knew of the resistance they would face from the indigenous population. Halifax, originally named Kchibouktouk (Chebucto), was located within the Mi’kmaq district of Eskikewa’kik. The British dispossessed the Mi’kmaq in order to build it.¹⁰³ Apparently untroubled by this fact, colonists continued to develop the settlement. According to a report in August, “[t]he town is laid out, and every man, by drawing lots, knows where to build his house.”¹⁰⁴ However, Edward Cornwallis, the governor of Nova Scotia, remained wary and “made the best disposition he can of the troops, in order to guard against any attempts of the Indians, should they begin to be trouble.”¹⁰⁵

The Mi’kmaq became incensed at the foundation of Halifax. Several Mi’kmaq chiefs expressed their ire in a document that they sent to Cornwallis.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the document, the chiefs use the name Kchibouktouk rather than Halifax, emphasizing their ownership of the site. They declared that God had given them the land in perpetuity. The British, with their insatiable land-lust, had stolen this divinely ordained home of the

¹⁰² “Extract of a Letter, dated Annapolis Royal, Feb. 21. 1749,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 12 April 1749.

¹⁰³ Paul, 6 and 107.

¹⁰⁴ “Chebucta [Halifax], in Nova Scotia, August 20,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 16 January 1750.

¹⁰⁵ “Chebucta [Halifax], in Nova Scotia, August 20,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 16 January 1750.

¹⁰⁶ The Mi’kmaq chiefs presumably wrote this document in English, as they were sending it to Cornwallis. L’abbé Maillard translated it into French and added a Mi’kmaq translation as well. He sent both to l’abbé Du Fau in Paris in mid-October 1749. This is the copy that I am using. The chiefs, writing from Port Toulouse in Île Royale (Cape Breton Island), probably composed it around late summer or fall in 1749.

Mi'kmaq. The Mi'kmaq had been tolerant of the British presence at Annapolis Royal, but the existence of Halifax proved unacceptable. They expressed that the British were compelling them towards war. The chiefs stated that they would visit Halifax soon and hoped that the Governor would take their concerns seriously. Some have read this document as a declaration of war. Perhaps the British read it this way, but it appears to be a warning that they had reached their limit. They were withholding their decision about a course of action until they received the British response.¹⁰⁷

Other Mi'kmaq attempted diplomacy to resolve the tension. In August of 1749, three Maliseet from St. John's and nine Mi'kmaq from Chignecto met the British at Halifax. After the meeting, Captain Howe, a member of Cornwallis' Council at Halifax, accompanied them to St. John's where he planned to give presents to the chiefs in the hopes of ratifying a peace treaty. At this point, the British seemed willing to attempt diplomacy to prevent further conflict. However, shortly after this party departed a large number of Mi'kmaq from Cape Sable arrived. Initially, they traded peacefully. A few days later, they attacked a British boat. These incidents demonstrate that the Mi'kmaq were not of one mind regarding how to handle the British. The Mi'kmaq from Chignecto, in the Siknikt district, attempted diplomacy; those from Cape Sable, in the Kespukwitk district, chose to attack.¹⁰⁸

By October of 1749, Halifax had grown more imposing. The town was surrounded by "five picketed block houses" and contained 900 troops and 100 men of

¹⁰⁷ *Collection de Documents Inédits*, vol.1, 17-19.

¹⁰⁸ "Chebucta [Halifax], in Nova Scotia, August 20," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 16 January 1750; "Chebucta, (in Nova Scotia) August 23, 1749," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 21 September 1749; O'Callaghan, 92.

Philip's regiment stationed at the head of the bay. Lurking about were Colonel Gorham's rangers whose job was to track down Indians. Supposedly, Governor Cornwallis gave a commission to Major Gilman that year to organize another group of rangers for the same purpose. Halifax also contained roughly 900 settlers from Britain and New England. To the Mi'kmaq, this growth proved threatening and insulting, given that it was occurring on their land.¹⁰⁹

The Indians and the British fought openly for the next several years. For example, in October 1749 a group of forty Indians, probably Mi'kmaq attacked several workmen near the harbor at Halifax. Allegedly, they scalped and decapitated the men and took a New Hampshire man prisoner. Colonel Gorham's rangers went in search of them. In December 1749, a body of 300 Maliseets, Mi'kmaq, and other Indians laid siege to the fort at Minas. During this time, the Maliseets from St. John's captured a party of eighteen men and women. They had recently signed a peace treaty, but had been infuriated when the British had built the fort at Minas. The native force retreated after about 8 nights, the Maliseet allegedly having quarreled with the Mi'kmaq.¹¹⁰

Governor Cornwallis, invoking Governor Shirley's idea from 1744, enacted a brutal policy in order to demolish the threat. On June 21, 1750, he announced the following,

Whereas by a former proclamation, a reward of Ten Pounds Sterling was offered to any person who brought in an Indian prisoner, or the head or scalp of an Indian, killed within this province, as is the custom of America; which has hitherto proved ineffectual, the Indians having

¹⁰⁹ "Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax in Nova Scotia, dated October 2. 1749," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 26 October 1749; O'Callaghan, 90.

¹¹⁰ "Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax in Nova Scotia, dated October 2. 1749," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 26 October 1749; "Extract of a Letter from Halifax, Nova Scotia,

committed fresh cruelties and barbarities in these parts of the province; I have therefore thought fit to order the sum [sic] of Fifty Pounds Sterling, as a further encouragement, to be paid out of the treasury to any person, who shall take any Indian prisoner, and for every head or scalp of an Indian killed as aforesaid.¹¹¹

Cornwallis made this proclamation in Halifax and it spread to the newspapers like *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. Probably, the Mi'kmaq and Maliseets became aware of the bounties placed upon their heads. The fact could not have endeared the British to them.

It remains unclear if British settlers took advantage of this macabre money-making opportunity. However, it is clear that this proclamation alone did not stop the Mi'kmaq and Maliseets from fighting back. For example, in October 1750, a party of "French and Indians in Nova Scotia" took 16 Englishmen captive. Thirty Frenchmen then attempted to take the captives to Canada by boat.¹¹²

In 1752, the British concluded yet another peace with the Mi'kmaq that they hoped would end the hostilities. The Mi'kmaq signers of this treaty were Jean Baptiste Cope, Andrew Hadley Martin, Gabriel Martin, and Francis Jeremiah. The treaty stated that these men signed on behalf of themselves, their tribe, and their posterity.

The British intended the 1752 treaty to inspire a sense of fealty in the Mi'kmaq. The first article of the document invoked the 1725 and 1726 "Articles of Submission." This was clearly an attempt to remind, or rather inform the Indians of their long standing duty towards the British. The treaty assured the Mi'kmaq that all past conflicts had been forgotten and that they could enjoy the protection of the government. In return, they

Dated December 20, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 30, 1750.

¹¹¹ "A Proclamation," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 26 July 1750.

¹¹² "Boston, December 3," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 December 1750.

should use “their utmost Endeavours to bring in the other Indians to renew and ratify this Peace, and shall discover and make known any Attempts or Designs of any other Indians, or any Enemy whatever, against his Majesty Subjects [sic]....” By this, the British were requiring that the first allegiance of the Mi’kmaq be to the British, not their Indian brethren.¹¹³

The 1752 treaty also addressed the issue most pertinent to the Mi’kmaq, land. However, as in the 1725 and 1726 treaties, the British left the terms vague and, therefore, difficult to enforce. For example, the document states that the Mi’kmaq “shall not be hindered from, but have free Liberty of Hunting and Fishing, as usual.” Unhelpfully, the treaty did not establish boundary lines to delineate their hunting and fishing grounds. This lack of specificity left their lands vulnerable. Ultimately, then, this treaty failed to sufficiently address the concerns of the Mi’kmaq.¹¹⁴

In the years following the unsatisfactory treaty of 1752, the Mi’kmaq faced continual challenges. For example, in 1755 the British expelled the Acadians from Nova Scotia. The Mi’kmaq had formed social bonds and alliances with this population. Losing those allies made their position in Nova Scotia still more precarious. During the French and Indian War, which lasted from 1754 until 1763, they fought British efforts to populate vacated Acadian land with English-speaking settlers. The French lost most of their colonies in North America after this war, which left the Mi’kmaq in a tenuous position. In 1762, the Mi’kmaq made another peace with the British. Afterwards, many

¹¹³ “Halifax, in Nova Scotia, Jan. 20. Treaty, or Articles of Peace,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 6 March 1753.

¹¹⁴ “Halifax, in Nova Scotia, Jan. 20. Treaty, or Articles of Peace,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 6 March 1753.

Mi'kmaq, not desiring to live under British control, relocated to areas in which the expelled Acadians had found refuge. The largest was located north of the isthmus of Chignecto in New Brunswick. Others moved eastward to St. Pierre and Miquelon, two islands that France was able to maintain after the war. Still others moved to the west coast of Newfoundland.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, the French relied upon native allies during warfare. Military leaders like Nicolas Sr. and Nicolas Jr. recognized the importance of these allies and actively sought them. For their part, the Indians who participated in battles alongside the French did so to further their own interests. In 1730 warriors from Potawatomi, Miami, Illinois, and other communities helped the French to massacre the Foxes. In this way, they eliminated a powerful enemy. In 1747 Mi'kmaq fighters battled alongside the French at Grand Pré. Forming this alliance allowed them to significantly weaken the British.

This chapter and its predecessors have demonstrated that at Jesuit missions, military posts, and on the battlefield, the French established relationships with a diverse array of native people. During the Fox Wars, they showed a disturbing contrast between how they treated their Indian allies and how they treated their Indian enemies. They not only wanted to defeat the Foxes, but they wanted to annihilate them. This behavior shows that the French, like their fellow European colonizers, had the capacity to treat native people with shocking violence and intolerance.

¹¹⁵ Plank, 140 and 163.

CHAPTER IV

Jumonville's Family and Atlantic World Slavery

In 1709 Madeleine Jarret de Verchères, Jumonville's famous aunt, and her husband, Pierre-Thomas Tarieu de Lanaudière de Lapérade, purchased a nineteen-year-old Indian slave named Pascal. Pascal, originally from the Great Plains, had formerly belonged to Pierre You de La Découverte, an illegal trader of fur and liquor. The young man had lived with La Découverte, his Miami wife, and their child, in the Illinois Country, probably performing domestic duties. Then, on June 15, 1709, Lapérade purchased Pascal for 120 *livres* from Découverte's second wife, Madeleine Just de La Découverte. The Montreal notary Antoine Adhémar recorded this sale, the first since Intendant Raudot's ordinance two months prior had legally recognized slavery in New France.¹

From 1709 until 1751, Madeleine and her husband acquired twelve additional Indian slaves.² This behavior was rather unique given that most slave owners in New France possessed only one or two slaves. Presumably, the couple commanded their Indian laborers to perform agricultural work on their seigneurie, Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade. In this way, they fashioned themselves after their slave holding counterparts in the Caribbean.³

¹ Trudel, *L'esclavage au Canada Français*, 42, 145-146, and 233-234; Brett Rushforth, " 'A Little Flesh We Offer You,' 807-808; *DCB*, "Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères," vol. 3, 308-313.

² One of their Indian slaves was a 29 year old woman named Marie-Madeleine. She married a Canadian in 1726. See Trudel, 367.

Jumonville's slave owning aunt was hardly an anomaly in New France.⁴ Between 1681 and 1806, 1,509 residents of New France owned 3, 604 slaves. These slave proprietors represented 962 different families.⁵ Slave owners belonged to various professions. Some worked as government officials, merchants, voyageurs, and clergymen. Others, like the members of Jumonville's family, belonged to the military. By purchasing slaves, they gained social status and lightened their personal workloads.⁶

The system of slavery in New France has received minimal academic attention. Instead, scholars have focused on slavery in colonies like Saint Domingue and Jamaica. They have neglected New France because, by comparison, the forced labor system in New France appears unremarkable. New France was a *society with slaves* rather than a *slave society*.⁷ As such, there were relatively few slaves in this colony. These individuals neither produced a cash crop nor did they mount a memorable rebellion. Nevertheless,

³ Trudel, 42, 145-146, and 233-234; Rushforth, 807-808; DCB, "Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères," 308-313.

⁴ For treatments of slavery in Louisiana and Illinois, see Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992); Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Carl Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

⁵ These and many other statistics in this chapter come from Marcel Trudel's *L'esclavage au Canada Français: Histoire et Conditions de L'esclavage*. This seminal work presents a statistical analysis of slavery based upon sources like parish registers, judicial reports, and baptismal records. Trudel's research provided a foundation all for future work on slavery in New France. For an earlier work on this topic, see Jacques Viger and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine, *De l'esclavage en Canada* in the *Mémoires de la Société historique de Montréal*, 1 (1859): 10, n. 1.

⁶ Trudel, 3-5, 57, 65-66, 94-96, 137-156, and 319; Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* 2nd edition (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 1-2 and 9-10.

⁷ In *societies with slaves*, slaves were not the central labor force. They did not produce cash crops like sugar and tobacco. They primarily performed in domestic capacities. In *slave societies*, slaves' labor proved essential. This dynamic existed in places like eighteenth century Saint Domingue. There large scale plantation agriculture. See Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 7-8 and 17-28.

slaves in New France, along with counterparts in the Caribbean, belonged to the Atlantic World. They came from various Indian and African groups and interacted with Europeans. Mixed race children resulted from these encounters. These slaves did not produce sugar or tobacco, but they helped to maintain a colony that was significant for the French. Because New France was quite unlike the Caribbean islands, the individuals there experienced slavery differently. Their stories will contribute to scholars' understanding of slavery in the Atlantic World.

This chapter uses Jumonville's family members as a means to study slavery in New France. Besides Madeleine Jarret, several others in Jumonville's family were witnesses to and participants in the Atlantic World system of slavery. Jumonville's sister, Madeleine Coulon de Villiers, owned an Indian slave while she lived in Montreal. His maternal uncle, Jean-Baptiste Jarret de Verchères, owned a black slave while he was the commandant of Michilimackinac.⁸ Meanwhile, relatives like Louis Coulon de Villiers, who did not directly participate in the system of slavery, witnessed it firsthand. Studying this family and their experiences illuminates the extent and diversity of this system in New France. This chapter is divided into two parts. Part 1 offers an overview of slavery and its development in New France. As such, it provides the necessary context in which to understand the experiences of Jumonville's family. Part 2 examines the how three of Jumonville's relatives interacted with slavery: Madeleine, Jean Baptiste, and Louis.⁹

⁸ In 1762, Jumonville's brother François Coulon de Villiers married New Orleans slave owner Marie-Geneviève Énault de Livaudais. The pair enjoyed the services of eight domestic slaves. Thus far, I have been unable to find any further information regarding this couple and their slaves. *DCB*, "François Coulon de Villiers," vol. 4 (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 177-178.

⁹ Trudel, 42, 145-146, and 233-234; "Mackinac Baptismal Register," *WHC* 19: 11 and 22; *DCB*, "François Coulon de Villiers," 177-178.

PART 1: An Overview of Slavery in New France

Development of Indian and Black Slavery in New France

This section examines the simultaneous development of both Indian and black slavery in New France. Indian slavery emerged from the practice of captive-taking. Black slavery grew within the larger context of African importation into the French colonies.¹⁰

In the mid-17th century, the French observed groups like the Ottawas, the Ojibwas, and the Hurons taking war captives. Initially, captors subjected their prisoners to emotional and physical abuse. For example, they forced them to sing “death songs.” They also mutilated and sometimes killed them.¹¹ However, Indians also adopted war captives as replacements for family members killed by warfare or murder. Because captives possessed the “symbolic power to mitigate the effects of warfare or murder,” as Brett Rushforth explains, they became “an important medium of exchange in the gift giving that characterized Indian diplomacy.”¹² Thus, captives played a central role in maintaining alliances between Indian groups.¹³

During the latter half of the 17th century, various Indian groups began giving captives to the French. For example, in 1671, the Iroquois gave two Potawatomis to

¹⁰ Throughout this chapter, I use the terms “Indian” and “Black” to refer to the enslaved population in New France. When possible, I include more specific terms like Ottawa and Ojibwa. I also note when certain Indians possess a mixed ancestry. Some of the Africans whom I cite might have been born in the Americas and, hence, could be called African Americans. To minimize confusion, I use the all inclusive term “black” to refer to all individuals of African descent.

¹¹ For an example of an Iroquois captive killed by the Huron, see “1688-1690: Disturbances Among the Upper Tribes, which are Quelled by Perrot,” *WHC* 16: 136-138. For more on the system of captive taking in general, see Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹² Rushforth, 785.

¹³ Rushforth, 780-784.

Governor Courcelle. In 1674, Indians from Mississippi gave a ten-year-old to Louis Jolliet. In the ensuing years, French military officers, fur traders, and merchants also acquired these “gifts” during their western travels. They either kept these Indians as their own slaves, or sold them. By the end of the century, at least twenty-eight Indians had been enslaved in New France.¹⁴

Meanwhile, in 1688 Governor Jacques-René de Brisbay, Marquis de Denonville and Intendant Jean Bochart de Champigny appealed to France to import black slaves to New France, as was being done in the Caribbean. On May 1, 1689, Louis XIV assented and legalized black slavery for the colony. However, the outbreak of King William’s War, among other events, halted the system’s growth. Louis XIV renewed his assent in 1701. Yet again, the start of hostilities, this time during Queen Anne’s War, limited importation.¹⁵ Those who were able to purchase blacks did so from British colonies rather than from French slaving vessels. Ships from the Compagnie des Indes, a primary supplier of black slaves to French colonies, never docked in Canada. Rather, they serviced more lucrative ports in the French Caribbean and the Gulf Coast.¹⁶ As a result, colonists in New France traveled to trade hubs like Albany, New York, to obtain black slaves.¹⁷

¹⁴ Rushforth, 793; Trudel, 15 and 86.

¹⁵Trudel, 86 and 95; *Archives nationales du Québec*, Centre de Québec, Ordonnances des intendants, E1, S1, P509, Raudot, Jacques, Ordinance relative to slavery in Canada, April 13, 1709. Found at <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/angelique/archives/colonialcorrespondence/2295en.html>. This website, “Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History: Torture and Truth: Angélique and the Burning of Montreal,” was composed in conjunction with the Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec, among other partners. It possesses numerous documents regarding Canadian history. All further *Archives nationales du Québec* (AnQ) documents cited come from this source.

¹⁶ “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,” <http://www.slavevoyages.org/>, Accessed March 16, 2011..

The turning point in the growth of both Indian and black slavery occurred on April 13, 1709 when Intendant Jacques Raudot issued an ordinance regarding the expansion of slavery. In this document, he emphasized the importance of black and Indian labor in French colonies. He also reinforced masters' property rights over their bondsmen and bondswomen. Raudot stated that "since the people of the Panis nation are as needed by the inhabitants of this country for Cultivating the land and for other work that may be Undertaken, as are the Negroes on the islands, and since these measures are very useful for this Colony, it Is necessary to ensure the ownership of those who have purchased them or will purchase them in the future."¹⁸ To ensure masters' property rights, he ordained that all Indians and blacks already purchased and who would be purchased in the future were indeed slaves. They were the property of their owners and were not allowed to run away. Anyone who "corrupted" a slave would be fined fifty *livres*. After Raudot's ordinance was enacted, the population of both black and Indian slaves in New France steadily rose. By the end of the French Regime in 1760,¹⁹ 1,685 Indian and 402 black slaves had lived in the colony.²⁰

Many proprietors of slaves worked within the upper echelon of the government. Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, who was the governor of New France from 1703 to 1725, owned four black and seven Indian slaves. Charles de Beauharnois de la Boische,

¹⁷ W.J. Eccles, *The French in North America, 1500-1783*, rev. ed. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 116; *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S1, P1120; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D2270.

