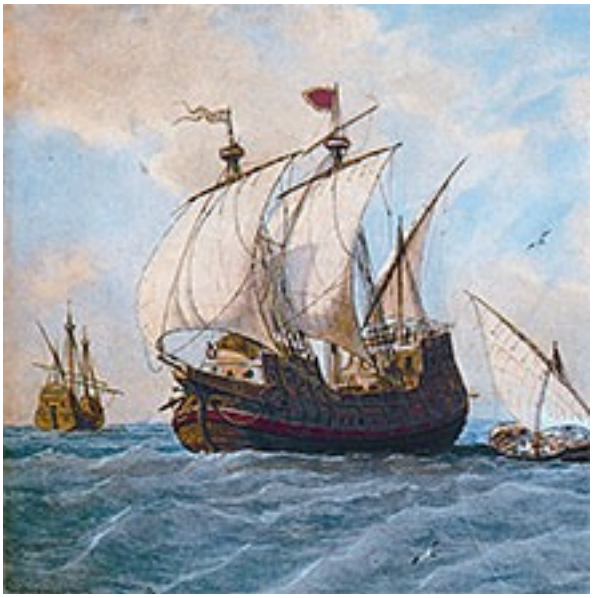
LA GRANDE RECRUE



The year 2003 will mark the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Great Recruitment, the 100 or so men who came to save the fledgling colony, in Montreal. The same ship also carried a few women, including Marguerite Bourgeoys, who came over to open a school in Ville-Marie, at the request of Sieur de Maisonneuve, the founder of Montreal. After a two-year absence, De Maisonneuve returned from France with over 100 colonists. He also brought back a teacher, Marguerite Bourgeoys, and a few other women. All of Ville-Marie celebrated!

But what about the 100 men recruited in 1653? Which part of France did they hail from? What were their trades? How was their crossing?

We invite you to follow in the steps of these men and women and share their adventures, through this historical column.

Ville-Marie in the 1650s

At the start of the 1650s, Ville-Marie (Montreal) was in danger. The settlement was under constant attack by the Iroquois and there were only a few dozen men left to defend the colony. Some of the first to arrive here became discouraged and returned to France, their homeland. 1651 was a particularly difficult year. No one dared go out unarmed and no month went by without victims. Jeanne Mance had to abandon the Hôtel-Dieu and take refuge, like many others, in the Ville-Marie fort.

The governor and founder of Montreal, Paul de Chomedy, Sieur de Maisonneuve, decided to look for help in France. His decision was made. He would return with at least 100 recruits. Otherwise, as he told Jeanne Mance, he would not return at all.

Jeanne Mance was the true driving force behind the founder’s trip to France. Not only did she advise De Maisonneuve to take on new recruits, she also offered him funds, originally intended for the Hôtel-Dieu, so that he could complete his mission and, possibly, save the colony.

So, the founder left Ville-Marie in the fall of 1651 and remained away for two long years, returning only in the fall of 1653. De Maisonneuve assigned Charles-Joseph d'Ailleboust des Muceaux, to replace him during his absence, and left for Quebec. There, he met Jean de Lauzon, governor of New France, and asked him for reinforcements for Ville-Marie. The governor only approved this request the following spring. De Lauzon hesitated because he would have preferred to have the new recruits to settle in Quebec. De Maisonneuve managed to set sail for France on November 5, 1651.