¹⁸ *An Q*, Centre de Québec, Ordonnances des intendants, E1, S1, P509, Raudot, Jacques, Ordinance relative to slavery in Canada, April 13, 1709.

¹⁹ The French Regime ended when the French lost the French and Indian War. Afterwards, the British took over in New France.

²⁰ *AnQ*, Centre de Québec, Ordonnances des intendants, E1, S1, P509, Raudot, Jacques, Ordinance relative to slavery in Canada, April 13, 1709; Trudel, 86 and 95; Rushforth, 793.

governor of New France from 1726 to 1746, owned twenty-seven slaves. Of these, two were black and the rest were Indian. He was one of the largest single proprietors of slaves in New France. Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial, the last governor of New France who served from 1755 to 1760, owned thirteen black and three Indian slaves. Intendants of New France also owned slaves. For example, Gilles Hocquart, who served from 1729 to 1748, owned one black and five Indian slaves. François Bigot, who was the last intendant of Canada and served from 1748 to 1760, possessed one black and two Indian slaves. In all, high level officials like governors and intendants owned 316 unfree persons.²¹

Military officials also owned a significant portion of the slave population. In total, 164 military officers owned 431 of the slaves in New France. For example, members of the Céloron de Blainville, Chaussegros de Léry, Duplessis-Fabert, and Pécaudy de Contrecoeur families also owned slaves. The Lacornes became one of the largest slave holding families in New France. In total, the five Lacorne brothers had forty-four slaves. Lower level military personnel like soldiers owned an additional 146 slaves.²²

Numerous Canadians within the judicial system purchased slaves as well. Included in this number were members of the Conseil Supérieur, the highest court in New France. Charles Guillimin owned five slaves while his son Guillaume Guillimin owned three. Judges also owned slaves. François-Marie Boüat possessed seven and Pierre Raimbault possessed eight. *Procureurs du Roi* like François Foucher and Louis Poulin de

²¹ Trudel, 126, 137- 139, 155, and 157; *DCB*, vol. 4, 354-365; *DCB*, vol. 4, 59-70.

²² Trudel, 122, 145-146, 155, and 157.

Courval became slave owners. Foucher possessed three while Poulin de Courval possessed two.²³

Canadians of various other professions used enslaved laborers. For example, there were 314 merchants/tradesmen in New France who owned 832 slaves and 38 voyageurs who owned 73. Skilled professionals in the medical field became slave proprietors as well. In total, twenty-two doctors and surgeons possessed forty-six slaves. Most other medical personnel possessed only one or two. Lastly, eleven innkeepers/tavern owners in New France possessed eighteen slaves while six bakers owned eleven.²⁴

Religious personnel were consistent proprietors of slaves. In total, the clergy and religious organizations in Canada owned forty-three slaves. For example, the Jesuits had twelve slaves and the Recollets had three.²⁵ Meanwhile, religious organizations like the Hôtel-Dieu in Québec and in Montreal also recorded the presence of slaves.²⁶

As the number of slaves in New France increased, the French government deemed it necessary to establish behavioral guidelines for masters. In 1724 another *Code Noir* was published.²⁷ This *Code* applied to Louisiana, but it gave slave owners throughout New France an outline of their duty towards their slaves.²⁸ No such document existed for the owners of Indian slaves. However, they seemed to view the *Code Noir* as universally applicable. For example, the *Code Noir* ordered masters to provide their African slaves

²³ Trudel, 139-140.

²⁴ Trudel, 143-144, 146, and 155.

²⁵ Jesuits had considerably more slaves in Louisiana and Illinois.

²⁶ Trudel, 149-156.

²⁷ The first was published in 1685.

²⁸ For the debate on whether or not the *Code Noir* applied to all of New France or just Louisiana, see William Renwick Riddell, "Le Code Noir," *The Journal of Negro History* 10 (1925): 321-329.

with instruction in the Catholic religion.²⁹ They generally followed this guideline and routinely baptized both their black and Indian slaves. Of the 3,604 slaves in New France, 2,971, were baptized.³⁰

New France developed into a *society with slaves* rather than a *slave society*. According to Ira Berlin, *societies with slaves* possessed a small enslaved population. These enslaved persons were not the primary source of labor; rather, they were one among several. By contrast, slaves in *slave societies* formed a significant portion of the population and their labor proved crucial for economic production. New France clearly falls into Berlin's definition of a *society with slaves*. During the French Regime, only 2,087 people appeared as slaves in the records. The population in Canada by this time was over 50,000. These slaves did not produce colony-sustaining crops like sugar or tobacco; instead, they typically served as domestics.³¹

Occupations, Religion, Marriage, and Mortality

Indian and black slaves had diverse experiences in New France. They performed a variety of jobs, converted to Catholicism, married and raised families. Both Indian and black slaves typically performed household work. For example, in 1712 an Indian named Joseph was listed as a domestic of François Lamoureux of Montreal. Joseph, probably cooked, cleaned, and performed any other duty that his master required. Other domestic slaves qualified as lackeys. These individuals served as ubiquitous companions for their

²⁹ *Code noir, ou Recueil d'édits, déclarations et arrêts concernant les esclaves nègres de l'Amérique, avec un recueil de réglemens, concernant la police des isles françoises l'Amérique & les engagés* (Paris: Les Libraires Associez, 1743), 77-105.

³⁰ Trudel, 322.

³¹ Berlin, 7-8 and 17-28; Dechêne, 297; Trudel, 86.

masters and ensured their continual comfort. Many of these masters were government officials, military personnel, merchants, voyageurs, and clergymen. By purchasing slaves, they gained social status and lightened their own workloads.³²

Slaves in New France also performed tasks beyond the domestic sphere. From 1734 until 1743, for example, a black man named Mathieu Léveillé served as an executioner. One of his jobs involved executing a black slave convicted of theft in 1735. Louis Lepage's occupation was less gruesome. In 1744, this black slave, owned by Jean-Baptiste Vallée, was listed as a sailor. In 1749, another black man named Pierre-Dominique Lafleur appeared in the records. He worked as a cooper and, therefore, made items like wooden barrels, casks, and hogsheads. Lafleur's skills made him a valuable asset to his master, an innkeeper named Jacquin. Note that all three of these skilled men have surnames. Not all slaves possessed this level of identification, which implies that these men attained a certain stature in Canada.³³

Black and Indian slaves participated in New France's trade system by working as boatmen. They served on expeditions to posts in the *pays d'en haut* like St. Joseph and Michilimackinac. They either went on these journeys with their owners or voyageurs paid owners for their services. Some slaves participated in illegal ventures and suffered repercussions.³⁴

³² Trudel, 3-5, 57, 65-66, 94-96, 127-129, 137-156, 168, and 319; Winks, 1-2 and 9-10; *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D502 ; *BanQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1342 ; *BanQ*, Fonds Prévôté de Québec, TL1, S11, SS1, D99, P953 ; *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1928.

³³ Trudel, 170; *BanQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL4, S1, D4251.

³⁴ Trudel, 169.

The case of François, an Indian slave, illuminates how voyageurs compensated slaves and owners. François lived in Laprairie, a region in the district of Montreal with a moderate slave population. He belonged to Dame Réaume and probably did domestic work in her household. In August 1719, François made an arrangement with Joseph Guillet to journey to the *pays d'en haut*. Guillet agreed to pay François 250 *livres* worth of beaver skins.³⁵ From this salary, Dame Réaume was to receive 123 *livres*, 7 *sols*, and 6 *deniers*. It is unclear how Guillet arrived at this number, but François and Réaume probably haggled and debated before settling the matter. So, Guillet promised almost half the value of François' wages to Réaume, simply for allowing him to "use" her slave.³⁶

Voyageurs might hire slaves for several years. Jean-Baptiste Legras made such a contract with another Panis named François. François was thirty-one years old and belonged to the widow Poulin. In May 1735, Legras hired François for three years and agreed to pay him 800 *livres*. A portion of this salary likely went to his mistress. Presumably, Legras became a kind of interim master for François. During the travails of travel, however, François probably enjoyed a measure of freedom.³⁷

In 1712 the aforementioned Indian slave Joseph became involved in an illegal trade venture with his master François Lamoureux. Their accomplices were Pierre Sarrazin, a *coureur de bois*, and Nicolas Sarrazin, an *avironnier*.³⁸ These four men were accused of transporting a barrel of powder and a small bark boat to François' home in

³⁵ Voyageurs usually made these travel contracts in the spring and summer. They often paid the slaves and masters in animal skins. See Trudel, 169.

³⁶ Trudel, 128 and 169.

³⁷ Trudel, 169.

³⁸ This word refers to one who makes or sells oars. Perhaps in this case it means to imply that he was an oarsman himself.

Montreal as preparation for a trade mission to the *pays d'en haut*. Because they lacked licenses, their plans were illegal. Although Joseph only worked as a domestic, he must have possessed a skill that his master considered useful for the voyage. Perhaps he was a strong boatman. Perhaps he was originally from the *pays d'en haut* and, therefore, had useful language skills. Whatever the case, Joseph was clearly included in the company of these aspiring traders. His slave status did not prevent this closeness.³⁹

In 1752 Antoine Pilon, a seasoned Canadian trader, incorporated a black slave into one of his ventures. In January of that year, the governor of New France, Jacques-Pierre Taffanel de la Jonquiere, gave Pilon permission to take a boat and six men to Green Bay in Wisconsin and the Sioux Post at Lake Pepin between Wisconsin and Minnesota. The rather small expedition was likely planning to rendezvous with Indian groups to trade for furs. Pilon broke the rules slightly and incorporated seven men into his party, including a black man who belonged to Monsieur Marin.⁴⁰ Pilon had never before included a black slave in one of his ventures.⁴¹ He probably chose this unnamed man because he was a strong boatman. Pilon certainly paid Marin for his slave's services. His willingness to accept this additional expense indicates how highly he regarded the slave's abilities. This black man braved the long and treacherous journey westward and bonded with his fellow boatmen along the way. When he reached Green Bay and the Sioux Post,

³⁹ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, TL5, D502 and TL4 S1, D1328.

⁴⁰ The six other men on this venture were Jacques Chaput, Joseph Lassiserai, Jean-Baptiste Choquette, Pierre Deniau, Lefebvre, Pierre Charlebois. *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S34, P945.

⁴¹ *BAnQ*, Fonds Conseil souverain, TP1, S35, D9, P109; *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S1, D4519.53; TL4, S34, P589; TL4, S1, D5183; TL4, S34, P731; TL4, S34, P762; TL4, S34, P791; TL4, S34, P901; TL4, S34, P864; TL4, S34, P926; TL4, S34, P940; TL4, S34, P945.

he met a diverse array of Indians and witnessed their customs. The system of slavery in New France was flexible enough to allow such interactions.⁴²

Catholicism proved central to slaves' lives in New France. In this way, the colony bears similarity to other majority Catholic colonies. Numerous slaves received religious instruction which culminated in baptism. At baptism, slaves received godparents, a process that incorporated them into the Christian community. Nearly 4/5 of the slave population in New France was baptized. Also, slaves frequently married in Catholic churches. The nuptials were publicized through customary bans after which the bride and groom wed in Catholic ceremonies; their masters were often in attendance. Thus, joining the Catholic Church allowed slaves to achieve a level of social legitimacy and belonging. In his classic book *Slave and Citizen*, Frank Tannenbaum argues that these factors brought a measure of humanity to slavery that was lacking in Protestant British colonies.⁴³

Converting to Catholicism did not make freedom more likely for slaves. According to Intendant Hocquart's ruling in the 1733 case of Pierre the Comanche, even baptized Indians could be sold as slaves.⁴⁴ In 1736, Intendant Hocquart passed an ordinance regarding the manner in which masters could perform manumissions.⁴⁵ Hocquart declared that verbal contracts were insufficient. Instead, masters had to sign an act of manumission in front of a notary. According to the notary records, few masters in

⁴² *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S34, P945.

⁴³ Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1946), 64 and 98; Berlin, 60-62; Trudel, 197-198.

⁴⁴ *BAnQ*, Fonds Intendants, E1, S1, P2549; Trudel, 101.

⁴⁵ As the case of Marguerite Duplessis-Faber indicates, it was not an easy task for Indian slaves to obtain freedom. See *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1230 and Trudel, 233-241.

New France freed their slaves. When they chose this course, they freed Indians more often than blacks. Hence, unlike in other colonies, there existed only a limited population of freed slaves in New France.⁴⁶

Marriage in Catholic ceremonies occurred regularly among the enslaved black population. Over all, fifty black couples wed in New France. A significant portion of these marriages occurred in Montreal and Quebec, where blacks were most numerous. For example, in Montreal in 1719, a thirty-five-year-old black man named Charles married a twenty-year-old black woman named Charlotte-Elisabeth. Both slaves belonged to Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil, Baron de Longueuil, who would become the governor of Montreal in 1724. The couple eventually had seven children.⁴⁷ In Montreal in 1750, twenty-three-year-old Marie-Louise married thirty-four-year-old Joseph. Marie-Louise belonged to Claude-Pierre Pécaudy de Contrecoeur, an officer in the colonial regular troops. Joseph belonged to the merchant Joseph Fleury Deschambault de Lagorgendière. Although the two slaves had different masters, they were able to meet and establish a relationship. This indicates that, at least in Montreal, slaves had a level of mobility.⁴⁸

Indian slaves rarely wed each other; only ten marriages have been recorded. One union occurred in 1754 in Michilimackinac. The groom was twenty-two-year-old Charles and the bride was seventeen-year-old Marie. Charles belonged to René Bourassa while Marie belonged to Augustin Mouet de Langlade. Another Indian slave wedding occurred

⁴⁶ This dynamic changed under British rule. Masters were able to free slaves through wills, as well as other means. The result was a more substantial number of freed slaves. Trudel, 248-251.

⁴⁷ Trudel, 127 and 362-363 and *DCB*, vol. 2, 401-403.

⁴⁸ Trudel, 363 and *DCB*, vol. 4, 617-618.

in Detroit around 1760. This union included Pierre and Babet, both slaves of Zacharie Cicotte. The dearth of Indian slave marriages does not necessarily mean that these slaves did not form relationships. Perhaps they simply chose not to participate in the Catholic ceremony.⁴⁹

Indian and black slaves also had the option of marrying Canadian partners. There are thirty-four cases of Indians doing so; fourteen of these cases involved Indian men marrying Canadian women while the other twenty involved Indian women marrying Canadian men. Only eleven blacks, ten men and one woman, married Canadians.⁵⁰

The results of mixed-race unions were numerous métis and mulatto descendants.⁵¹ For example, in 1705 nineteen-year-old Marie Demers married an Indian named Laurent Léveillé. Léveillé was about twenty-four-years-old and likely belonged to the seigneur Boucher de Boucherville. Marie was pregnant when they wed in Boucherville, located within the district of Montreal. The couple produced three children before Léveillé died in 1709.⁵²

The Demers' métis children assimilated into Canadian society in spite of their slave heritage. According to records, these offspring were not slaves. They were not classified as Indians although all three kept their father's surname. Their oldest son was Pierre-Laurent Léveillé and he was born in 1706. Augustin Léveillé was born in 1708 and died the following year. Marie-Anne Léveillé was born in 1709. All three children were

⁴⁹ Trudel, 360.

⁵⁰ Trudel, 283.

⁵¹ A métis was a person of Indian and European ancestry. A mulatto was a person of African and European ancestry.

⁵² Trudel, 128 and 366.

baptized. Pierre-Laurent eventually moved to St.-François-de-Sales, another town within the district of Montreal. It was here in 1731 that he married Barbe Parant, presumably a Canadian woman. They had nine children, four of whom appear in the marriage registers. These four carried the surname of their enslaved grandfather and married Canadians. Marie-Anne Léveill  eventually moved to Terrebonne within the district of Montreal. It was here in 1730 that she married Jean Riquier, presumably another Canadian.⁵³

Other m tis children were labeled by their Indian heritage. For example, Jean-Baptiste Content's parents were an Indian named Jean-Baptiste Content and a Canadian named Marie-Charlotte Morand. When Jean-Baptiste the younger was baptized around 1731, the records identified him as an Indian slave. Interestingly, his two siblings Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Marguerite were not labeled in this way. Perhaps their appearance was more Canadian than their brother's. Regardless of why, they avoided the mark of slavery while their oldest brother did not.⁵⁴

Mulatto children took on varied racial identities as well. For example, Marie-Joseph was born in 1750 to a black father named Pierre-Dominique Lafleur, a cooper, and a Canadian mother named Marie Talon. At her baptism, Marie-Joseph was labeled as a "Negress." However, the four children of the Canadian Marie-Joseph Bouchette and the black Louis-Joseph Regereau were labeled neither *mul tre* nor *negr *.⁵⁵

The mortality rates of the slaves in New France bear mentioning. Statistics are only available for 1,587 slaves. Altogether, Indian and black slaves had an average

⁵³ Trudel, 128 and 374.

⁵⁴ Trudel, 367 and 383.

⁵⁵ Trudel, 372 and 385-386.

mortality rate of about nineteen years old. Separately, these numbers shift. On average, Indian slaves lived until about seventeen years old while black slaves lived until about twenty-five. Indian slaves were more likely to die during epidemics than their black counterparts. For example, in 1733 a small pox epidemic occurred in New France, ravaging Montreal for five months. Fifty-eight Indian slaves succumbed during this outbreak while only two black slaves did so. In 1757, another small pox epidemic occurred that killed fifty-one Indian slaves, but only four black slaves. Statistics for other epidemics are similar. For whatever reason, black lived longer and withstood the ravages of disease more effectively than Indians.⁵⁶

PART 2: Jumonville's Family Interacts with Slavery

Madeleine Coulon de Villiers and Slavery in Montreal

Madeleine Coulon de Villiers interacted with both Indian and black slavery while she lived in Montreal. In this city, which had the largest slave population of any other site in New France,⁵⁷ she owned an Indian slave girl. Also, she lived next door to a black slave woman who would become infamous in the colony. This experience gave Madeleine a new perspective on the institution of slavery.

Madeleine acquired her Indian slave girl through her husband's connections. François Duplessis-Faber, whom she had married in 1727, was stationed at Green Bay. Around 1730, René Bourassa, François' trade partner at Green Bay, sent his Pawnee

⁵⁶ Trudel, 178-181.

⁵⁷ Of the 3,604 slaves who eventually resided in New France, 1,376 lived in Montreal. Of these, 973 were Indian and 403 were black. Trudel, 127-129.

slave, Marguerite, to Madeleine as a present.⁵⁸ At this time, Madeleine was living in Montreal at the home of the merchant Étienne Volant de Radisson. Marguerite, who was then twelve-years-old, was soon baptized and received her confirmation under the name Marguerite Duplessis. She was a slave girl, so she probably performed domestic tasks. However, she might have become more than that to Jumonville's sister. Madeleine had lost her only daughter in infancy and Marguerite might have become a surrogate. The girl was later accused of being difficult. If this characterization was true, then Madeleine probably showed her a firm hand.⁵⁹

In the ensuing years, Marguerite was sold to various owners. François Duplessis-Faber died in 1733, while serving as a cadet under Madeleine's father. Two years later, Madeleine's brother-in-law, also named François Duplessis-Faber, sold Marguerite to the merchant Louis Fornel. Madeleine was either unwilling or unable to halt this sale. In 1740, Fornel sold Marguerite to Marc-Antoine Huart Dormicourt. To say that Marguerite and Dormicourt did not favor each other would be an understatement. Their relationship grew so tempestuous that he accused her of both poor character and thievery. Perhaps out of spite, he decided to sell her to the Caribbean. Marguerite had been torn from her family and sold as a slave. Then she had been passed between various homes in New France. Now, the master she disliked wanted to sell her to a foreign island. Marguerite

⁵⁸ The sources do not mention Madeleine by name. They only refer to the spouse of François Duplessis Faber. There was more than one man with this name. However, the sources note that this one died in 1733. This specification makes it clear that this was the Duplessis Faber married to Madeleine Coulon de Villiers who died in Green Bay under Nicolas Coulon de Villiers.

⁵⁹ *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1230; Tanguay, *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes* vol. 3, 545; Beauharnois and Hocquart to the French Minister, November 11, 1733, *WHC* 17: 188-191; Gosselin, 87-88; Trudel, 233-234; *DCB*, vol. 3, 205; *DCB*, vol. 3, 77-78.

steeled herself to fight back.⁶⁰

Dormicourt had Marguerite imprisoned in Quebec while he waited for a ship to carry her to the islands. As she languished in the gaol, a legal practitioner named Jacques Nouette became interested in her story. With his help, she sought a legal solution to her predicament. She appealed to Intendant Gilles Hocquart and contended that she should be free and that she should not be shipped to the West Indies. Her argument contained three main points: first, she claimed that she was the natural daughter of her former master François Duplessis-Faber, second, she asserted that she had always lived within the king's territories, and, third, she contended that she had been baptized. She and Nouette presented her case before the provost court of Quebec, and then they appealed to the Conseil Souverain. This court referred the case back to Intendant Hocquart who rendered the final judgement. On October 20, Hocquart ruled that Marguerite was a slave, that she belonged to Dormicourt, and that he could do with her as he wished.⁶¹

Several factors led to Marguerite's defeat. Firstly, René Bourassa testified that he had purchased her in 1726 when she was about eight-years-old. Thus, she was not François' child. Secondly, when Nouette presented his client's baptismal certificate, for an unknown reason, it damaged her case. Lastly, Marguerite was fighting against legal precedents that the intendant did not want to overturn. The first was Raudot's 1709 ordinance that legalized slavery, the second was the 1732 case of Pierre, a Comanche slave. According Pierre Raimbault's ruling in Pierre's case, even baptized Indians could

⁶⁰ *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1230; Tanguay, *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes* vol. 3, 545; Beauharnois and Hocquart to the French Minister, November 11, 1733, *WHC* 17: 188-191; Gosselin, 87; Trudel, 233-234; *DCB*, vol. 3, 205; *DCB*, vol. 3, 77-78; *DCB*, "Nicolas Coulon de Villiers," vol. 2, 156.

⁶¹ *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1230; Trudel, 234-241; *DCB*, vol. 3, 205; *DCB*, vol. 3, 77-78; *DCB*, vol. 3, 520.

be slaves. So, even if Hocquart believed that Marguerite had been baptized, he could legally justify condemning her to slavery. Although Marguerite lost her case and was probably shipped to the Caribbean, she contributed to the history of slave resistance.⁶²

Marguerite was not the only slave to participate in the legal system of New France. In June 1728, Jean-Baptiste, a nineteen-year-old Indian slave, served as a witness in a murder case. The victim was Jacob, an Indian slave belonging to Julien Trottier, sieur DesRivières. Lapalme, a sentry and a soldier, was accused of the crime. Jacob's body was found in front of the *hangar des sauvages* at the port of Montreal. Allegedly, Lapalme had killed Jacob by shooting him with a gun. François Foucher, the lieutenant general, discussed the case with Governor Beauharnois who contended that Lapalme was innocent. Although Jean-Baptiste served as a witness, he lacked the power to provide justice for a fellow slave.⁶³

Like Jean-Baptiste, Joseph served as a case witness. Joseph, a forty-two-year-old black slave, belonged to a man with the surname Fleury Deschambault.⁶⁴ In March 1748, Joseph participated in a theft case. The plaintiff was a notary named Guillet de Chaumont who accused his domestic servant Joseph Duval of stealing.⁶⁵ In his defense, Duval blamed a voyageur named Julien Saillant and his Indian slave wife Marie-Josèphe for the crime. He contended that Saillant and Marie-Josèphe instructed him to leave the doors to Chaumont's cowshed and barn open so that they could procure hay and oats. They

⁶² *BAnQ*, Collection Pièces judiciaires et notariales, TL5, D1230; Trudel, 234-241; *DCB*, vol. 3, 205; *DCB*, vol. 3, 77-78; *DCB*, vol. 3, 520.

⁶³ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S1, D3433.

⁶⁴ This man was likely either Joseph de Fleury de la Gorgendière, or his son Joseph Fleury Deschambault. Both men were merchants. *DCB*, vol. 2, 223-224; *DCB*, vol. 3, 216-218; *DCB*, vol. 4, 268-270.

⁶⁵ Probably, Duval was a Canadian.

promised him money in return for his services. Decoste, the bailiff, brought Sergeant Barrière as well as six musketeers with him when he arrested the pair. Joseph the slave gave his testimony along with Marie Desnoyers, another of Chaumont's domestics, Jean-Baptiste Berthiaume, a carter, and several others. Ultimately, the court cleared Saillant and Marie-Josèphe of the charges, but banished Joseph Duval from Montreal for three years.⁶⁶

Unlike Marguerite, Jean-Baptiste, and Joseph, other slaves encountered the legal system when they themselves were accused of crimes. Theft was a common infraction. Slaves typically stole merchandise like fur rather than food or clothes. This implies that slaves resorted to theft in order to earn money, not to supplement their diets or wardrobe.

In 1725, Julien Trottier DesRivieres accused an Indian slave named Marie Joachim of theft. Although this twenty-one-year-old woman belonged to the widow Biron, she was also a servant for DesRivieres. According to DesRivieres, Marie Joachim had disappeared for several days. During that time, she took the key to his attic and stole some furs. She then returned the key to the wife of Bertrand to whom she confessed her many crimes. Along with Marie Joachim, an eighteen-year-old soldier named Jean-Baptiste Gouriou was mentioned in the lawsuit. Under interrogation, Marie-Joachim claimed that everything that she took she gave to Gouriou. Apparently, the two were beginning to "set up a household" together. Marie Joachim believed that selling the furs would aid them in building their lives.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S1, D5358.

⁶⁷ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S1, D3159.

An Indian slave woman named Marie-Louise was also accused of theft in 1731. Her accusers were Provencal, Souste, and Philippe Robitaille. They claimed that she had stolen items in front of several Montreal residents. Provencal stated that he had witnessed the crime. The judicial records offers details about Marie-Louise that rarely appear for slaves. For example, the records indicate that she was from the Mascouten people, an Indian group in the Great Lakes. She had been purchased by Perigny, probably after being captured by Indian raiders. After becoming enslaved, she worked as a laundress in Montreal. Interestingly, the records describe her as not having a set place of residence. This implies that while she was recognized as a slave, she did not have a master at this time.⁶⁸

In 1735, a slave named Jean-Baptiste was also accused of theft and he too worked with accomplices. Jean-Baptiste was a thirty-eight-year-old African who worked at the house of Louise Lecomte, the widow of Magnost. It is unclear who he stole from and what he stole. Given his severe punishment, it must have been substantial. Or, perhaps the sentence was so steep because the thievery involved so many others.⁶⁹

The report mentions four accomplices: Francois Darle, Charlotte D'arragon, Charlotte Ondoyé, and Marie Vennes. Francois Darle, who was forty-nine-years-old, was accused of possession as well as trying to convince Jean-Baptiste to flee with him to Orange. Charlotte D'arragon was a servant for a man called Guy and she was accused of possession. It is curious that Ondoyé and Vennes, both married and seemingly settled women, would engage in such a dangerous enterprise. Perhaps financial troubles

⁶⁸ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S1, D3787.

⁶⁹ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S1, D4251.

compelled them. Perhaps their husbands were away and they needed money.⁷⁰

Jean-Baptiste and Francois Darle were condemned to be hanged. Thus, a black slave and a free Canadian received an equal punishment. Charlotte Ondoyé, and Marie Vennes were condemned to be “beaten and castigated with the rod” while Charlotte D’arragon was simply “admonished.”⁷¹ Capital punishment was fairly rare in New France. The courts must have felt truly threatened by this coalition of alleged criminals to enact this sentence. The fact that this coalition formed at all is, again, a testament to the interconnectivity within Canada. Mathieu, a black man, served as the executioner for Jean-Baptiste and Darle. Perhaps Mathieu felt a particular pang when he hung a fellow slave.⁷²

The most infamous crime committed by a slave was the burning of Montreal by a black woman named Marie-Joseph Angélique.⁷³ The fire occurred on April 10, 1734, at about 7pm at the home of Thérèse de Couagne, the widow Francheville. The blaze started in the attic, spread, and eventually consumed forty-six houses, including the Hôtel Dieu. Volant de Radisson’s house was one of the casualties. By the next day, rumors had spread that Angélique, the slave of Francheville, had started the fire. Based on these rumors, Angélique was arrested. Over the next two months, witnesses like Marie Manon, Étienne Volant de Radisson, and Marie-Louise Poirier presented damning testimony

⁷⁰ *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S1, D4251.

⁷¹ *Archives nationales*, Fonds des Colonies. Série C11A. Correspondance générale, Canada, vol 64, fol. 12-15v, Hocquart, Gilles, Letter to the Ministre de la Marine, October 1, 1735. Found at www.canadianmysteries.ca.

⁷² *BAnQ*, Fonds Jurisdiction royale de Montreal, TL4, S1, D4251.

⁷³ For a fuller picture of these events, see Afua Cooper, *The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montreal* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2007).

against the slave woman.⁷⁴

Madeleine Coulon de Villiers and Marguerite were living with Volant de Radisson at the time of the fire.⁷⁵ Since Volant's house was next to Francheville's, the women were Angélique's neighbors and had probably met her before. Madeleine and Marguerite, at such different stations in life, likely interpreted the fire differently. Madeleine, as a slave owner, certainly viewed the event with horror. Perhaps she began regarding her slave with greater wariness and fear. This could have compelled her to become less strict, out of fear of reprisal, or stricter, out of a desire to exert more control. Marguerite, perhaps, sympathized with Angélique. Marguerite also had been stolen from her home and family and enslaved by the French. The idea of a slave woman rebelling against her owner likely made an impression upon her. Perhaps it motivated her to fight back in 1740. Volant's house, so near to Francheville's, burned down and Volant moved in with Antoine Salvail de Trémont on Rue St. Paul. Madeleine and Marguerite likely accompanied him.⁷⁶

Angélique's life in Montreal had been filled with conflict and loss. She was born in Portugal around 1705. From there, she was sold to a Flemish man who, in around 1725, sold her to François Poulin Francheville of Montreal. While in the city, she became

⁷⁴ France. *Archives nationales*, Fonds des Colonies, Série C11A, Correspondance générale, Canada, ol. 61, fol. 131-139, Beauharnois de La Boische, Charles et Gilles Hocquart, Letter to the King, October 9, 1734. Found at www.canadianmysteries.ca.

⁷⁵ I deduce that Madeleine was still living with Volant de Radisson because, after her husband died in 1733, it makes sense that she stayed put. I know that she stayed in Montreal because she remarried there in 1737. Marguerite remained with Volant de Radisson until he died in 1735.

⁷⁶ France. *Archives nationales*, Fonds des Colonies, Série C11A, Correspondance générale, Canada, vol. 61, fol. 144-145, Inconnu/Unknown, List of houses destroyed by the fire, appended to a letter by Charles de Beauharnois and Gilles Hocquart to the King, ca. 1734. Found at www.canadianmysteries.ca; *Archives nationales du Québec*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminel contre Marie Joseph Angélique negresse - Incendiaire, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Juridiction royale de Montréal, Deposition of Étienne Volant Radisson, April 14, 1734, 1-4. Found at www.canadianmysteries.ca.

involved with Cesar, an African slave who belonged to Ignace Gamelin. The unmarried slave couple had a son named Eustache in 1731 who only lived for one month. Angélique's relationship with Cesar appears to have broken down after that and she began a relationship with a Canadian man named Claude Thibault. Thibault worked for Francheville as well, likely as an indentured servant. Roughly six weeks before the fire, Angélique and Thibault ran away together. They intended to go to New England and then Portugal, but the pair was caught thirty leagues from Montreal. Madame Francheville made plans to sell Angélique to François-Étienne Cugnet in Quebec. Many viewed Angélique's stormy relationship with her mistress as her motive to set the fire.⁷⁷

Marie Manon gave perhaps the most damning testimony against Angélique. She was the fifteen-year-old Indian slave of François Bérey des Essars. Her master's house was close to Francheville's, so she and Angélique were neighbors. Both Angélique and Marie confirmed that a few hours before the fire, they were playing together in the street. Their accounts of what happened next differ. Marie claimed that while outside Angélique threatened that Madame Francheville "will not long be in her home and will not sleep there."⁷⁸ It was this alleged statement that compelled the authorities to arrest Angélique and helped to convince the court of her guilt. Angélique vehemently denied making this statement, but Marie insisted that she had. Marie's willingness to denounce Angélique indicates that the two slave women did not share a sense of solidarity. They were friendly

⁷⁷ *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Registres d'état civil, CE 601, État civil, paroisse Notre-Dame de Montréal, Baptism of Angélique and her children, 1730, 1731; *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminel contre Marie Joseph Angélique negresse - Incendiere, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Juridiction royale de Montréal, First interrogation of Angélique, April 12, 1734, 1-7; *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminel contre Marie Joseph Angélique negresse - Incendiere, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Juridiction royale de Montréal, Addition of information by Ignace Gamelin, May 6, 1734, 4-6.

⁷⁸ *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminel contre Marie Joseph Angélique negresse - Incendiere, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Juridiction royale de Montréal, Deposition of Marie dite Manon, April 14, 1734, 7-9.

enough to play together, but Marie felt no loyalty based on their shared experience of slavery. Perhaps Marie saw no similarity in their condition at all.⁷⁹

Étienne Volant de Radisson's testimony became a pitfall for Angélique. He contended that he returned home from church at about seven o'clock. Angélique approached him there and told him that Madame Francheville's house was on fire. Volant brought two pails of water to the burning house, but could not reach the flames that engulfed the attic. He raced to his own home and attempted to save his possessions. Angélique contradicted herself when discussing Volant's testimony. First, she stated that Volant had gone to the attic with her while carrying two pails of water. In a later interrogation she claimed that she did not know if Volant had entered the attic at all. Angélique's inconsistency, possibly brought on by fatigue or genuine confusion, damaged her credibility.⁸⁰

Marie-Louise Poirier's testimony painted Angélique as hostile to the French. This characterization helped the prosecution to establish the slave woman's motive. Poirier, a woman with a grudge, was a twenty-eight year old servant. She had worked for the widow Francheville alongside Angélique. Then, eight days before the fire, Francheville had fired her. Angélique had convinced her mistress that she could tend the house without Poirier. In apparent retaliation, Poirier testified that Angélique disliked her

⁷⁹ *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminelle contre Marie Joseph Angélique négresse - Incendiaire, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Juridiction royale de Montréal, Confrontation of Marie dite Manon, slave, with Angélique, May 12, 1734.

⁸⁰ *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminelle contre Marie Joseph Angélique négresse - Incendiaire, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Juridiction royale de Montréal, Deposition of Étienne Volant Radisson, April 14, 1734, 1-4; *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminelle contre Marie Joseph Angélique négresse - Incendiaire, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Juridiction royale de Montréal, First interrogation of Angélique in the criminal seat in the presence of counsellors Adhémar dit Saint-Martin, Gaudron de Chevremont, Guillet de Chaumont and Lepailleur de Laferté, May 27, 1734.

because she had several times prevented her from drinking alcohol and from leaving the house without permission. She concluded her contemptuous account by declaring that Angélique often told her that “if she ever reached her country and there were whites there, she would see them burned like dogs, that they are without worth.”⁸¹

Angélique responded to Poirier’s accusation during the “Confrontation” in May.⁸² She declared that her accuser was a liar and had never forbidden her to consume alcohol. Also, Poirier did not possess the authority to forbid her to go out. Asserting her right to freedom of movement was important for a slave like Angélique. She denied saying that she would see the French burned like dogs if they ever went to her country. However, Angélique contended that “there was little wrong in her stating that the French are of little worth.”⁸³ Her feelings toward the French, given how she was being treated, appear justified. However her hatred proved selective, for she clearly did not despise Thibault.

Although none of the witnesses saw her set the fire, their evidence was enough to bring about a conviction. Throughout the proceedings, Angélique had always claimed her innocence. On the morning of her execution, she was subjected to a torture session. In her agony, she confessed to setting the fire, but maintained that she had done so without accomplices.⁸⁴ Her execution commenced at 3pm on June 21, 1734 and proceeded as

⁸¹ *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminelle contre Marie Joseph Angélique negresse - Incendiaire, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, Déposition de Marie-Louise Poirier dit Lafleur, April 15, 1734, 17-18.

⁸² The accused were allowed to directly respond to their accusers’ statements. The accusers were present during this encounter.

⁸³ *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminelle contre Marie Joseph Angélique negresse - Incendiaire, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Jurisdiction royale de Montréal, Confrontation of Marie-Louise Poirier dit Lafleur with Angélique, May 15, 1734, 1-4.

follows:

The year seventeen Hundred thirty-four the twentieth (sic) of June three in the afternoon, the present judgment Was Read by me, the undersigned Clerk, at the gaol of This city to the accused And after the sacrament of Repentance was Administered to her by M. Navetier priest of the St Sulpice Seminary, She Was Remanded forthwith Into the hands of the Executor of the high Court, who brought Her before The door of the parish Church of This city where She made honourable amends a torch in her fist, then Was Led by the said Executor to the Water's Edge opposite The house of sieur de Joncaire to the empty Place in front of the burned houses where She was Hanged and Strangled and Then Thrown into the fire, And the Ashes cast to the wind,⁸⁵

And so Angélique died. Her punishment was severe, but not unique. In Quebec in 1732, a Canadian woman named Marie-Anne Sigouin received the same punishment when convicted of infanticide.⁸⁶ Although Angélique was convicted on circumstantial evidence, the courts did not treat her more harshly than they did Canadians.

Jean-Baptiste Jarret in Michilimackinac

Michilimackinac was a significant post in the *pays d'en haut* with a high population of slaves. Jean-Baptiste Jarret participated in the system of slavery at this post by owning a black man named Charles. At Michilimackinac, French settlers and Indian and black slaves were bound together through ties of kinship. Families like the Bourassas, the Chevaliers, and the Langlades intermarried. The members of these

⁸⁴ *AnQ*, Centre de Montréal, Procédure Criminelle contre Marie Joseph Angélique negresse - Incendiaire, 1734, TL4 S1, 4136, Juridiction royale de Montréal, Interrogation under torture (ordinary and extraordinary), June 21, 1734.

⁸⁵ *AnQ*, Centre de Québec, Jugements et délibérations, TP1, S28, P17230, Conseil supérieur, Report on the execution, June 21, 1734.