De Maisonneuve recruits in France…

De Maisonneuve, who took advantage of his trip to France to settle some family business, had to meet with people who would play an important role in the future of Ville-Marie, including Madame de Bullion and the members of the Société de Notre-Dame-de- Montréal. A very wealthy woman, Angélique Faure, the widow of Claude de Bullion, Superintendent of Finances in France, was the anonymous benefactor of the Hôtel-Dieu. Only Jeanne Mance knew her identity. As a result, De Maisonneuve had to talk with her without revealing that he knew her secret. He succeeded and finally received the sum of 20,000 livres from this woman, which he added to the funds already provided by Jeanne Mance (22,000 livres). The members of the Société de Notre-Dame-de-Montréal, which was created in 1639 to found Ville-Marie, were experiencing difficulties in the tumultuous times of?La Fronde? (a time of social unrest while Louis XIV was still a minor). Nevertheless, they organised numerous meetings and managed to convince various benefactors of the urgent need to help the colony of New France. In this way, through discussion and sacrifice, the funds needed to outfit the recruits (a total of 75,000 livres) were raised.
De Maisonneuve and De la Dauversière, one of the founding members of the Société, travelled throughout France to recruit about 100 men, who signed on for three to five years. They sought young, healthy men since they would have to defend and establish the colony. They also had to be able to use arms and exercise a trade that could be of use to Ville-Marie. Most of this recruiting took place in the regions of Anjou and Maine, particularly in the vicinity of La Flèche, De la Dauversière's birthplace.
In 1652, De Maisonneuve went to Troyes to visit his two sisters: Louise de Chomedy, also known as Louise de Sainte-Marie, a nun with the Congregation of Notre-Dame, and Jacqueline de Maisonneuve, the widow of François Bouvot de Chevilly (who had been assassinated a year earlier in a quarrel over an inheritance). In the City of Troyes, the Governor of Montreal encountered a woman who would accomplish enormous things for the colony: Marguerite Bourgeoys.

De Maisonneuve meets Marguerite Bourgeoys in Troyes

In 1652, De Maisonneuve, who was busy with his recruiting activities, went to Troyes to see his two sisters. The older sister, Louise de Sainte-Marie, a nun with the Congregation of Notre-Dame, received her brother in the convent parlour.

De Maisonneuve told his sister about the misfortunes of Ville-Marie and informed her about the need for a teacher to educate the colony's children. Although several of the nuns in the community expressed a desire to go "to Canada", it was no place for cloistered women during this period of crisis. There was only room for a single teacher on the ship carrying the new recruits.
The name of Marguerite Bourgeoys soon came up. Louise de Sainte-Marie knew Marguerite Bourgeoys well as an active person devoted to teaching. Moreover, her landlady, Madame de Chevilly, who was De Maisonneuve's younger sister, held her in high esteem. As a result, a meeting was arranged between the Founder of Montreal and this exceptional woman.
Abbey Charles de Glandelet*, known as the first biographer of Marguerite Bourgeoys, recounted that when Marguerite first saw De Maisonneuve she was upset: she had seen the man recently in one of her dreams! He asked her if she would be willing to follow him to Ville-Marie and set up a school there. She replied that if her ecclesiastical superiors agreed she would leave. She consulted one nun, then another, then a third… they all encouraged her to continue with her project.
Marguerite Bourgeoys left Troyes for Paris, where she spent some time before heading on from Paris to Nantes, travelling on a houseboat on the Loire.
Marguerite Bourgeoys' autobiographical writings contain numerous details about the difficulties of her pilgrimage: in the 17th century it was dangerous for a woman to travel alone. In Nantes, where she had to wait for De Maisonneuve and oversee the final preparations for the crossing, she received internal confirmation that her project was approved. In fact, she later related that, shortly before her departure for New France, the Virgin appeared to her, saying "Go, I will not abandon you." (Les Écrits de Mère Bourgeoys, p. 238).
* Charles de Glandelet was born in Vannes, France, in 1645. He died in Trois-Rivières in 1725.

Meanwhile, back in Montreal…

During De Maisonneuve's absence, Charles-Joseph d'Ailleboust des Muceaux was responsible for defending Montreal and he tried, in as much as it was possible, to maintain a "normal" life. Several marriages and baptisms took place, providing an opportunity for celebration. However, people had to be careful. The Iroquois continued to attack. Sergeant-Major Lambert Closse, whose feats are abundantly recounted in 17th century correspondence, followed by his famous dog, Pilote, rescued the inhabitants of the island on many occasions.
Some of these attacks are still recalled today, narrated with considerable detail. One particular attack involved Martine Messier, the wife of Antoine Primot*. When she was, in fact, attacked by three Iroquois on July 29, 1652, she fought back so fiercely that they fled. A man who arrived in haste to rescue her was so happy to see her alive, that he embraced her, only to be slapped by the lady as she cried out,"Parmanda!" in the dialect of the region of her birth (Normandy). Following that, Martine was always referred to by the name Parmanda!
That same year, 1652, during the good weather, Jeanne Mance travelled to Trois-Rivières, then Quebec, escorted by Lambert Closse, to wait for De Maisonneuve.

At that time she learned, by ship's message, that he would only be returning the following year, with more than 100 colonists. She returned to Montreal to announce the news.
One year later, in June or early July, Jeanne Mance, taking advantage of a calm period, returned to Quebec to welcome De Maisonneuve as soon as he landed. The need for reinforcements was still pressing: the Iroquois redoubled their attacks in the summer of 1653. On August 7 a ship guided by Captain Poulet, set anchor at Quebec and announced the imminent arrival of Sieur de Maisonneuve's recruit. The days passed. Concern grew: no ship on the horizon, no sign of the governor and his recruits...
* The Primot couple, married in France, arrived in Ville-Marie in 1650.

The recruits leave France: a difficult departure…

As De Maisonneuve travelled through France to complete the various steps surrounding the departure of the recruits, Marguerite Bourgeoys travelled to Nantes. In fact, the governor of Ville-Marie had instructed her to oversee the loading of merchandise. The Saint-Nicolas-de-Nantes, the ship that would take the recruits to New France, was anchored in the port. The captain responsible for the crossing was Pierre le Besson.
The Saint-Nicholas left the port of Saint-Nazaire (a town located about 60 km from Nantes) on June 20, 1653 with 122 passengers on board – for the most part men – and several crew members. After sailing for a few days, the crew noticed that the boat was rotten and taking on water on all sides. All of the men did their best to plug up the ship so they could continue their trip. But they quickly had to face the obvious: it was no longer possible to proceed, the water was starting to damage the provisions. They resolved to return to France after travelling 350 leagues (approximately 1600 km) across the ocean.
Since many of the travellers were shocked by this frightful departure, De Maisonneuve decided not to return them to the continent. Marguerite Bourgeoys explained the events: "Sieur de Maisonneuve and all of his soldiers stopped on an island from which there was no escape. Otherwise, not a single one would have stayed. Some even set about swimming to save themselves since they were furious and believed they had been taken to perdition." (Les Écrits de Mère Bourgeoys, p. 46). Despite everything, they managed to calm the troops.
It took several weeks to find another ship and equip it. Unfortunately, we do not know the name of that one. The recruits finally departed a second time on July 20, 1653, on St. Marguerite's day, the patron saint of Marguerite Bourgeoys. What an astonishing historical coincidence! Following a Mass for the passengers, the ship raised anchor and set sail.

The recruits cross the ocean

Setting out on July 20, 1653, the ship carrying the recruits to New France, sailed at the will of the winds. It is difficult to evaluate the length of the crossing. The shortest crossing, to the best of our knowledge, took nineteen days (in 1610), while the longest took six months (in 1752).