⁸⁶ *AnQ*, Centre de Québec, , Registre no 37 des arrêts rendus au Conseil supérieur de Québec sur les matières criminelles (4 juin 1730 au 29 décembre 1759), Jugements et délibérations du Conseil supérieur, Sentence rendered against Marie-Anne Sigouin found guilty of infanticide, May 7, 1732, fol. 18v-19v.

families also served as godparents to each other's slaves. As a result, slaves gained fictive kinship networks. This proved especially important for these individuals who had been stolen from their own families. Through fictive kinship, they could establish themselves within their new society.⁸⁷

Michilimackinac was home to numerous slaves, most of whom were Indian. These slaves, many of them Pawnee,⁸⁸ had been captured by tribes like the Ottawa and Illinois and given as "symbolic gifts" to French traders. These traders then sold their slaves to French buyers for a profit. For example, the voyageur Ignace Durand received an Indian slave named Pierre as a gift from Ottawa traders at Michilimackinac. In 1696, Durand sold Pierre to Pierre Hubert dit Lacroix, another inhabitant of the post. Over the course of the French Regime, 117 Indian slaves resided at Michilimackinac. Black slaves were far rarer at this post; only fifteen ever resided there. Presumably, their masters had acquired them before arriving in the Upper Country.⁸⁹

Jean-Baptiste Jarret participated in the system of slavery while at Michilimackinac. While he served as the commandant of this post, he owned an approximately twenty-year-old black slave named Charles.⁹⁰ Black slaves were rarer than Indian slaves at Michilimackinac. In fact, the only other black slave who lived at the post

⁸⁷ Trudel, 127-129.

⁸⁸ This is why the general French term for an Indian slave was *Panis*. However, there is some scholarly dispute regarding this term. For example, Brett Rushforth contends that the French used the term *Panis* to refer to a number of tribes in the Plains. These groups may or may not have been the ancestors of the modern Pawnee. See Rushforth, 788-789.

⁸⁹ Rushforth, 804; Trudel, 127-129.

⁹⁰ Another commandant who owned slaves was Louis Liénard de Beaujeu Villemonde. He began commanding Michilimackinac around 1757. He owned at least two slaves while he served there, Louise and Alexandre Louis. See *DCB*, vol. 5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 498-499 and The Mackinac Register, 56 and 60.

while Charles was there was Veronique.⁹¹ By owning Charles, Jean-Baptiste signaled his status. Probably, Charles performed domestic work within the Commandant's household and served as his personal assistant. In his position, Charles was able to meet the various French officials and Indian leaders who visited the commandant. He could have even witnessed the council meetings held at the residence.⁹²

Like most masters in New France, Commandant Jarret de Verchères ensured that his slave was baptized. The baptisms of slaves were community events. Godfathers and godmothers in Michilimackinac often came from military and trading families and frequently knew each other. Meeting at the baptismal ceremony and sharing the responsibility for a slave helped them to build a sense of community.⁹³ By holding a baptismal ceremony for Charles, Jean-Baptiste continued this tradition. Charles Chaboillez, a voyageur, became Charles' godfather while Therese Villeneuve, wife of a soldier named Claude Germain Gautier, became his godmother. Both godparents attended the ceremony, which occurred on January 6, 1744.⁹⁴ Charles Chaboillez even named the young man after him.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Veronique belonged to Sieur Boutin. Her parents were Africans named Bon Coeur and Marguerite. Veronique and Boutin wintered in Michilimackinac in 1743 on their way to Illinois. In January of that year, Veronique was baptized. Nicolas Rose, a trader, and Dame Constante Chevalier, the wife of master carpenter Sieur Hains, served as her godparents. Dame Constante gave Veronique her baptismal name. Trudel, 127 and The Mackinac Baptismal Register, 9.

⁹² Jean-Baptiste served as the commandant of this post in 1737 and again from 1742 until 1745. He briefly reoccupied this position in 1747. Beauharnois to the French Minister, October 16, 1737, *WHC* 17: 274; Speech of the Outaouacs of Missilimackinac, of the band of la fourche, Sinagos, and Kiskakons to Monsieur the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor-General of New France, June 16, 1742, *WHC* 17: 372-373; Reply of Monsieur the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor-General of New France, to the speech of the Outaouacs of Missilimackinac, of the band of la fourche, Sinagos, and Kiskakons," June 23, 1742, *WHC* 17: 374-375; Peyser, 91 and 96-97; *DCB*, vol. 3, 99-100; "The Mackinac Baptismal Register," 11.

⁹³ Trudel, 202.

⁹⁴The Mackinac Baptismal Register, 11.

The Bourassas, the Chevaliers, and the Langlades were successful trading families at Michilimackinac who also participated in slavery. René Bourassa had become a trader in the *pays d'en haut* by 1726. As was previously noted, Bourassa partnered with François Duplessis-Faber and gifted his Pawnee slave girl to Madeleine Coulon de Villiers. After 1737, Bourassa focused his business dealings in Michilimackinac. He married twice and had eight children. He moved his family to Michilimackinac in the 1740s. Jean-Baptiste Chevalier moved his family from Montreal to Michilimackinac in 1718. Throughout his career, he made numerous trips to Montreal and posts in the *pays d'en haut*. He likely bought and sold fur pelts and other merchandise. He and his wife Marie Françoise had twelve children who lived to adulthood. Of those, five sons became voyageurs like their father. Augustin Mouet de Langlade headed another trading family. His wife was Domitilde, the sister of the Ottawa chief Nissowaquet. Their son Charles-Michel became a successful trader, in part due to his relationship with his Ottawa uncle.⁹⁶

The Bourassas, the Chevaliers, the Langlades lived within Fort Michilimackinac. The Bourassas' home was located near the commandant's residence. The various Chevaliers had four houses, two of which were directly beside each other. The Langlade family had a house near the church as well as a stable outside of the fort. These three families, living within this fort community, must have seen each other often. They probably interacted at church and shared information about possible trading ventures. The closeness grew as members of the family intermarried. For example, Charles-Michel

⁹⁵ *Code Noir*, 79-80; "The Mackinac Baptismal Register," 2, 11, and 16.

⁹⁶ *DCB*, vol. 4, 77-78; *DCB*, vol. 3, 121-122; *DCB*, vol. 4, 563-564; *DCB*, vol. 4, 582-583.

Langlade married René Bourassa's daughter Charlotte-Ambroisine. Nannette Chevalier married René Bourassa, the younger.⁹⁷

Ensign Michel Chartier de Lotbinière, who had visited Michilimackinac in 1749, characterized settlers like the Bourassas, Chevaliers, and Langlades as both lazy and uppity. He accused the men of sauntering about the fort all day smoking tobacco. The women, he claimed, put on "lady-like airs." All this they did instead of planting and harvesting beans, peas, or other root crops. He asserted that these people, most of whom were from rural area, had grown up farming. Yet, they preferred to subsist on the corn and fish that they got from Indians. They also lived off of deer or moose grease.⁹⁸ According to Lotbinière, the success that the settlers enjoyed from fur trading made them lazy and snobbish. They considered it a dishonor to farm. He concluded that "for as long as there will be one single pelt to be had in these countries, they will never engage in any other business."⁹⁹

While Lotbinière's characterization seems a bit exaggerated, it bears some crucial implications. According to him, trading families were enjoying a degree of freedom from labors. Lotbinière does not include slaves in his scenario, but they played a vital role. The slaves at Michilimackinac made the settlers' "easy" lifestyle possible. Unlike masters in the French Caribbean, settlers at Michilimackinac did not require their slaves to plant and harvest cash crops. Instead, they primarily ordered them slaves to perform domestic tasks. Probably, slaves were responsible for the little planting and gardening that did

⁹⁷ Kent, 338; *DCB*, vol. 4, 563-564; *DCB*, vol. 4, 77-78.

⁹⁸ Kent, 336-342.

⁹⁹ Kent, 341.

occur at Michilimackinac. With their households taken care of, settlers were free to focus on trade and sociability. Given that Bourassa traveled, like these other patriarchs, slaves fell under the care of the women.¹⁰⁰

The heads of the Bourassa, Chevalier, and Langlade families owned slaves from at least the 1730s until the 1760s. René Bourassa and his second wife Catherine Leriger de La Plante owned at least five slaves. One of these slaves was Ignace, a fourteen-year-old who was baptized in 1754. Jean-Baptiste and Marie Françoise Chevalier had at least three slaves. These slaves had children whom the Chevaliers probably owned.¹⁰¹ For example, one of their female slaves had a son named Michel who was baptized in 1739. Augustin Mouet de Langlade and his Ottawa wife Domitilde owned at least four slaves. One of these slaves, named Marie, was baptized in 1752 at the age of fifteen. According to Father Jaunay, she had received considerable instruction and “greatly desired” to be baptized. As a result of her knowledge and her zeal, she also took her first communion at this time.¹⁰²

The next generation of these trading families continued the tradition of holding slaves.¹⁰³ Marie-Anne Chevalier, Jean-Baptiste and Marie Françoise’s daughter, owned at least three slaves during her marriage to Charles Chaboillez. For example, the couple had a forty-five-year-old slave woman named Magdelaine who was baptized in 1756.

¹⁰⁰ Trudel, 143-144 and 168.

¹⁰¹ There were no formal rules regarding the status of the children of enslaved Indians. The *Code Noir* asserted that children of African slaves bore the status of their mothers. It seems that masters applied the same rule for Indian slaves. For example, Bourassa had the children of his slaves baptized.

¹⁰² “The Mackinac Baptismal Register,” 6, 33, 36-37; *DCB*, vol. 4, 563-564.

¹⁰³ Charles Chevalier, whom the record calls Charles Chevalier Tallier, had a child with a Sioux slave woman. The child, named Pierre, was born at Rainy Lake around 1743. In 1747, Pierre was baptized at Michilimackinac. See The Mackinac Baptismal Register, 23.

Nannette Chevalier married René Bourassa the younger. They had a slave named Antoine who was baptized in 1756 at age fifteen. Charles-Michel Mouet de Langlade, the son of Augustin and Domitilde, married Charlotte-Ambroisine, one of René Bourassa's daughters.¹⁰⁴ Together, the couple had several slaves. For example, in 1759 the couple's seven-year-old slave Caterinne was baptized.¹⁰⁵

The Bourassas, Langlades, and Chevaliers served as godparents to each others' slaves. In 1747, Charles Langlade served as the godfather to Jean-Baptiste. Jean-Baptiste belonged to Marie-Anne Chevalier and her husband Charles Chaboillez. Marie-Anne's sister Angelique served as the godmother. In 1750, Charles Langlade served as the godfather to René Bourassa's eighteen-year-old slave. The young slave was named Charles, after his godfather. In 1754, one of René Bourassa's daughters served as the godmother to Augustin Langlade's twenty-year-old slave Jean Baptiste.¹⁰⁶

The kinship bonds between these families affected their slaves. For example, there is only one recorded instance of two Indian slaves marrying in Michilimackinac. This union happened between a slave of René Bourassa and a slave of Charles Langlade. The wedding occurred on November 30, 1754. The groom was Charles, the same slave who had been baptized in 1750 and had Charles Langlade for a godfather. The bride was Marie, the well-instructed young woman who had been baptized in 1752. Charles and Marie must have had sufficient opportunities to interact within the fort. Because the families they worked for were closely linked, they probably saw each other often. The

¹⁰⁴ Prior to this marriage, he a son named Charles with an Ottawa woman. See *DCB*, vol. 4, 563-564. Also, when the register says "Langlade the younger," I believe it refers to Charles.

¹⁰⁵ "The Mackinac Baptismal Register," 43, 45, and 56.

¹⁰⁶ "The Mackinac Marriage Register," 22, 29, and 37.

couple eventually had two children, one in 1756 and the other in 1758. Besides the Jesuit who officiated, seven people signed the marriage document: René Bourassa, Charles Langlade, Nanette Bourassa, Charlotte Bourassa Langlade, Charles Chaboillez, René Toullis, and La Combe. Perhaps this party even shared a meal afterward to celebrate the ceremony. This wedding between two slaves brought their masters and their masters' families together.¹⁰⁷

Louis Coulon de Villiers and Slave Stealing

French settlers desiring black slaves often resorted to stealing to obtain them. Sometimes, Indians stole these slaves from New England and later sold them. Sometimes the French participated in the theft. Louis Coulon de Villiers witnessed this phenomenon firsthand.

During the various wars in North America, Indians captured black slaves from New England and brought them to Canada. An early example of this phenomenon occurred in 1704. On the morning of February 29, a combined force of 200-250 Indian and forty-eight French attackers raided Deerfield, Massachusetts. They killed fifty and captured 112 whom they marched to New France. This assault happened within the context of Queen Anne's War. Included in the Indian number were Abenakis, Hurons, Mohawks, Pennacooks, and Iroquois of the Mountain. Lieutenant Jean-Baptiste Hertel de Rouville, a member of an elite Canadian military family, led the French.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ "The Mackinac Marriage Register," 481-482; Trudel, 360.

¹⁰⁸ Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 1-3 and 40.

Among the Deerfield residents who were taken captive was a black man named Frank. He was the slave of John Williams, Deerfield's minister. Williams had purchased Frank in order to replace his deceased slave, Robert Tigo. In addition, Williams also purchased a black woman, Parthena, who became Frank's wife. During the 1704 raid, the Indians killed Parthena. Frank survived the initial attack, but that night some raiders killed him "in their drunken fit." It seems odd that the Indians killed both Parthena and Frank when they could have received significant funds by selling them in French Canada or by ransoming them back to their master.¹⁰⁹

Numerous other black slaves, taken by French and Indian captors, actually made it to Canada. In 1706, a mulatto youth was taken from Exeter, New Hampshire. He and nine other men were mowing a field when a band of twenty to forty Indians fell upon them. The Indians took the mulatto and two others captive. Titus Jones was another black slave stolen from the British colonies. He was taken from Wells (Vermont or New York) and brought to Canada around 1710.¹¹⁰ While in Canada, both the mulatto and Titus probably became familiar with the French language as well as with Catholicism. They were able to compare their experiences in New England and New France and decide which was most bearable.¹¹¹

Louis Coulon de Villiers witnessed the process of slave stealing while at Fort William Henry in 1757. Fort William Henry, originally occupied by the British, was located along Lake George in upstate New York. In August 1757, the French, led by the

¹⁰⁹ Haefeli and Sweeney, 26-27 and 126.

¹¹⁰ Emma Lewis Coleman, *New England Captives Carried to Canada between 1677 and 1760 during the French and Indian Wars*, vol. 1 (Portland, Maine: Southworth Press, 1925), 87-93.

¹¹¹ Coleman, vol. 1:369-370.

Marquis de Montcalm, laid siege to the fort. Louis participated in this action. The British commander, Lieutenant-Colonel George Munro, surrendered after a bombardment that lasted for over a week. As the defeated British marched away from the fort, a body of French-allied Indians attacked them, violating the terms of the capitulation. Louis Antoine Bougainville, Montcalm's aide-de-camp, blamed the Abenakis of Panaomeska for commencing the hostilities. Subsequently, Indians "from all the nations"¹¹² joined in the attack. Bougainville claimed that a desire to obtain the British's black slaves motivated the Indians to attack. He also contended that several French officers attempted to protect the besieged British; perhaps Louis Coulon de Villiers was among them. This infamous encounter, which James Fenimore Cooper immortalized in *The Last of the Mohicans*, embarrassed the French and outraged the British.¹¹³

Louis Coulon de Villiers participated in the siege of Fort William Henry. He commanded a body of 300 Canadian volunteers. On August 4, Louis and his men, along with the Chevalier de Lévis, four brigades, and various Indian allies, were ordered to "cover the right of the army, to send scouts on the road to Lydius, to watch the enemy on this side, and to make them believe, by continuous movements in this area, that we occupied all this line of communication..."¹¹⁴ Several days later, Louis, his men, and

¹¹² Various groups of Indians belonged to Montcalm's army. These included "domesticated Indians" like the Iroquois from Kahnawake and the Lac des Deux Montagnes, the Abenakis from St. Francis and Panaomeska, and the Micmacs from Acadia. Also included were "western Indians" like the Potawatomis and Miamis from St. Joseph and the Ottawas from Detroit. Edward P. Hamilton, ed. *Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 150-151 and 172-173.

¹¹³ DCB, "Louis Coulon de Villiers"; Gosselin, 61-62; Bougainville, 150-173.

¹¹⁴ Bougainville, 160.

several Indians “went sniping around the enemy’s entrenched camp.”¹¹⁵ The encounter resulted in the deaths of twenty-one Canadians and Indians. Supposedly, the British suffered worse fatalities. When the British surrendered the fort, Louis celebrated along with his countrymen. The celebrations ended quickly after the infamous attack on the retreating British. Louis might have witnessed the event firsthand. He might have even been one of the officers desirous of the black slaves.¹¹⁶

Black slaves served as soldiers in British companies during the French and Indian War.¹¹⁷ Oxford, who was from East Haddam, Connecticut, was one such individual. In 1757, he belonged to Welles’ company. While in service, Oxford formed a partnership with Sergeant Joseph Comstock and Drummer John Chappell of Fitch’s company. Together, the trio ran an illicit rum trade. Oxford also took advantage of his fellow soldiers’ belief in African spiritual power by telling their “fortunes.”¹¹⁸ Oxford received ninety lashes for both practices.¹¹⁹ Thomas Henry was another black soldier who fought on the British side. He belonged to Fitch’s company and once received 50 lashes for falling asleep on guard duty. Several blacks also served under Captain Gaplops, one of whom was whipped for threatening to kill a man.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Bougainville, 167.

¹¹⁶ Bougainville, 152-154, 160, and 167.

¹¹⁷ For more on blacks and military service, see Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1961) and Douglas Egerton, *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹¹⁸ For more on African American spiritual traditions, see Yvonne Patricia Chireau, *Black Magic: Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

¹¹⁹ Whipping was a common punishment in the British military at this time. Throughout Luke Gridley’s diary, there are numerous cases of soldiers receiving lashes.

Five black men were with the British at Fort William Henry in August 1757: Caesar, Caesar Nero, Linn, Jacob Lindse, and Cuggo. Caesar, whose master was Jacob Bigelow, had enlisted as a soldier that year. Caesar Nero, who belonged to Major John Gilman, was serving in Captain Richard Emery's company.¹²¹ Linn was the slave of Nathaniel Whittemore and Jacob Lindse, a mulatto, was the slave of John Biglow. Presumably, both men served as soldiers as well; Cuggo, likely, did the same.¹²²

The desire of the French and their Indian allies to obtain black slaves provided an impetus for the infamous skirmish at Fort William Henry. Caesar, Caesar Nero, Linn, Jacob Lindse, and Cuggo were all taken in the skirmish. According to Bougainville, the Indians, as well as some Frenchmen, engaged in this assault in order to steal black slaves from the British. He lamented that,

Will they in Europe believe that the Indians alone have been guilty of this horrible violation of the capitulation, that desire for the Negroes and other spoils of the English has not caused the people who are at the head of these nations to loosen the curb, perhaps to go even farther? The more so since one today may see one of these leaders, unworthy of the name of officer and Frenchman, leading in his train a Negro kidnapped from the English commander under the pretext of appeasing the shades of a dead Indian, giving his family flesh for flesh.¹²³

The Indian attackers wanted to sell these black slaves. Whoever captured Linn did in fact sell him to the French. The French officers, according to Bougainville, wanted to give the

¹²⁰ Luke Gridley, *Luke Gridley's Diary of 1757 While in Service in the French and Indian War* (Hartford Press, 1907), 27, 43, and 56.

¹²¹ For a full and excellent account of Caesar Nero's life, see Lois Brown, *Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins: Black Daughter of the Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 20-28.

¹²² Emma Lewis Coleman, *New England Captives Carried to Canada between 1677 and 1760 during the French and Indian Wars* (Portland, Maine: Southworth Press, 1925), vol. 2, 347, 349, and 355.

¹²³ Bougainville, 175.

slaves as captives to their Indian allies. It remains unclear if these Indians would have accepted the black slaves as appropriate substitutes for their deceased loved ones. All five black men were taken to Canada. Caesar and Linn remained there until 1760, the former was redeemed by his master. The fates of the other three remain unknown.¹²⁴

Conclusion

The members of Jumonville's family participated in the system of slavery in New France. These Atlantic World citizens owned both Indian and black people. They also lived within cities and posts that included slaves. These experiences exposed them to various Indian and African cultures and forced them to grapple with issues of unfreedom. For example, Madeleine Coulon de Villiers resided in Montreal during the fire of 1734. She lived next to Angélique, the convicted perpetrator. Witnessing the slave woman's supposed rebellion against her mistress likely affected Madeleine. Perhaps she treated her slave, Marguerite, more kindly afterwards. The Coulon de Villiers family continually interacted with foreign cultures, be they Indian or European, throughout the eighteenth century. Their experiences within a *society with slaves* influenced how they managed these encounters.

The enslaved population of New France, invisible for too long in histories of Early America, had diverse experiences. Some worked for governors and intendants while others worked for merchants and doctors. While certain slaves performed domestic tasks within households, others traveled to the *pays d'en haut* as boatmen. Many black slaves intermarried while numerous Indian slaves wed Canadians. Some slaves fought for

¹²⁴ Coleman, vol. 2, 347, 349, and 355.

their rights in the courts; others perished by the will of the justice system. These stories illuminate the varied nature of the slave experience in New France and, therefore, the Atlantic World. Scholars must continue to wrestle with this diversity.

CHAPTER V

The Jumonville Affair in Historical Memory

In 2005, the Public Broadcasting Service produced a documentary that presented a familiar portrait of a Revolutionary hero.¹ This film, “The War that Made America: The Story of the French and Indian War,” was based on a book by Fred Anderson.² The first scene opens in rural New York in the summer of 1776. A group of colonial soldiers are gathered in an open field. One man is reading aloud the Declaration of Independence. The camera pans to a solemn George Washington who sits astride a horse. On the eve of the Revolution, he is reflecting upon events that, according to the film’s narrator, helped to make him “the leader he was.” One of those events was the Jumonville Affair.³

The scene changes and, suddenly, it is May 28, 1754. Washington is a young man leading a band of soldiers into the woods of Western Pennsylvania. He and his party, which includes such Indian allies as the Half King, are approaching a small French camp. The French soldiers sight the intruders and scramble to take up their arms. Washington orders his men to fire and a battle ensues; both sides suffer casualties. The French surrender after a few minutes and the fire ceases. An interpreter accompanying the French introduces Washington to Ensign Joseph Coulon de Villiers de Jumonville, the

¹ “The War that Made America: The Story of the French and Indian War,” (PBS Home Video, 2005).

² This book, *The War that Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War*, is an abridgment of Anderson’s tome *Crucible of War*.

³ Washington did not forget his adventures in 1754. In a letter to Adam Stephen, who had fought alongside him at Fort Necessity, Washington expressed his remembrances. He stated that, “I did not let the Anniversary of the 3d...pass of [sic] with out a grateful remembrance of the escape we had at the Meadows...” Philander D. Chase, ed., *The Papers of George Washington* vol. 5 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 408-409.

commander of the French forces. He explains that the French were on a diplomatic mission and that Jumonville was a peace envoy. During this conference, the Half King approaches the wounded Jumonville and says, “Tu n’es pas encore mort, mon père.”⁴ He rears back and smashes his tomahawk into the ensign’s head, killing him. Washington stands horrified and confused. The narrator explains that under the rules of war, he was responsible for the safety of his defeated combatants. Now, his Indian ally has murdered the French commander, who was supposedly on a peace mission. The narrator explains that this event, the Jumonville Affair, helped to spark the French and Indian War. This was the war that made America and the war that made George Washington.

According to this film, the significance of the Jumonville Affair was that it served as a formative military experience for Washington. Also, in precipitating the French and Indian War, it set in motion events that would lead to American independence. However, the Affair was not always interpreted in this Washington-centered, nationalistic manner. Initially, contemporaries viewed the event as yet another battle between France and Britain in America in which the character of each nation was revealed. Washington was only an incidental figure in their recollections. After Washington became the hero of the Revolutionary War and the first president of the United States, the memory of the Jumonville event shifted. Historians focused on what the Affair meant within the context of Washington’s life. This historiographic trend persisted into the 21st century, as evidenced by “The War that Made America.”

The Washington-centered approach to the Jumonville Affair imposes an anachronistic context upon the event. In 1754, Washington was an inexperienced

⁴ “You are not yet dead, my father.”

lieutenant-colonel, not the Father of the United States. In fact, Jumonville was a more prominent figure at this time than Washington.⁵ The lure examining a Founding Father, however, has led scholars to minimize the roles of other actors in the Affair. Paul A. Cohen calls historical myth “an impressing of the past into the service of a particular reading of the present.”⁶ This is certainly what scholars, who are focused on illuminating Washington, have done to the Jumonville Affair.

Thus far, this dissertation has recreated the diverse world in which the Jumonville Affair took place. This chapter shifts gears and explains how, why, and to what effect historians forced the Affair into an American nationalist framework. This chapter argues that the Jumonville Affair was initially viewed as an example of imperial conflict in America. However, the unforeseen outcome of the French and Indian War, namely, the British victory which paved the way for the American Revolution, led historians to kidnap the event for the sake of the national narrative.⁷ As a result, Washington became the most important character in this story. The Washington-centered narrative of the Jumonville Affair has persisted despite the rise of the “new Indian history,” a development that inserted native perspectives into how American history is interpreted.⁸

⁵ I say this because Washington did not marry the wealthy Martha Custis until 1759. Prior to this, he was a struggling military man hoping for advancement. Meanwhile, Jumonville was from an elite military family with its own seigneurie in Verchères.

⁶ Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), xii.

⁷ For more on the “creation” of American history, see Eileen K. Cheng, *The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth: Nationalism and Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

⁸ Since the 1970s, scholars have rightly paid greater attention to Indian perspectives. Examples of this include Francis Jennings’ *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (1975), Neal Salisbury’s *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England* (1982), and Daniel Richter’s *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (2004). This

As this chapter demonstrates, traditional historiography remains influential among historians despite the rise of new interpretive approaches. Recently, Annette Gordon-Reed, for example, convincingly argued that Thomas Jefferson sired several children with his slave, Sally Hemings. Others who had raised this possibility encountered stiff resistance from established Jefferson scholars. Not until Gordon-Reed's prize-winning work appeared, along with corroborating DNA evidence, did "defenders" of Jefferson accept the possibility of alternative interpretations of his private life.⁹ Similarly, scholars of George Washington have sustained legendary claims about his character and experiences which fresh research both complicates and challenges. Hence, inquiries about the Jumonville Affair and the Coulon de Villiers family compel the same re-examination of Washington that Gordon-Reed applied to Jefferson.

This chapter, which addresses the aforementioned historiographic issues, is divided into three sections. Section 1 examines how the news of the Jumonville Affair was originally reported and demonstrates the impact of these initial characterizations. Section 2 explores how contemporaries recalled the Affair in the decades following the war. These interpretations only portrayed Washington as a minor character. Section 3 analyzes the shift to a Washington-centered narrative in the late 18th century. This approach has remained popular even among scholars who are receptive to the "new Indian history."

approach, called the "new Indian history," examines how Indians themselves shaped their world and affected American history.

⁹ See Annette Gordon Reed, *Thomas Jefferson & Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997) and Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008).

The Creation of the Jumonville Affair

During the summer of 1754, various versions of the Jumonville Affair were disseminated throughout the Americas and Europe. The varying accounts of the story derive from the differences in the sources. French and British soldiers and Indian warriors reported on the Affair. Their testimonies were biased and often contradictory with each witness attempting to place themselves in the best possible light. This evidence provided the basis for interpretations of the Affair for centuries.

Days after the Affair occurred, a member of Jumonville's party related his version of events to Claude-Pierre Pécaudy de Contrecoeur, the commander at Fort Duquesne.¹⁰ This informant was a Canadian named Monceau. He reported that Jumonville's party had built cabins in a low bottom, protecting themselves from the rain. At about 7 o'clock in the morning, their camp was surrounded by the British on one side and Indians on the other. The British fired two volleys. Using an interpreter, Jumonville bade them to stop and listen to him. They heeded him and Jumonville read the letter that Contrecoeur had given him, explaining his mission. While he was reading, the French came close to Jumonville, supposedly to protect him.¹¹ At this time, Monceau escaped and hobbled to Fort Duquesne.

Several Indians present during the Affair filled in the remainder of the story. These warriors were probably from Logstown (Chingué), the Half King's village, and

¹⁰ Fort Duquesne was located at the strategically significant forks of the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers in Western Pennsylvania. British soldiers began building a fort at this site in early spring 1754. On April 16 of that year, the French expelled the British and completed the fort themselves. They named it after the governor of New France, the Marquis Duquesne. Jumonville was stationed at this fort until May, when Contrecoeur sent him on his mission.

¹¹ Anderson, 47 and 53-54; Jacob Nicolas Moreau, *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits avec leurs pièces justificatives, pour servir de réponse aux observations envoyées par les Ministres d'Angleterre, dans les Cours de l'Europe* (Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1756), 106-107.

included a combination of Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingos. They related their account to M. de la Chauvignerie, the commandant at Logstown. According to their testimonies, the British shot Jumonville in the head while he was reading Contrecoeur's letter. They emphasized that the British would have killed all of the French had they not intervened. Chauvignerie sent this information to Contrecoeur. Contrecoeur sent this testimony and that of Monceau to the governor of New France, Michel-Ange Du Quesne de Menneville, Marquis Du Quesne. In this way, the French began disseminating their version of the Jumonville Affair.¹²

Other accounts of the Affair soon reached the French from various sources like Denis Kaninguen. Kaninguen, possibly another member of the Half King's party, deserted from the British camp and arrived at Fort Duquesne on June 30. He related a more sensational story than previous informants. As recalled in the journal of Gaspard-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry,¹³

[Kaninguen] reports that M. de Jumonville was killed by an English detachment which surprised him. This officer had advanced to communicate his orders to the English commander, in spite of the musket-fire the commander had aimed at him. On hearing the reading of it, he withdrew to his men whom he ordered to fire on the French. **M. de Jumonville was wounded, and had fallen. Thaninhison [the Half King], an Indian, came to him and said, "You are not dead yet, my father," and struck him several blows with his hatchet, which killed him [emphasis added].**¹⁴

¹² Marcel Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," *Pennsylvania History* 21, no. 4 (October 1954): 367 and 373; Moreau, *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits*, 107-108; Anderson, 27 and 54; Fernand Grenier, *Papiers Contrecoeur et autres documents concernant le conflit Anglo-Français sur l'Ohio de 1745 à 1756* (Québec: Les Presses Universitaires Laval, 1952), 192-195.

¹³ Anderson, 57.

¹⁴ Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, ed., *Journal of Chaussegros de Léry* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1940), 27-28. Recall that this is the version of events used in "The War that Made America."

In this version, the Half King personally kills Jumonville. He mockingly calls him “father,” a term that Indian groups used to address French leaders in recognition of their fictive kin relationship. Hatred for the French is the Half King’s implied motive in his actions. This tale of Jumonville’s death, more brutal than the previous version, further incited the French.¹⁵

Tensions in the Ohio Country continued to build during the summer. By July, Washington had already retreated to the Great Meadows, an open field near the site of the Affair. At this location, he and his men prepared to defend themselves against French retaliation. They hastily built the aptly named Fort Necessity, a simple structure composed of a circular fence which surrounded a small ammunition house. High trenches encircled this fortification. Reinforcements from South Carolina bolstered Washington’s numbers at the fort to 400. However, even the presence of these additional soldiers did not convince the Half King to remain with his British allies. Underwhelmed by Washington’s fortifications, he refused to offer further assistance.¹⁶

Meanwhile, Jumonville’s brother, Louis Coulon de Villiers, was making preparations of his own. After he heard about his brother’s death, he hastened to Fort Duquesne. He arrived on June 26 and Contrecoeur ordered him to retaliate against the British. Originally, Contrecoeur had assigned this job to Monsieur Le Mercier. However, both Mercier and Contrecoeur recognized Louis’ superior claim to the position because

¹⁵ Anderson, 56-58.

¹⁶ John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, vol. 1 (Washington, 1938), 70-84; Dorothy Twohig, ed., *George Washington’s Diaries, An Abridgement* (Charlottesville, 1999), 52-59; René Chartrand, *Monongahela 1754-1755: Washington’s Defeat, Braddock’s Disaster* (New York, 2004), 39; Anderson, 59-65.

of his rank and because, as he said, “mon frère avoit été assassiné....” On June 28, Louis departed Fort Duquesne with 600 French and Canadian soldiers and 100 Indian allies.¹⁷

Louis and his men attacked Fort Necessity on July 3. They positioned themselves on the high ground surrounding the fort and remained out of range of the British guns. From the cover of the forest, they pummeled their enemies with fire from long range muskets. Washington and his men fired back, albeit in vain. The fighting continued into the evening, at which point Louis assessed the situation. Although he was in a winning position, he knew that his Indian allies would leave in the morning. He had also received reports of drums and a cannon being heard in the distance, possibly belonging to British reinforcements. Louis decided to end the hostilities before the British could get the upper hand. He requested a parley, which Washington accepted.¹⁸

Washington agreed to surrender. A translator related the terms that the French were offering. These articles of capitulation stated that the French had only attacked the British in order to “revenge the **Assassination** committed on one of our Officers [emphasis added].” This line attributed to Washington responsibility for Jumonville’s death, or rather, murder. Washington, whose translator apparently failed to fully explain these terms, signed the document. The French now had an admission of guilt from the British. The term “assassination” was thereafter associated with the Affair, to the satisfaction of the French and the annoyance of the British.¹⁹

¹⁷ Grenier, 196-197; Anderson, 62-63.

¹⁸ Chartrand, 29-41; Anderson, 62-65; Grenier, 196-202.

¹⁹ “Capitulation,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 July 1754; Anderson, 64.

In anticipation of war with Britain, French officials in Canada used the “disgraceful assassination” of Jumonville to recruit Indians allies.²⁰ On July 17, a French official, probably Governor Duquesne, consulted with Shawnee from the town of Sonioto; some Miamis from the Great Lakes region were also present. The French courted them because of their strength in the Ohio Country. At the council, the French invoked the “assassination” of Jumonville as evidence of English perfidy. They promised the Shawnees access to a blacksmith, an armorer, and traders in return for their support. They also provided the Miamis with two belts so that they could relate the council “talk” in their villages. French officials like Duquesne had been rattled by the Indian involvement in the Jumonville Affair. Duquesne had immediately suspected the Half King’s complicity and feared the implications. The influential Indian leader might lead other Ohio Indians into the British camp.²¹ If this occurred, French forts, especially Fort Duquesne, would be at risk. This threat compelled the French to reach out to local native communities.²²

Jumonville’s story reached France that summer. Duquesne informed the French government about the incident, writing to Jean-Baptiste Machault d’Arnouville, the French minister of the marine.²³ He hoped that the government would be outraged at the “assassination” and resolve to strike against the English. Desiring to withhold judgment until further inquiry, Machault, in his reply on August 19, avoided using the loaded term

²⁰ Trudel, “The Jumonville Affair,” 373; Grenier, 192-195.

²¹ In addition to the Half King, who was a Mingo (western Seneca), Monacatoocha, an Oneida and Mingo chief was present at the Affair. He was also called Scarrooyady. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings*, 64; Anderson, 18.

²² Trudel, “The Jumonville Affair,” 373; Grenier, 192-195 and 216-218.

²³ This minister was responsible for colonial affairs.

“assassination.” Instead, he reported that “[t]he King has been sorry to learn the adventure which befell M. de Jumonville.” Machault contended that “[t]he views expressed by the King of England would not lead anyone to suppose that he has authorized the movements of the English troops on Belle-Rivière [Ohio River] or elsewhere. Will have an explanation upon this subject with the Court of England.” The French government did not want to act prematurely against the British. Rather, the government wanted to “remain on the defensive as long as possible.”²⁴

Duquesne, determined for those in France to see the urgency of the situation, wrote again to Machault. On October 25, he emphasized the malicious intentions of the British in Ohio. He warned that they were trying to strengthen ties with various Indian groups, including those allied with the French. He claimed that a “solemn congress” had occurred in July in Albany during which seven governors attempted to “persuade the Nations they had invited thither to attack us.” Duquesne also contended that the British intended to, “gain over our domiciled Indians, since they employ all sorts of artifices to corrupt them....” These actions, in addition to “the assassination of M de Jumonville,” proved that the British posed a serious threat. Duquesne demanded action.²⁵

Duquesne continued to seek out alliances with Indian groups. He was confident that the French would receive support from the “domiciled” Indian towns of La Présentation, Sault St. Louis, and Lac de Deux Montagnes. He believed that these villages, which housed Catholic Iroquois, would serve as barriers against the British or the British-allied Indians. In late October, he held a private council with Oneidas,

²⁴ *Report Concerning Canadian Archives for the Year 1905*, vol. 1 (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1906), 195.

²⁵ O’Callaghan, 264-265.

Tuscaroras, Cayugas, and Catholic Mohawks. This meeting addressed the “evil spirit” that ruled the Seneca, their brother nation. This “evil spirit” had compelled the Half King to ally with the British and other Senecas to attend the council at Albany. Duquesne hoped that the other Iroquois nations could bring their recalcitrant brothers back into the fold.²⁶

Meanwhile, the British had taken their own road to learning about and reacting to the Jumonville Affair. Their version of the story developed from Washington’s correspondence with Robert Dinwiddie, the governor of Virginia. On May 29, from his camp at the Great Meadows, Washington informed the governor of the incident. He explained that a few days before, he had received intelligence that the French were nearby and had hostile intentions. On the night of May 27, the Half King had sent him a note declaring that he knew the site of the French camp. Washington met with the Indian leader and they agreed to attack the French together. They marched throughout the rainy night until they located their enemy. Then, Washington “in conjunction with the Half-King and Monacawacha, formed a disposition to attack them on all sides, which we accordingly did, and, after an engagement of about fifteen minutes, we killed ten, wounded one, and took twenty-one prisoners. Amongst those killed was M. de Jumonville, the commander.”²⁷ Washington’s story markedly differed from that of the French. By his account, the French were enemy combatants, not envoys. Jumonville was a battle casualty, not a murder victim.

²⁶ O’Callaghan, 265-269.

²⁷ George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington: Being His Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official and Private: Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts: With a Life of the Author, Notes, and Illustrations*, vol. 2 (Boston: American Stationers’ Co, 1834), 32.