It should be noted, however, that trips from Europe to the Americas always took longer as a result of the winds: the winds blow from the east an average of 100 days per year compared to 260 days for winds from the west.
Our passengers, who were most certainly discouraged by their false start and the ensuing inconveniences, had not seen the last of their difficulties. Many perils lay ahead of those who set out for the New World in the 17th and 18th centuries. These included natural elements: storms, the lack of wind, the temperature (specifically the severe cold), hurricanes, the sudden appearance of icebergs, etc. The fear of running into pirates was another concern.
Numerous accounts mention the terrible times encountered during storms. Here, for example, is the testimony of Sister Cécile de Sainte-Croix, an Ursuline nun who crossed the ocean in 1639:?We ran into a furious storm that lasted 15 days with little break (?). The ship was tossed about (?) so much that it was impossible to stand up, or to take a step without support. It was even impossible to sit without holding onto something (?) We had to take our meals on the floor and use a plate for three or four. We found it hard to keep from spilling our food.?
Epidemics were another concern. They were a common problem as a result of the poor sanitary conditions and the vermin (rats, fleas?) found on ships. Plague, typhoid fever, dysentery, scurvy, measles, furunculosis (recurrent furuncles) occurred on numerous trips, resulting in hundreds of deaths over the decades.
Not to mention all of the difficulties resulting from seasickness, which few passengers managed to escape. Although seasickness was not dangerous, it could be extremely embarrassing and contributed significantly to a general lack of health. Once again, let us read the words of Sister Cécile de Sainte-Croix about her horrific vomiting: “I do not believe that I exaggerate when I say that I filled a bucket and my greatest enemy was my bed.”

The ships that crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the 17th and 18th centuries were often very modest in size, measuring 25-45 meters long and 8 meters wide on average. They could hold from 20 to 300 people, depending on their tonnage (transportable weight calculated in pounds – a ton is equivalent to 2000 pounds). These are generalisations. We have no specific data about the dimensions of the ship that carried the recruits in 1653. Nevertheless, we do know that approximately 150 people boarded the ship (122 passengers plus the crew members).
First, before anyone boards a ship, the merchandise is loaded. These operations take place during the days that precede the departure and they are conducted in keeping with specific rules. Supplies, munitions, commercial products and personal belongings go in the hold (the section of the ship between the keel and the lowest deck). Heavier items are placed in the middle and the lightest stowed at the ends. Animals, which can either be eaten during the trip or used for the colonies, are also generally placed in the hold.
As for the passengers, the arrangements depend on their rank. The officers and the high-ranking individuals are given more space and more comfortable beds. The situation is not the same for the others. The crew members sleep where they can, with two sailors often sharing a single hammock (called a “swing” since it moves with the ship). The passengers are usually crowded in a single room at the back of the ship.

They slept in rudimentary bunks and nights were most certainly not pleasant: they had to sleep in their clothes, out of a sense of decency, and deal with a lack of privacy, the ambient odours, and the rolling of the ship, which could be considerable depending on weather conditions.
The day started at dawn, usually with a prayer. The sailors would then clean the ship. The remainder of the time was spent in a variety of chores, depending on the shift (4-hour work period). In the event that the crew members committed an offence or refused to obey, punishment* was allowed, generally a strong incentive for discipline. The other individuals on board spent their time as they saw fit. Everyone had three meals a day if things went well…
*A fine for the first offence, eight days on bread and water for a second offence and keelhauling for a third. Keelhauling involved tying the prisoner's hands and throwing him overboard.

What did people eat on ships in the 17th and 18th centuries? First, those passengers who were able to – and who were, perhaps, a little distrustful – would bring their own supplies and prepare their own meals. However, most found themselves obliged to rely on the?official? ship kitchen. On royal ships, there was a chef, known as "Le Coq" (the Rooster). On other ships – which were more numerous – the ship's boy was responsible for this chore. Many contemporary records provide testimony about their incompetence and dirtiness.
The principal drink was water. However, water quickly became undrinkable. In his Histoire du Canada, historian Albert Tessier (1895-1976) described the water in great detail: "During the first few weeks, it was fine, but the liquid soon became murky. You shouldn't look too closely at the thick mixture or inhale its odour, which smells like rotten eggs. You close your eyes, pinch your nose and quench your thirst. That's the essential thing." Everyone was entitled to one ration of water each day. Generally, passengers on the ship could also find wine, cider and spirits, but these beverages were served in limited quantities and under certain conditions.
During ocean crossings, the primary food was the "biscuit" (from the French "bis cuit": bread that has been cooked twice to harden it), prepared to be stored for lengthy periods of time. Everyone on the ship ate one pound per day. When rationing was required, three pounds were distributed for four days. In ordinary times, salt pork was also served three or four times per week. Moreover, peas, cod (fresh or dried), herring, fresh fish (if fishing was possible) and meat (from the animals stored in the hold) were also available. Olive oil, butter, mustard and vinegar were used in the preparation and conservation of these foods.
Passengers faced the risk of water shortages and famine. Running out of water was catastrophic; it was an important factor in the spread of disease. Famine often occurred when the ship was stopped for lengthy periods of time, generally when winds were weak or non-existent. In this case, as well, the passengers weakened and were more prone to infection.