In a subsequent letter to Dinwiddie, Washington continued to defend his actions by asserting that “[The French] were sent as Spyes, and were order’d to wait near us till they were truly informed of our Intentions, situation, strength &ca...I doubt not but they will endeavour to amuse your Honour with many smooth Stories, as they did me but were confuted in them all and by circumstances too plain to be denied almost made me ashamed of their assertions.”²⁸ Washington professed his innocence, but he knew that the French were telling a different story. He vehemently defended himself lest Dinwiddie believe his enemy’s tale.

Over the next few months, information regarding the Jumonville Affair appeared in colonial newspapers. On June 27, an item about the ambush appeared in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Benjamin Franklin’s influential newspaper. The information came from a news source in Annapolis, Maryland. It gave particulars similar to those that Washington had provided to Dinwiddie, but with new details. For example, it said that the French, lying low in their glen, had detected the British as they had approached. They had then fired first and the British had returned fire in self-defense.²⁹

As the *Gazette* article proceeded, it supplied further information. According to this account, the French had tried to retreat, but “the Half King, and his Indians, who lay in Ambush to cut [the French] off in their Retreat, fell upon them, and soon killed and scalped Five of them...Major Washington interposed between them and the Half King, and it was with great Difficulty that he prevented the Indians from doing them further Mischief.” This account next blamed the Half King for Jumonville’s death: “One of those

²⁸ Fitzpatrick, *The Writings*, 68-69.

²⁹ “Annapolis,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 27 June 1754.

Five which were killed and scalped by the Indians, was Monsieur Jumonville, an Ensign, whom the Half King himself dispatched with his Tomahawk.” According to the article, he had nurtured a deep seeded hatred for the French because they had, “killed, boiled, and eat his Father.” He and his companions, “would not be satisfied without all their Scalps.”³⁰

This *Gazette* portrayed the Half King as a blood-thirsty killer and Washington as a decorous peacemaker. Although the general particulars of the story were similar to Washington’s account, there were significant differences. Firstly, this article contended that the French had started the fight. Then it cited the Half King, not Washington, as responsible Jumonville’s death. In this way, it bore similarity to Denis Kaninguen’s testimony. The article’s source resolutely denied British culpability for the incident and placed blame upon both their Indian ally and the French party.³¹

The account of Private John Shaw supported the account that the Half King killed Jumonville. Shaw was not present at the encounter on May 28, but he allegedly learned about it from Washington’s soldiers. He told his version of events in an affidavit to the governor of South Carolina on August 21, 1754:

Col. Washington with his Men and the Indians first came up with them and found them [the French] encamped between two Hills, being early in the morning some were asleep and some eating, but haveing (sic) heard a Noise they were immediately in great Confusion and betook themselves to their Arms and as this Deponent has heard one of them fired a Gun upon which Col. Washington gave the Word for all his Men to fire.³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² William L. McDowell, Jr., ed., *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765* vol. 3 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970) 4.

After the British victory, “the Half King took his Tomahawk and split the Head of the French Captain haveing (sic) first asked if he was an Englishman and haveing (sic) been told he was a French Man. He then took out his Brains and washed his Hands with them and then scalped him.”³³ This version of events implied that Washington could not control his Indian ally and that the Half King had an agenda that Washington had not understood. If true, it made sense that Washington did not include those details in his report to Dinwiddie.³⁴

By late summer, the British public had become aware of what had occurred in the Ohio wilderness. The source was, again, George Washington. In August, the *London Magazine* published his letter to his brother John Augustine. In this missive, Washington gave an abridged version of the account he had sent to Dinwiddie. He employed a vastly different tone, though. In his report to the governor, he was justifying his military actions to his superior. In his letter to his brother, he felt free to boast about his victory and the coolness that he showed under fire. He wrote that “I fortunately escaped without any wound, for the right wing, where I stood, was exposed to and received all the enemy’s fire...I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.”³⁵ King George II heard this comment and was unimpressed with the young man’s

³³ McDowell, 4.

³⁴ Anderson, 55; Hayes Baker-Crothers and Ruth Allison Hudnut, “A Private Soldier’s Account of Washington’s First Battles in the West; A Study in Historical Criticism,” *The Journal of Southern History* 8, no. 1 (1942): 24.

³⁵ “Copy of a Letter from Major-General George Washington to his Brother,” *London Magazine* 23 (1754): 370-371.

bravado. In response to Washington's apparent indifference to gunfire, the King replied that "[h]e would not say so, if he had been used to hear many."³⁶

By 1755, the French and British courts had learned about the Jumonville Affair. Each side heard versions of the incident and blamed the other for it. Finally, both governments were prepared to act. According to Machault "[t]he movements which took place last year in the direction of the Beautiful river, [Ohio River] have made considerable noise in Europe, and Sieur de Villiers' expedition [the Battle of Fort Necessity] has occasioned a particular ferment in England." As a result "the British Court has taken the resolution to dispatch to Virginia two regiments of Regulars, with officers, arms and clothing, for the levying of two others there." The British sent these reinforcements on January 13. Although the British claimed that this was only for security reasons, the French now had justification to react themselves. Machault informed Governor Duquesne that the King was sending troops to reinforce the French in America. The French and Indian war was soon to begin.³⁷

The Jumonville Affair Remembered, 1756-1780

During the war years, and for decades thereafter, the French and the British discussed the Jumonville Affair in books, poems, and letters. In these remembrances, the French recalled the event as a moment in which the British displayed their brutality. The British preferred to recall the event as infrequently as possible. Both sides mention Washington in their accounts of the Affair, but only as an incidental character.

³⁶ Fitzpatrick, *The Writings*, 70 and 70n34.

³⁷ O'Callaghan, 270 and 275-278.

In 1756, coinciding with the official declaration of war between Britain and France, the printing press of the French government, l'Imprimerie Royale, published Jacob Nicolas Moreau's *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits*. *Mémoire* details the conflicts that had occurred between France and Britain since the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, including the Jumonville Affair. The work contained various primary sources which chronicled these disputes. Taken together, these documents were powerful propaganda tools to stir opposition to the British and justify the war.³⁸

In *Mémoire*, Moreau repeats the version of the Affair that had circulated among the French since June 1754. He writes that Contrecoeur, acting on intelligence that the British were nearby, sent Jumonville's party out with a letter. Jumonville was to deliver this missive to the first British commander whom he met. The letter stated that the French had only innocuous intentions and that the British should treat Jumonville with the respect due him. The letter also demanded the British to retreat from the Ohio Country, a region to which they had no title, lest the French "repel force by force." Contrecoeur instructed the British commander to reveal his intentions to Jumonville and then send him back to Fort Duquesne. Thus, Jumonville's mission, from Moreau's perspective, was simply to deliver a letter to an officer and to cause no disturbance. Bolstering this depiction were the private orders that Contrecoeur had given to Jumonville. These orders emphasized that Jumonville was to maintain peace with any whom he met. In a later section of *Mémoire*, Moreau includes a copy of Contrecoeur's orders to Jumonville and a

³⁸ Auguste Bernand, *Histoire de l'Imprimerie Royale du Louvre* (Amsterdam: Verlag P. Schippers N.V., 1966), 66-69; Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," 375; Moreau, *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits*, 1-21, 104-146.

copy of his letter to the British commander. These documents assist Moreau in characterizing Jumonville as an innocent.³⁹

Mémoire was well received in academic circles. The July 1756 edition of the *Journal de Trévoux*, also called the *Mémoire pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux-arts*, included a summary of this work.⁴⁰ This summary remains true to Moreau's book and calls the Jumonville Affair an "assassination." The entry blames the British for the event and describes Washington as "the author of that cowardly and guilty enterprise..."⁴¹ The Half King and his men, as in *Mémoire*, appear as defenders of the French. The publication of Moreau's version of the Affair in the *Journal de Trévoux* further disseminated to the French the idea of Jumonville as a victim of British barbarity.⁴²

The British responded by publishing an English language version of *Mémoire*. The book was printed in London in 1757 as, *The conduct of the late ministry, or, a memorial; containing a summary of facts with their vouchers, in answer to the observations, sent by the English ministry, to the courts of Europe*. This book resembled

³⁹ Moreau, *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits*, 21 and 106-108; Jacob Nicolas Moreau, *The conduct of the late ministry, or, a memorial; containing a summary of facts with their vouchers, in answer to the observations, sent by the English ministry, to the courts of Europe* (London: Printed for W. Bizet, at the Golden-Ball, in St. Clement's Church-Yard, 1757), 20-21 and 110-113; Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," 367; Anderson, 27, 47 and 53-54.

⁴⁰ The *Journal de Trévoux* was first published around 1701. This literary journal was founded by Jesuit faculty of the College of Louis-le-Grand in Paris, a famous Jesuit school. The purpose of the monthly journal was to summarize recently published books that the editors deemed significant. Cyril B. O'Keefe, *Contemporary Reactions to the Enlightenment- A Study of three critical journals: The Jesuit Journal de Trévoux, the Jansenist Nouvelles ecclésiastiques, and the secular Journal des Savants* (Paris, Honoré Champion, 1974), 6-9.

⁴¹ "Article LXXIV, Mémoire contenant le précis des faits, avec leurs pièces justificatives, pour servir de réponse aux Observations envoyées par les ministres d'Angleterre, dans les cours de l'Europe," *Mémoire pour l'Histoire des Sciences & des beaux Arts* 2 (July 1756): 1759.

⁴² *Mémoire pour l'Histoire des Sciences & des beaux Arts*, 1734-1790.

the French publication, including the footnotes. In the Preface to this new edition, however, the editor accuses Moreau of being “extremely cautious to advance any Thing, which he cannot support by undoubted Authority.” As a result, “it is no wonder the Whole should have made an Impression upon many Foreign Nations.” The editor contends that, “the unexampled, and strange Indifference, which some former Allies, shew [sic] at present to our Interests, is in a great Measure, owing to the Impression made by this Performance.”⁴³ According to this editor, *Mémoire* had created an impression in Europe that the British were at fault for the war. This impression may have caused other nations to hesitate to rally behind them. By publishing an English version of the text, the editor hoped to inform the English about the “foul aspersions” being cast upon their nation so that they could defend the “Honour of their deluded, and most injured Country.”⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, he also hoped that other European nations would become sympathetic to the British cause.

George Washington read the English version of *Mémoire* that Hugh Gaine published in New York in 1757. Two journals included in the book especially interested him. One of these journals had belonged to him. He had left it behind at Fort Necessity and the French had taken possession of it.⁴⁵ The other journal belonged to Louis Coulon de Villiers and included his version of the Fort Necessity battle. Washington expressed

⁴³ Moreau, *A Memorial*, iv.

⁴⁴ Moreau, *A Memorial*, iv.

⁴⁵ The Marquis Duquesne, governor of New France, received a copy of Washington’s journal and sent it to various persons in New France. One recipient was Claude Pécaudy de Contrecoeur, commandant of Fort Duquesne. Contrecoeur’s copy of the journal was preserved in the Archives du Séminaire de Québec. The version of the journal printed in *Mémoire* is very similar to Contrecoeur’s version. This shows that, despite claims by Washington and others, Moreau did not creatively edit *Mémoire*, rather he remained close to the original text. Twohig, *George Washington’s Diaries*, 33-35; Grenier, 133 and 249-253.

his thoughts about these documents in a letter to a friend. He contended that he had not written a regular journal during 1754 expedition and that the notes he had taken had been altered in *Mémoire*. Concerning the capitulation at Fort Necessity, Washington declared “that we were willfully, or ignorantly, deceived by our interpreter in regard to the word *assassination*, I do aver, and will to my dying moment; so will every officer that was present.”⁴⁶ In this way, Washington disputed the French version of the events and offered his own perspective.⁴⁷

As the war continued, French poets preserved the memory of the Jumonville Affair through a literary genre. They followed the French line that Jumonville was an innocent and the British were barbarians. In 1758, François-Antoine Chevrier published *Poèmes sur des sujets pris de l’histoire de notre tems*. He devoted the second section of this poem to the death of Jumonville, whose name he considered forevermore covered with “shame and infamy.” In his depiction, Chevrier emphasizes the letter that Jumonville carried, considering it evidence of his peaceful purpose. However, he confuses the timing of the events, having Jumonville to bring his letter to Fort Necessity. He writes that as Jumonville approached, the British fired. Jumonville held the letter, which proved his innocent intentions, in his hand. However, the impatient British, not even pausing to read the letter, killed him.⁴⁸ The Indians in Chevrier’s poem were

⁴⁶ Jared Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington; Being his Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official, and Private, Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts; with a Life of the Author, Notes, and Illustrations* vol. 2 (Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Metcalf, and Hilliard, Gray, and Co., 1834), 464.

⁴⁷ Sparks, vol. 2, 463-465; Fitzpatrick, *The Writings*, 36n84.

⁴⁸ “Quand Jumonville, d’une Main, Pour leur découvrir son dessein, Montre la Lettre...L’on s’avance, On l’environne en frémissant; D’un regard plein d’impatience L’Anglais semble, à son innocence Demander compte de son sang. Voilà donc l’instant redoutable De cette Epoque épouvantable...” François-Antoine

outraged and vowed revenge. In this way, Chevrier disparages the British by juxtaposing their barbarity with the humanity of the “savages.”⁴⁹

Chevrier uses Louis Coulon de Villiers’ journal as a source to depict the aftermath of Jumonville’s death. As in the journal, the poem recounts Commandant Contrecoeur, or Crevecoeur as Chevrier misspells it, ordering that Jumonville’s assassination be avenged. Contrecoeur commands Louis to lead the war party. During his march, Louis stops at the place of his brother’s assassination and sees dead bodies still on the ground. The sight fills him with righteous indignation. After Louis triumphs at Fort Necessity, Chevrier continues, he shows his superior French character by displaying mercy and fairness towards his enemies. The moral of Jumonville’s story, as Chevrier expresses it, is that “The French are always noble and the English are always angry.”⁵⁰ This conclusion, supported by evidence from *Mémoire*, became potent propaganda during the war.

In 1759, French writer Antoine Léonard Thomas published the *Jumonville Poëme*.⁵¹ This poem received more acclaim than Chevrier’s, winning a prize from the Académie Française that year.⁵² Thomas begins boldly in his Preface, stating that “the subject of this poem is the assassination of M. de Jumonville in America, and the

Chevrier, *Poèmes sur des sujets pris de l’histoire de notre tems. Publiés par Mr. D. Partie anglo-gallicane*. A Liege, Aux dépens de la Compagnie, 1758, 24.

⁴⁹ Chevrier, 20-28; Trudel, “The Jumonville Affair,” 377-378.

⁵⁰ Chevrier, 28-39 and Moreau, *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits*, 147 and 150.

⁵¹ Antoine Léonard Thomas, 1732-1785, was a French philosophe. He was a professor at the *Collège de Beauvais* and joined the Académie Française in 1766. His other works include *éloges* of Sully, Descartes, and Marcus Aurelius. Duncan Maclaren Robertson, *A History of the French Academy, 1635-1910* (New York: G.W. Dilligham Company, 1910), 362.

⁵² The *Jumonville Poëme* was republished in a 1764 collection of Thomas’ work. Antoine Léonard Thomas, *Oeuvres Diverses de Mr. de Thomas, Ci-devant Professeur en l’Université de Paris au College de Beauvais* (Avignon: Jean-Baptiste Giroud, 1764), 10-54.

avenging of this murder.”⁵³ Throughout the Preface, Thomas describes the events leading up to the Jumonville Affair; his account mirrors the narration divulged in *Mémoire*. He emphasizes that the British had fired upon Jumonville and his party first and that Jumonville had attempted to stay them by reading Contrecoeur’s letter. He was murdered as he read.⁵⁴ Thomas laments that this treatment of an envoy violated the laws of nations. The British, therefore, were both ignoble and barbarous.⁵⁵

The actual text of Thomas’ poem is composed of four sections, or *Chants*. In these sections, Thomas dramatizes the story told initially in the Preface. In the *Chant Second*, Thomas creates a speech for Jumonville that the ensign delivers to the British. In the speech, Jumonville speaks forcefully, but respectfully, to his enemies, emphasizing France’s rights in the Ohio Country. Suddenly, a fatal bullet silences him. Thomas writes that, “[t]hree times he raised his heavy eyelid, three times his eye was closed to the light.” Jumonville dies at the feet of his enemies, “his torn limbs twitching on the arena [ground].”⁵⁶ Thomas’ depiction of Jumonville’s story further embedded in French minds the certainty of Jumonville’s innocence and his maltreatment.

The British did not write poems about Jumonville. In fact, reflections on the war often excluded discussion of the Affair altogether. The 1758 edition of the *Annual Register*⁵⁷ carried a section entitled, “The History of the Present War.” In this section,

⁵³ Thomas, 13.

⁵⁴ Note that in Contrecoeur’s account from *Mémoire*, Jumonville’s translator reads the letter. This small change adds drama to Thomas’ narration. Thomas, 15 and Moreau, *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits*, 107.

⁵⁵ Thomas, 13-21.

⁵⁶ Thomas, 34.

Edmund Burke, the editor of this journal, listed “the uncertain limits of the English and French territories in America,” as a primary cause of the war. He defended British settlers’ rights to the Ohio Country and questioned the right of the French to expel them from this land and to build Fort Duquesne. Ultimately, he claims that he cannot definitively settle who had the strongest land claim. He astutely points out that “[i]t is no wonder that [England and France] seizing on a country in which they considered the right of the natural inhabitants as nothing, should find it a very difficult matter to settle their own.”⁵⁸ The Jumonville Affair does not appear in Burke’s characterization of the reasons for the war. Even in discussing the dispute over the Ohio Country, he ignores the event.⁵⁹

British histories on the war, such as M. Dobson’s *Chronological Annals of the War; From its Beginning to the Present Time*, make only brief references to the Jumonville Affair. In his introduction to the book, Dobson summarizes the events leading up to the war. He includes a short reference to the Affair, saying “[o]n the first of June, a Party of 35 Soldiers, detach’d to intercept an English Convoy, was routed by 45 men under Mr. Washington; seven of the French were kill’d, and the rest made Prisoners....”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature for the Year...*, was a yearly synopsis of significant events in Britain and abroad. The journal was first published by Robert Dodsley in 1758. Edmund Burke served as the journal’s first editor. For more, see T.O. McLoughlin, *Edmund Burke and the First Ten Years of the Annual Register 1758-1767* (Salisbury, 1975) and William B. Todd, *A Bibliographical Account of the Annual Register, 1758-1825* (London, 1961). Also see the *Annual Register* website “The Annual Register: A Record of World Events,” <<http://annualregister.chadwyck.co.uk/info/home.htm>> Accessed August 4, 2010.

⁵⁸ *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature for the Year 1758* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1759), 2.

⁵⁹ *Annual Register... for the Year 1758*, 1-3.

⁶⁰ M. Dobson, *Chronological Annals of the War; From its Beginning to the Present Time* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1763), xiii.

As evidence of Dobson's lack of interest, he gives an incorrect date for the incident. He also avoids the debate on whether or not Jumonville's death was an assassination.