After leaving France on June 20, 1653, the recruits encountered problems, returned to terra firma, and set out a second time on July 20, 1653. They were quite shaken up by all these events. Moreover, the conditions of the trip were far from idyllic, as we learned in the previous episodes. Unfortunately, like many others, they did not escape disease.
In fact, a serious epidemic (most likely the plague) soon broke out on board. It is highly likely that the second ship used for the trip had already been contaminated by vermin. Numerous people fell ill for weeks at a time. The most robust helped the weaker ones. Bed-ridden passengers were crowded in steerage. Portholes* could be opened in the hold to ventilate the area but, as soon as the temperature dropped or the seas rose, they were kept closed. The air would then become unbreathable. In all, eight men died during the crossing.
A Sulpician, François Dollier de Casson (1636-1701), the first historian of Montreal, reported at the time that Marguerite Bourgeoys nursed all of the ill, “providing praiseworthy care”. She dispensed consolation, devotion and spiritual assistance to all. This woman, who had buried numerous victims during the Thirty Years' War in France – including her father – was already familiar with death. Moreover, in the absence of a priest, she took charge of the funeral rights.
Finally, despite everything – deficient sanitation, poor weather, lack of privacy on board, and illness – the recruits arrived at their destination. It is easy to imagine the relief they must have felt when they approached the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. The ocean crossing ended after three months and two days, including the false start. The ship arrived at Quebec City on September 22, 1653, carrying De Maisonneuve and his recruits.
* Four-sided opening in the wall of a ship, equipped with a device for sealing it.

The recruits arrive

After spending three months and two days in a frightful crossing, the recruits finally reached Cap-Diamant, on September 22, 1653, the feast day for St. Maurice. One final difficulty completed this trip. Let's take a look at the words of Marguerite Bourgeoys: “When we arrived at Quebec, we didn't pay any heed to the fact that a rib dug in so deeply that even the high tide could not free the ship. It was burned there” *. The recruits watched as the ship that had brought them to New France was destroyed in the middle of the river!
This incident did nothing to dampen spirits. The population of Quebec was on the shore as the long-awaited passengers disembarked. Solemn thanks were given, with the singing of the Te Deum in the city's church (current site of the Notre-Dame basilica). However, the passengers weren't up for the festivities, since they were still inconvenienced by the effects of the serious epidemic they had suffered during the crossing. Marguerite Bourgeoys offered to watch over the ill until they were completely healed. They were installed in the house (warehouse) owned by the Société Notre-Dame-de-Montréal, in the lower portion of Quebec.
Sieur de Maisonneuve paid homage to the governor of New France, De Lauson, who took advantage of the opportunity to try and keep the recruits in Quebec. However, the Governor of Ville-Marie had a royal letter confirming his mandate and firmly refused.