In London in 1765, a collection was printed with the title "A Short History in Miniatures of the Origin and Progress of the Late War from its Commencement to the Exchange of the Ratification of Peace between Great Britain, France and Spain, on the 10th of Feb'y 1763." These miniatures contain only a passing reference to the Jumonville Affair. The collection includes fifty-eight small, circular panels, each covered in either a story or a picture about the war. One miniature tells that the British began trading with Indians on the banks of the Ohio in 1749. Several subsequent panels explain the ways in which the French interfered with this trade. The next miniature tells of George Washington's 1753 expedition into the Ohio to meet with French commander Jacques Legardeur de Saint Pierre.⁶¹ The next lists the disputes between the French and the British in the ensuing year. Included among these disputes was "Washington's expedition," probably a reference to the Jumonville Affair. This event received no further examination and no accompanying picture. So, the compilers of this miniature collection recognized the role the Affair played in starting the war, but they avoided the details lest the narrative of French aggression be weakened.⁶²

Thomas Mante had more to say about the Affair and its aftermath in *The History of the Late War in North America*. In this work, he defends Washington, explaining that he had received intelligence of the French skulking about in the woods. Convinced of

⁶¹ See George Washington, *The Journal of Major George Washington, Sent by the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, Esq; ... to the Commandant of the French Forces on Ohio* (Williamsburg printed, London reprinted for T. Jefferys, 1754).

⁶² Bernard Fay, *George Washington: Republican Aristocrat* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931), illustrated pages between 98 and 99.

their negative intentions, he attacked Jumonville's party. His actions were both reasonable and justified. Mante displays righteous indignation about how the French characterized Washington after the Affair. He took particular umbrage that they attached the title of "assassin" to him.⁶³

An epistolary conversation occurred in 1768 that encapsulates French and British attitudes towards the Affair. The French correspondent in this tête-à-tête was Voltaire; the British correspondent was Horace Walpole, son of Prime Minister Robert Walpole. The two men had mutual friends, like Mme du Deffand, and mutual interests, like Shakespeare. Their dialogue regarding the Jumonville Affair captures the French interest in and the British discomfort with discussing the event. Their letters also show that the death of Jumonville remained a topic of conversation among intellectual and political elites even after the war.⁶⁴

Both Walpole and Voltaire had commented on the Jumonville Affair prior to their 1768 exchange. On October 6, 1754, Walpole referenced the Affair and the Battle of Fort Necessity in a letter to Horace Mann. In this letter, Walpole paraphrased Washington's comment from the *London Magazine* and called him a braggart.⁶⁵ On July 12, 1757, Voltaire expressed disdain for the British, "since they assassinate our officers in

⁶³ Thomas Mante, *The History of the Late War in North America, and the Islands of the West-Indies, Including the Campaigns of MDCCLXIII and MDCCLXIV Against His Majesty's Indian Enemies* (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1772), 10-14.

⁶⁴ M. B. Finch and E. Allison Peers, "Walpole's Relations with Voltaire," *Modern Philology* 18, no. 4 (1920): 189-200.

⁶⁵ Horace Walpole, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann* ed., W.S. Lewis, Warren Hunting Smith, and George L. Lam, vol. 20 (New Haven, 1960), 449-450. "Copy of a Letter from Major-General Washington," *London Magazine* 23 (August 1754): 370-371; Fitzpatrick, *The Writings*, 70n34.

America....”⁶⁶ This is a reference to Jumonville’s “assassination.” Both men, then, entered their 1768 discussion with an understanding of and an opinion on the Affair.

On June 6, 1768, Voltaire wrote to Walpole that “I have always doubted the assassination of M. de Jumonville, which produced in France more bad verses than reprisals.”⁶⁷ This is a reference to either one or both of the poems written by Chevrier and Thomas. After researching the incident in official documents, Voltaire claimed to be unsure if the “alleged assassination” had occurred. He implored Walpole to discover the truth and relate it to him.⁶⁸ On June 21, Walpole responded that “I know nothing of the history of Monsieur de Genonville, nor can tell whether it is true or false, as this is the first time I ever heard of it...I love my country, but I do not love any of my countrymen that have been capable, if they have been so, of a foul assassination.”⁶⁹ As previously mentioned Walpole had referenced the Jumonville Affair in a letter in 1754. He hid this knowledge from Voltaire in order to evade the question.

As the weeks progressed, Walpole avoided a response to his correspondent’s inquiry. Voltaire refused to be thwarted and on July 15, he brought up the subject again. With a politeness that concealed his impatience, Voltaire asked Walpole to “[b]e so kind as to tell me frankly if Jumonville was assassinated near the river called Oyo.” Voltaire wrote this sentence in English, unlike the rest of the letter which was in French, to

⁶⁶ Theodore Besterman, ed., *Voltaire’s Correspondence*, vol. 31 (Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1958), 225-227; H.H. Miles, *The History of Canada under French Régime, 1535-1763* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1872), 290.

⁶⁷ Theodore Besterman, ed., *Voltaire’s Correspondence*, vol. 69 (Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1961), 178-179. The translation of this letter is my own.

⁶⁸ Besterman, vol. 69, 178-179.

⁶⁹ Besterman, vol. 69, 204.

emphasize the importance of his request. Walpole finally addressed the issue on July 27. He wrote that “I have made all the inquiry I could into the story of M. de Jumonville; and though your and our accounts disagree, I own I do not think, Sir, that the strongest evidence is in our favour.” After this admittance, he continued that “I am told we allow he was killed by a party of our men, going to Ohio. Your countrymen say he was going with a flag of truce. The commanding officer of our party [Washington] said M. de Jumonville was going with hostile intentions; and that very hostile orders were found after his death in his pocket.” However, Walpole asserted that since Washington had no previous knowledge of these orders, their existence did not absolve him of guilt. Walpole ended the letter lamenting that the situation had occurred, “between two nations who have everything in themselves to create happiness, and who may find enough in each other to love and admire.”⁷⁰ Walpole’s defense of Washington is modest and indicates that he, like others writing in Britain after the war, preferred to leave the topic of the Jumonville Affair quite alone.

The Washington-Centered Narrative and Its Persistence

J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur⁷¹ provides an early example of the turn to a Washington-centered interpretation of the Jumonville Affair.⁷² This turn began in the late

⁷⁰ Fitzpatrick, *The Writings*, 70n34; Walpole, 449-450; Besterman, vol. 69, 281-283.

⁷¹ Crèvecoeur was one among several Frenchmen who would visit and write about the new nation. Alexis de Tocqueville published his two-volume work *De la démocratie en Amérique (Democracy in America)* in 1835 and 1840; François-René de Chateaubriand wrote *Voyage en Amérique* in 1828; Michel Chevalier produced *Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States* in 1839. See Edward Watts, *In This Remote Country: French Colonial Culture in the Anglo-American Imagination, 1780-1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1-5. Watts discusses these writers’ interest in and conclusions about French America.

18th century as scholars considered the character of the new American nation and its leaders. Crèvecoeur fought on the French side during the French and Indian War and certainly heard various versions of the Affair. After years of reflection on this event and its consequences, he discusses it in his essay, “The English and the French before the Revolution.”⁷³ He recalls that Washington “very civilly kills Captain Jumonville, though clad under the sanction of a flag. Each party accuses the other of perfidy; God knows who is to blame.” Although Crèvecoeur appears uncertain about who was at fault for the event, he still calls Washington Jumonville’s “murderer.”⁷⁴

Ultimately, Crèvecoeur interprets the Affair as a necessary step on the road to American independence.⁷⁵ He contends that “[f]rom the ashes of Jumonville a Frenchman sees, I suppose, with pleasure the shrub of independence growing up, perhaps to a tall tree, perhaps to remain a bush until some more distant period.” Thus, he credits the Jumonville Affair with setting in motion a war that was a necessary precursor for the American rebellion. Also, the event helped to create Washington, the Revolutionary hero and the “idol of the French.” Crèvecoeur reasons that “[i]n that case, a Frenchman could

⁷² He was born Michel-Guillaume Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur in Caen, France in 1735. He first arrived in New France in 1755 as a cadet in the French military. He fought at Fort William Henry in 1757 and at the battle on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. After the war, he settled in New York. He published *Letters from an American Farmer*, his most famous work, in 1781. See J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 7-14.

⁷³ This essay appears in *Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America*. Crèvecoeur probably wrote this collection of essays in the 1780s, but they were not discovered until 1923. Now, they are published alongside his *Letters from an American Farmer*. Crèvecoeur, 23.

⁷⁴ Crèvecoeur, 340.

⁷⁵ As a sign of his respect for Washington, Crèvecoeur sent him a copy of *Letters from an American Farmer* in 1787. George Washington, “To Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur,” July 9, 1787, *The writings of George Washington: being his correspondence, addresses, messages, and other papers, official and private: selected and published from the original manuscripts: with a life of the author, notes, and illustrations*. vol. 9 (Boston : American Stationers’ Co, 1834-1837), 259.

not have died a more useful death for the benefit of this country [America].”⁷⁶ Crèvecoeur’s book is one of the first in the historiography to interpret the Jumonville Affair in this nationalistic, Washington-centered manner.⁷⁷ This pattern of analysis pervades the discourse for years to come.⁷⁸

During the antebellum era, American scholars produced history with nationalist objectives. They argued that the new nation had a history that made America exceptional. These scholars wrote innumerable biographies, particularly of Revolutionary heroes like George Washington. The purpose of these works was to demonstrate the moral virtue of these individuals. Scholars imputed these same characteristics to America itself. Within this context, the Jumonville Affair became more than just another imperial clash; it became a moment in which historians could uncover Washington’s virtuous character.⁷⁹

Jared Sparks compiled *The Writings of George Washington* in 1834.⁸⁰ This work became so popular that it was translated into both French and German. In it, Sparks contends that “[n]o transaction in the life of Washington has been so much misrepresented, or so little understood, as this skirmish with Jumonville.” Because the Affair was the opening event in the war, “a notoriety was given to it, particularly in

⁷⁶ Crèvecoeur, 341.

⁷⁷ Crèvecoeur, 340-341.

⁷⁸ See also Pierre Pouchot, *Mémoires sur la dernière guerre de l’Amérique septentrionale entre la France et l’Angleterre, suivis d’observations, dont plusieurs sont relatives au théâtre actuel de la guerre, et de nouveaux détails sur les mœurs et les usages des sauvages, avec des cartes topographiques* (Yverdon, 1781). An English language version of this book was also published. See Franklin B. Hough, ed., *Memoir upon the late war in North America, between the French and the English, 1756–60* vol. 1 (Roxbury: W. Elliot Woodward, 1866).

⁷⁹ Cheng, 13-20.

⁸⁰ Sparks was a contemporary of George Bancroft, perhaps the most prominent historian of the period, as well as John Marshall and William Prescott. Cheng, 30-31.

Europe, altogether disproportioned to its importance.” Sparks explained that prior to the official outbreak of war in 1756, “[i]t was the policy of each nation to exaggerate the proceedings of the other on their colonial frontiers....” In this tense climate, each side wanted the other to perform the first act of aggression. Thus, “when the intelligence of the skirmish with Jumonville got to Paris, it was officially published by the government, in connexion with a memoir and various papers, and his death was called a murder.”⁸¹ The poet and scholar M. Thomas stirred tensions further by composing the epic *Jumonville*. This “fictitious” account “passed from fiction to history, and to this day it is repeated by the French historians, who in other respects render justice to the character of Washington....”⁸² The Affair had been obscured by propaganda; Sparks intended to lift the veil.

Ultimately, Sparks defends Washington’s behavior in 1754, contending that his actions against the French were justifiable. Jumonville’s own behavior convinced Washington of his “hostile intention.” Sparks argues that “[Jumonville] was at the head of an armed force, he sent out spies in advance, concealed himself and his party two days in an obscure place near the camp, and despatched messengers with intelligence to his commander at the fort.” These were “strong evidences” of French perfidy and had Washington ignored them, he would have been derelict in his duty. Additionally, Sparks contends, Washington did not know of Jumonville’s summons. Even if he had, “he could not properly do otherwise than what he did, under the circumstances in which M. de

⁸¹ Jared Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington; Being his Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official, and Private, Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts; with a Life of the Author, Notes, and Illustrations*, vol. 1 (Boston: American Stationers’ Company, 1837), 47.

⁸² Sparks, vol. 1, 47-48.

Jumonville chose to place himself.”⁸³ Thus, it was Jumonville’s questionable behavior that killed him, not Washington.⁸⁴

Joel Tyler Headley, a successful “popular” historian who wrote *The Illustrated Life of Washington* in 1860, goes further than Sparks in glorifying the Virginian.⁸⁵ He dramatizes the Jumonville Affair and depicts Washington as a fearless leader. According to his portrayal, Jumonville’s party spotted Washington and his Indian allies as they approached. The French grabbed their weapons and prepared to attack:

“Fire!” cried Washington, and the same moment discharged his musket. A rapid volley followed, and for fifteen minutes it was sharp work. Jumonville, the French commander, and ten of his men were killed, and twenty-two taken prisoners. The remainder fled. Washington had but one man killed and three wounded.⁸⁶

In this account, Washington appears confident and in control. For Headley, the Affair was the “first trial” in which the future Founding Father “showed the metal he was made of.”⁸⁷ This inner steel would make Washington an American hero.

⁸³ Sparks, vol. 1, 48-49.

⁸⁴ In 1851, British historian Lord Mahon criticized Sparks’ historical method. He accused him of altering citations and excluding facts that would impugn Washington’s dignity. Sparks believed that his method was honest. He was committed to using primary sources and only changed quotations to rid them of slang expressions and grammatical errors. He also refused to include personal anecdotes, for he considered them untrustworthy. However, Sparks did believe in writing in an accessible way in order to attract readers. For an example of a historian who relished in relating the personal anecdotes of his subjects, see Mason Locke Weems’ *The Life of George Washington, with Curious Anecdotes Laudable to Himself and Exemplary to his Countrymen* (1806). Cheng, 87 and 91-92.

⁸⁵ Sparks recognized some merits in Headley’s “popular” work, namely the accessibility of his writing. However, he considered it different from his own, more rigorous scholarship. Cheng, 47.

⁸⁶ Joel Tyler Headley, *The Illustrated Life of Washington* (New York: G.F. & Bill, 1860), 46.

⁸⁷ Headley, 46.

In order to literally illustrate Washington's shining moment, Headley includes a color print entitled "Death of Jumonville." The characters in the picture are surrounded by a dark-green forest. The focus of the picture is an erect Washington, clad in a blue uniform. Behind him are British soldiers and Indian warriors. Washington's head is turned to face his men, but his hand points forward, towards the French who are wearing red. Both sides are shooting their guns, but the French are losing the engagement. One French soldier holds the dying Jumonville in his arms, presumably shot by British fire. The Washington in this print is much like the Washington in Headley's description. He is displaying the resolve and bravery that would serve him well in his later military career. Meanwhile, Jumonville is no peace envoy; he has no diplomatic letter in his hands. Rather, he is a legitimate enemy who died in battle.⁸⁸

Headley depicts the Jumonville Affair as an event with significant consequences for Europe and America. He enhances Washington's importance by contending that this event, in which he was so involved, had a monumental outcome. He argues that "[p]robably there never before turned such vast consequences on a single musket-shot as on that fired by Washington in the commencement of this skirmish. Its echo went round the globe; it was the signal-gun breaking up the councils and diplomatic meetings of Europe, and summoning the two greatest powers of the world to arms to struggle for a continent." The war expelled the French from America and "made a warlike people of the colonists, who were jealous of their rights." This, as Crèvecoeur had earlier noted, led to the American Revolution. Additionally, it was the Jumonville Affair that first introduced the French to Washington. The event had thrown "both government and people into a

⁸⁸ Headley, 47. This print of the "Death of Jumonville" is sold at the gift shop at the Fort Necessity National Battlefield.

state of high excitement.” The government responded by going to war while the people responded by writing poetry to “commemorate [Jumonville’s] sad fate.”⁸⁹ So, to Headley, the importance of the Affair is that it provided the impetus for one war which then led to the Revolution. Also, the event began France’s relationship with Washington.

Francis Parkman, like Sparks, focused on Washington’s guilt or innocence for the Affair in *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884). This book was a part of his seven-volume work *France and England in North America*. Parkman used *Mémoire*, Washington’s writings, and Pierre Pouchot’s *Mémoire sur la dernière guerre*, among other sources, to compose his depiction of the Jumonville Affair. He concluded that Jumonville’s extended tenure in the woods and his failure to alert the British to his presence and peaceful intentions left Washington no choice but to act. Therefore, Washington was innocent of the charge of assassination.⁹⁰ Parkman concludes that “[j]udge it as we may, this obscure skirmish began the war that set the world on fire.”⁹¹ In this way, he mirrors Headley who also casts the Affair as a globally significant event.

The pattern of viewing the Jumonville Affair through the lens of Washington’s life continued into the 20th century. In 1931, Bernard Fay published the influential biography *George Washington: Republican Aristocrat*. In this book, he portrays Washington as a naïve young man who was surprised at the firestorm his skirmish caused; had the event occurred in Europe, he would have been shamed and dishonored. In the face of accusations that he murdered a French emissary, Washington argued that

⁸⁹ Headley, 49.

⁹⁰ Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe* vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1885), 148-153.

⁹¹ Parkman, 150.

Jumonville had been a spy. From Washington's perspective, the French had begun hostilities when they had expelled the British from Fort Duquesne weeks before. Most importantly for Fay "[Washington] knew that in the shadows of the woodland and the unspeakable confusion of Indian warfare, he who was caught off guard was lost and that the winner of the first victory would have the greater influence over the Indians." Therefore, by his preemptive attack, he acted as "a good patriot." He had "obeyed the laws of the forest rather than the rules of European warfare. He was a gentleman from Virginia and not a regular officer."⁹² In this way, he had been loyal to both his class and colony. Fay acknowledges that Jumonville died on Washington's watch. However, he contends that Washington merely did his duty.

Concurrently with their counterparts in the United States, historians in Canada were also considering their national identity. After 1763, Canada became a British colony rather than a French one. English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians spent the next century deciding how to define themselves both culturally and politically. This grappling is reflected in the numerous "History of Canada" books published during the 1800s. Historians attempted to understand what Canada had become by examining what it had been before. The end of French rule, precipitated by the French and Indian War, played a significant role in these analyses. As a result, historians regularly mentioned Jumonville's death. Because these historical works are intended to be objective history and not propaganda, inflammatory words like "assassination" do not appear. While

⁹² Fay, 77-78.

scholars mention Washington in conjunction with the Affair, he does not initially loom large, though this dynamic changes by mid-century.⁹³

In 1815, William Smith published *History of Canada; From Its First Discovery to the Peace of 1763*. Smith was not a native of Canada. He was born in New York and spent time in London during the Revolutionary War. He moved to Quebec in 1786 where he established a legal career. Smith's perspective as an Anglophile comes through in *History of Canada*. The undercurrent of the book is that while French dominion had been significant for Canada, British dominion would improve the colony.⁹⁴

As a respecter of the British, Smith rejected the French propaganda of the past and presented a milder version of the Jumonville Affair. He explains that Jumonville's party had left Fort Duquesne to gain intelligence of the nearby Virginians. Jumonville had not gone far when he met Lieutenant Colonel George Washington. Washington, Smith erroneously claims, was on his way to Fort Necessity. Jumonville barely had time to relate his mission when the enemy struck him down. According to Smith, the British and the French should have foreseen this conflict. The Ohio Indians had warned both sides to cease building forts in the region. Nevertheless, the French constructed forts Duquesne, Presqu'Isle, and Machault and the British built Fort Necessity.⁹⁵ The Affair

⁹³ See Desmond Morton, *A Short History of Canada*, 5th ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2001). The British took control of Canada in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris. In 1867, the British North America Act, passed by the British Parliament, established the Dominion of Canada. This Confederation initially consisted of the Province of Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. Territories like British Columbia joined the Confederation in the ensuing years. Currently, Canada is a constitutional monarchy, with Queen Elizabeth II as the sovereign.

⁹⁴ William Smith, *History of Canada; From Its First Discovery to the Peace of 1763* vol. 1 (Quebec: John Neilson, 1815); *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, "William Smith," vol. 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 816-819.

⁹⁵ Again, this is inaccurate. The British built Fort Necessity after the Jumonville Affair.

was not an assassination by the barbaric British; rather, it was an inevitable outcome of this aggressive fort building.⁹⁶

Unlike Smith, François Xavier Garneau was a native born French Canadian. Nevertheless, he was even-handed when discussing conflicts between France and Britain. He published the first volume of his tome *Histoire du Canada: depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours* in 1845 in Quebec. The second volume, which includes the history of the French and Indian War, was published in 1846.⁹⁷ In this volume, Garneau gives an account of the Jumonville Affair, enriched by details from archival sources. For example, he paraphrases Contrecoeur's orders to Jumonville, which warned the ensign to be on guard against a "surprise" from the enemy. Garneau also relates that Indians informed Washington about the French party's presence. Washington attacked at daybreak, killing Jumonville and nine others. Garneau explains the controversy regarding this event. The French, he says, claimed that the British had shot at them while one of their party read Contrecoeur's summons. Washington, however, contended that the French had made the first aggressive move and that Jumonville had not made himself known as an envoy. Garneau acknowledges that both versions of the story had elements of truth. As to the Jumonville Affair's significance, Garneau claims that the event did not cause the war, which was already a foregone conclusion; rather, the Affair simply accelerated the hostilities.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Smith, 226-228.

⁹⁷ In 1860, Andrew Bell, a Briton living in Canada, published an English version of this work entitled *History of Canada: From the Time of its Discovery Till the Union*. He adapted it in a way that displeased Garneau. Nevertheless, this version became highly popular among the English-speaking public and it was reprinted in 1862. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, "François Xavier Garneau," vol. 9 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 297-306.

In *The History of Canada* (1850), Jennet Roy depicts the Jumonville Affair with less detail than Garneau, but with a similar sentiment.⁹⁹ She describes the incident as a skirmish that had significant consequences; it was not, though an assassination that forever tainted Britain's image. Washington appears as an important player in Roy's work and she recognizes that he went on to have an "illustrious" name. However, he does not overshadow the story as will be the case in later scholarship.¹⁰⁰

In 1855, John Mercier McMullen published *The History of Canada: From Its First Discovery to the Present Time*. McMullen wrote this book to "infuse a spirit of Canadian nationality into the people generally—to mould the native born citizen, the Scotch, the English, and the Irish emigrant into a compact whole...." He believed that a "popular history of Canada, issued at a price which places it within the reach of every working man, is a step in this direction."¹⁰¹ Instilling nationalism into the diverse Canadian population was pressing because of developments in the United States. McMullen contended that the United States would soon be torn apart over the issue of slavery. With the demise of this nation, "Canada cannot fail to occupy a prominent position in the great transatlantic family of Anglo-Saxon nations."¹⁰² Canadians needed to unite and take advantage of the opportunity. Study about Canada's past was the place to start.

⁹⁸ François Xavier Garneau, *Histoire du Canada: depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Quebec: P. Lamoureux, 1859), 207-208.

⁹⁹ This book was reprinted in 1854 under the title *History of Canada for the Use of Schools and Families*.

¹⁰⁰ Jennet Roy, *The History of Canada* (Montreal: Armour and Ramsay, 1850), 103.

¹⁰¹ John Mercier McMullen, *The History of Canada: From Its First Discovery to the Present Time* (Brockville, C.W.: J. M'Mullen, 1855), Preface Page 4.

¹⁰² McMullen, Preface Page 3.

McMullen uses Washington to dramatize the Jumonville Affair. He narrates that on the day of the skirmish, which he erroneously claims occurred on June 25, the French spotted the British upon their approach and rushed to their arms. The heroic Washington bellowed “Fire,” and then “he raised his own musket to his shoulder and showed his men how to obey the order.” Washington and his men were victorious. In this way “George Washington struck the first blow in a war which led to the expulsion of France from North America, and paved the way to the independence of the United States. From first to last he was the most conspicuous actor in the drama, which altered the relations of civilised humanity.”¹⁰³ McMullen’s desire to interest Canadian readers in their history probably motivated him to present this dramatic Washington-centered analysis. After all, Washington was an internationally known figure. His participation in Canadian history was bound to attract attention.¹⁰⁴

Les Anciens Canadiens by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé continues the practice of debating Washington’s guilt or innocence of “assassination.” Gaspé had a personal interest in this issue. His grandmother was Marie-Anne Coulon de Villiers, Jumonville’s sister; hence, Jumonville was Gaspé’s great-uncle.¹⁰⁵ In *Les Anciens Canadiens*, Gaspé states the commonly held belief of his family regarding the Jumonville Affair:

¹⁰³ McMullen, 111.

¹⁰⁴ This book was reprinted almost forty years later. John Mercier McMullen, *The History of Canada: From Its First Discovery to the Present Time*, vol. 1 (Brockville: McMullen & Co., 1892). For another example of the turn towards the Washington-centered analysis, see Henry Hopper Miles, *The History of Canada Under French Régime, 1535-1763* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1872), 288-289.

¹⁰⁵ Pierre-Georges Roy, *La Famille Aubert de Gaspé* (Levis, 1907), 78-80; *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, “Philippe Aubert de Gaspé,” vol. 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 18-22; *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, “Ignace-Philippe Aubert de Gaspé,” vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 33-34.

The tradition in my family is that Jumonville presented himself as the bearer of a sommation ordering Major Washington, commandant of Fort Necessity, to evacuate this post constructed on French possessions, that he raised his parliamentary flag, showed his dispatches, and that nevertheless the English commandant gave the order to fire on him and on his small escort, and then Jumonville fell having been struck to death, as well as some of those who had accompanied him.¹⁰⁶

Gaspé portrayed the Affair as a tragic murder. Probably, he grew up hearing stories from his grandmother Marie-Anne about her brother's death, which happened when she was about thirty-two. She could have told her grandson about her grief when her brother was killed and of her joy when her other brother Louis avenged him at Fort Necessity. Her exact thoughts and words are lost to history, but one can imagine that she was proud that both brothers' names were known throughout Europe and the Americas. She might have even read the poetry and the prose written about them.¹⁰⁷

Also in *Les Anciens Canadiens*, Gaspé attacks those not sharing his fury over Jumonville's death. He accuses Garneau of depicting the "horrible assassination" too lightly, presumably in *Histoire du Canada*. Recall that Garneau gave credence to both French and British versions of Jumonville's death, which he never calls an assassination. He also denies that Jumonville's death caused the war, rather, it merely hastened the inevitable conflict. Garneau defended his depiction, contending that the subject was "delicate" and that "the great shadow of Washington hangs over the writer." In short, Garneau was hesitant to accuse such an important figure of murder.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ This translation is mine. Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, *Les Anciens Canadiens*, vol. 2 (Quebec: 1877), 214.

¹⁰⁷ Gosselin, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Gaspé, 213; DCB, "François-Xavier Garneau," 297-306; François-Xavier Garneau, *History of Canada: From the Time of Its Discovery till the Union Year 1840-1841*, vol. 1 (Montreal: Richard Worthington, 1866), 467-468.

Three 20th century Canadian historians took up the question of “what really happened on May 28, 1754?” These historians were Abbé Georges Robitaille, Gilbert Leduc, and Marcel Trudel. They created their work in conversation with each other. The previous generation of historians had established the Jumonville Affair as a significant event in the history of Canada. This next generation, not interested in delving into Jumonville’s own history, focused on answering what they deemed was the most pertinent question: was Washington a murderer?¹⁰⁹

In his 1933 book *Washington et Jumonville*, Robitaille addresses the issue of Washington’s guilt or innocence. He devotes a chapter to Washington’s family history and then delves into the events of May 28, 1754. He relies heavily upon Bernard Fay’s *George Washington: Republican Aristocrat*, citing generous passages from this book. He concludes that if Fay’s characterization of events was accurate, and he clearly believes that they are, then Washington was indeed guilty of assassinating Jumonville and nine others. Irrespective of his symbolic importance in the United States, Washington should be held responsible for this murder. Fay himself had not drawn this conclusion, but Robitaille considered it logical.¹¹⁰

In *Washington and “The Murder of Jumonville”* (1943), Leduc explains the impact of Robitaille’s “widely read brochure.” He contends that Robitaille’s work, which proclaimed Washington guilty of assassination, “set off a tinder-box of controversy in many American and Canadian circles.” In Leduc’s opinion, Robitaille’s work followed

¹⁰⁹ For other examples, see Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Ferland, *Cours d’histoire du Canada* vol. 2 (Québec: N.S. Hardy, 1882), 506-509 and Edmond Mallet, “Washington et Coulon de Villiers,” *Les Quarante Ans de la Société Historique Franco-Américaine*.

¹¹⁰ Abbé Georges Robitaille, *Washington et Jumonville: Étude Critique* (Le Devoir, 1933), 22-35.

Bernard Fay's argument to its logical conclusion.¹¹¹ However, other historians took Robitaille's analysis seriously and "tailored their historical textures to Abbé Robitaille's pattern of thought and conviction."¹¹² Leduc rejected this historiographical trend and instead delved into primary source material to develop his own analysis.

In his chapter "Washington on Trial," Leduc examines the evidence for the Affair and draws his own conclusion regarding Washington's guilt or innocence. Leduc recognizes the persuasiveness of the French version of events. French officials like Contrecoeur had repeated "the yarn" of the Jumonville assassination and it spread throughout Canada and France. This story was disseminated so effectively that "[n]o Frenchman challenged the accusation that Jumonville had been brutally slain or murdered; it was common belief and accepted by all."¹¹³ Historians like Robitaille perpetuated this account. However, Leduc contends that the French version of events, based upon testimony from Monceau and the Half King's men, was skewed and inaccurate. For example, he claims that the Indians' account of protecting the French from molestation by the British was unsubstantiated and only intended to "placate" the French. While Leduc discounts French testimony, he readily accepts Washington's, who also had a reason to embroider or obscure the truth. Relying on Washington's evidence, Leduc concludes that the Virginian acted appropriately and reasonably on May 28. Jumonville was the duplicitous one. He was no peaceful ambassador; rather, he was a spy

¹¹¹ Gilbert F. Leduc, *Washington and "The Murder of Jumonville"* (Boston: La Société Historique Franco-Américaine, 1943), 17-18 and 18, note 1.

¹¹² Leduc, 20.

¹¹³ Leduc, 116.

who the British had caught. Thus, in Leduc's account, Washington is vindicated and Jumonville denounced.¹¹⁴

Trudel wrote *L'Affaire Jumonville* in 1953.¹¹⁵ Trudel devoted the first nine pages of *L'Affaire Jumonville* to a searing critique of Robitaille's *Washington et Jumonville*.¹¹⁶ He criticized Robitaille for detailing Washington's family history, but failing to closely examine primary documents related to the Jumonville Affair. Hence, he accused, Robitaille of repeating the information and analysis from Bernard Fay's *George Washington: Republican Aristocrat*.¹¹⁷ In short, Robitaille's work was not "une étude méthodique et scientifique" as the author had claimed. Trudel, however, is more appreciative of Leduc's work.¹¹⁸

In the remainder of the article, Trudel posed and addressed the following questions: "Who owned the Ohio Valley? Did the French know the exact limits of what they called their incontestable territory? What was the object of Jumonville's mission? How did Jumonville conduct himself after his departure from Fort Duquesne up to his encounter with Washington? Just what happened on that morning of May 28, 1754? How did national policy use this affair?"¹¹⁹ By focusing on these questions, Trudel trod the same ground as his predecessors. The newly published *Papiers Contrecoeur* served as a

¹¹⁴ Leduc, 105-128.

¹¹⁵ This article was translated and abridged in *Pennsylvania History*. Marcel Trudel, *L'Affaire Jumonville* (Québec: Les Presses Universitaires, 1953); Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," 351-381.

¹¹⁶ These nine pages do not appear in the English version of Trudel's work.

¹¹⁷ A French version of this work was published the next year in Paris as *Georges Washington, Gentilhomme* (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1932).

¹¹⁸ Trudel, *L'Affaire Jumonville*, 4-9.

¹¹⁹ Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," 352.

significant source base for Trudel. Previous scholars had not had access to these documents and he cites their importance for his analysis.¹²⁰

When answering the question of Jumonville's behavior after leaving Fort Duquesne, Trudel exonerates Washington. He questions what Jumonville and his party did between May 23, when he left Fort Duquesne, and May 28, when he was attacked. According to Drouillon, an officer who had accompanied Jumonville, the French party had arrived at the glen where they were attacked on May 26. Trudel questions why they would have tarried there for two days. Jumonville was an experienced soldier and Contrecoeur had already warned him to beware of British and Indian attacks. Did Jumonville even send out scouts? If so, why did these scouts fail to locate the enemy and warn Jumonville? Trudel concluded that "[e]ither Jumonville displayed inexplicable imprudence, or else he was devoting part of his time to carrying out a mission which was essentially improper for an envoy."¹²¹ So, when Washington received intelligence from the Half King and others about French and he put that together with his previous experiences with the French, it made sense that he went on the offensive.¹²² This argument mirrored that of Jared Sparks who also contended that Washington's actions were justifiable.

Trudel's conclusions on the Jumonville Affair were inconclusive. He considered each piece of testimony and weighed its veracity. Trudel dismissed the information that the Half King's men had given to La Chauvignerie at Chingué. He particularly

¹²⁰ Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," 366.

¹²¹ Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," 362.

¹²² Trudel, "The Jumonville Affair," 361-365.

disbelieved that they had thrown themselves between the French and the British in order to prevent further bloodshed. Trudel argues that the Indians only gave this testimony to “get in the good graces of the French.” Thus, their testimony was “too untrustworthy to be considered.” Trudel was equally critical of other sources. He contended that the account of Drouillon was the most trustworthy French source and the account of Washington was the most trustworthy British source.¹²³ Since these two versions differed in crucial ways, Trudel concludes that Garneau was right: “It is probable that there may be truth in both versions of the story [French and English]; for the collision being precipitate, great confusion ensued.”¹²⁴ Trudel’s critical treatment of the Affair moved the scholarly conversation towards a more impartial explanation of events.

Finally, in 2000, Fred Anderson’s epic *Crucible of War* offered an additional perspective on the Jumonville Affair. Reflecting the “new Indian history,” Anderson pays greater attention to Indian actions and motives than the historians who have been discussed thus far. For example, the version of the Affair that he chooses to use is that of Private John Shaw. In Shaw’s gruesome account, the Half King killed Jumonville with his tomahawk and then washed his hands in the ensign’s brains. Although certainly the most sensational account of Jumonville’s death, it was not frequently cited. Anderson’s commitment to showing Indian agency compelled him, perhaps arbitrarily, to take this version more seriously than others had. According to Anderson, the Half King believed that starting a fight between the British and the French would secure his own political

¹²³ Trudel, “The Jumonville Affair,” 368-372.

¹²⁴ Trudel, “The Jumonville Affair,” 372; Garneau, *Histoire du Canada* (Quebec: Aubin, 1845), English version translated by Andrew Bell (Montreal: John Lovell, 1862).

aims. For this reason, he killed Jumonville and then blamed the British for it. This analysis adds a new dimension to the historiography of the Jumonville Affair.¹²⁵

Although Anderson's attention to the Half King's story was innovative, his commitment to the Washington-centered narrative was not so. Washington serves as the protagonist in Anderson's discussion of the Jumonville Affair. Such was also the case in film based on his work, "The War that Made America." It is Washington whom we follow into the woods on May 28. It is through his eyes that we experience the skirmish and its aftermath. One critical difference is that Anderson portrays Washington as a naïve bungler, demystifying him in a way that would have offended 19th century American historians. Nevertheless, he remains committed to Washington as the protagonist. The story would have looked differently had Anderson allowed Jumonville or the Half King to serve as the narrative center.¹²⁶

Anderson has affected the perception of the Jumonville Affair in the scholarly community and the public. He influenced French historians Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal who published *Histoire de l'Amérique française* in 2003. Their discussion of the event closely mirrors Anderson's, whom they cite in their footnotes, particularly in regards to how the Half King killed Jumonville.¹²⁷ Popular biographies, like Joseph Ellis' *His Excellency: George Washington*, also keep Anderson's depiction of Washington and the Affair alive.¹²⁸ Ellis even calls Anderson's portrayal "the best scholarly version of the

¹²⁵ Anderson, 5-7 and 56-57; McDowell, 4.

¹²⁶ Anderson, 42-65.

¹²⁷ Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de L'Amérique Française* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003), 424-426 and 513.

¹²⁸ Joseph Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York: Random House, 2004), 14-15.

massacre.”¹²⁹ Ellis’ work, so influenced by Anderson’s, inspired a *Politico* article which, on May 28, 2010, commemorated the anniversary of the Affair.¹³⁰

Conclusion

The Jumonville Affair has been a source of discussion and debate since it occurred in 1754. The French used the memory of the event as war propaganda. The British, particularly Washington, resented this and presented their own memories of the incident. American historians have been particularly devoted to the Washington-centered narrative. This persistence demonstrates the difficulty inherent in divorcing history from the nation. This chapter is not meant to minimize Washington or his importance in history. It is simply to point out that when historians read back national significance on pre-national events, they obscure them.

Ultimately, “what really happened” on May 28, 1754 is unknowable and beside the point. What is significant is what this event shows about the diversity, complexity, and violence of Early America. The relations between the British, the French, and various Indian groups were delicate. This was certainly true since the death in the woods of a French ensign was able to spark an international conflagration. Instead of asking who was at fault for the Jumonville Affair, historians should also ask what this event can tell us about 18th century North America.

¹²⁹ Ellis, 282n21.

¹³⁰ Andrew Glass, “Washington Attacks French Scouting Party, May 28, 1754.” *Politico* May 28, 2010 Accessed October 1, 2010. <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0510/37887.html>

EPILOGUE

New France was a complex, diverse, and interconnected colony. Jumonville and his family negotiated this world by engaging in significant interactions with native communities. As diplomats, they employed tools such as godparentage to establish alliances with their Indian neighbors. As soldiers, they built coalitions with and fought alongside Potawatomis, Miamis, Illinois, Mi'kmaq, etc. As slaveholders, they had close contact with unfree Indians. The interactions between this family and these native people occurred in Canada, the Upper Country, Louisiana, and Acadia. Studying this family, therefore, has opened a window into the cultural exchange that occurred throughout French North America.

And what can now be said of the Jumonville Affair? The purpose of this dissertation has not been to radically alter our understanding of the event itself. The questions regarding “who was really at fault?” and “what really happened?” have been debated since 1754. In truth, no one can know the answers to these questions because the sources provide such contradictory evidence. The purpose of this dissertation has been to revisit this event and pose new questions. Instead of asking, “what did the Jumonville Affair mean to Washington and how did it affect his future trajectory?” I have asked “who was Jumonville, the man behind the Affair?” To find the answer, I traveled to 18th century New France and met his family. This family lived in a world in which incidents like the Jumonville Affair were commonplace. Jumonville’s own father died in a skirmish in 1733. Jumonville was fully integrated into the world of New France and was a casualty of its violence. Scholars, more concerned with his famous Virginian

contemporary, have ignored his story for so long. This dissertation has reclaimed it and, hopefully, will promote interest in other untold stories from Early America.

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