Yet, as a result of this difference, the recruits spent longer than expected in their port of arrival, since De Lauson refused to grant them the barges they needed to travel on to Montreal. The entire month of October was spent looking for new boats.
On the other hand, Jeanne Mance quickly left Quebec in order to inform “Montrealers” about the imminent arrival of the recruits. Before doing that, she met briefly with Marguerite Bourgeoys, through the intervention of Paul de Chomedey. He had nothing but compliments for this woman, whom he had recruited in Troyes: “This good woman that I am bringing (...) will provide strong support for Montreal” **, he told the founder of the Hôtel-Dieu. From that time, a strong friendship grew between the two women, both of whom came from Champagne. The recruits reached their final destination on November 16, 1653. During the rejoicing, people spoke about the second founding of Montreal.
* Les Écrits de Mère Bourgeoys, p. 47.
** Dictionnaire biographique du Canada, Vol. I, p. 225.

Who were the recruits?

In 1687, 34 years after the recruits arrived, the Governor, Jacques-René de Bresay de Denonville, and the Intendant, Jean Bochart de Champigny, commemorated the event by honouring “these 100 men who saved Montreal and all of Canada”. Although people generally speak of 100 men, it should be noted that, based on a study of the recruits' contracts and other documents, a total of 102 men embarked on the Saint-Nicolas-de-Nantes. Eight died during the crossing, leaving a total of 94 men.
The most complete work we have to date is that published by Roland-J. Auger in 1955: La Grande Recrue de 1653. According to this historian, who collected the results of past studies, a total of 153 men signed contracts in France. Of that number, 50 did not embark on the ship. According to his list, a total of 103 men departed from Saint-Nazaire. Recent research conducted by the Société de généalogie canadienne-française has shortened the list, bringing the number of recruits to 102.
In the second episode, we learned that most of the recruits came from the vicinity of La Flèche (in the La Sarthe department), the birthplace of De La Dauversière. More detailed figures are provided below (the regions listed are those in modern-day France and not the 17th-century historic regions):

- **Pays de la Loire region – 62 recruits**
- [Sarthe, Loire-Atlantique, Mayenne and Maine-et-Loire departments]
- **Central region – 10 recruits**
- [Indre-et-Loire, Loir-et-Cher and Loiret departments]
- **Île-de-France region – 6 recruits**
- [Seine and Seine-et-Marne departments]
- **Bourgogne region – 3 recruits**
- [Côte-d'Or and Nièvre departments]
- **Basse-Normandie region – 2 recruits**
- [Calvados departments]
- **Picardie region – 2 recruits**
- [Aisne and Oise departments]

- **Bretagne region – 1 recruits**
- [Morbihan department]
- **Nord-Pas-de-Calais region – 1 recruits**
- [Pas-de-Calais department]
- **Unknown origin – 15 recruits**

It should be noted that the average age of these men, when they arrived in 1653, was 24.

List of the 1653 recruits

Family names, pseudonyms*, and first names / Place of origin: village or city (current French department) / Trade

1. AUDRU, Jacques - Paris (Seine) - Land-clearer
2. AUGER dit LE BARON, Jean - Chemiré-en-Charnie (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
3. AVERTY dit LÉGER, Maurice - La Flèche (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
4. BAREAU dit LAGOGUE, Pierre - La Flèche (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
5. BASTARD, Yves -? - Land-clearer
6. BAUDREAU dit GRAVELINE, Urbain - Clermont-Créans (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
7. BAUDRY dit L'ÉPINETTE, Antoine - Chemiré-en-Charnie (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and nail-maker
8. BEAUDOUIN, Olivier -? - Land-clearer
9. BÉLIOT, Charles-Jean - St-Jean-de-Lamothe (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
10. BENOIT dit LIVERNOIS, Paul - Châtillon-en-Bazois (Nièvre) - Carpenter
11. BESNARD (or BÉNARD) dit BOURJOLI, René - Villiers-au-Bouin (Indre-et-Loire) Land-clearer
12. BITEAU dit ST-LAURENT, Louis - Clermont-Créans (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
13. BOIVIN dit PANSE, Jacques - Jarzé (Maine-et-Loire) - Land-clearer
14. BONDY, René - Dijon (Côte-d=Or) - Carpenter
15. BOUCHARD, Étienne - Paris (Seine) - Surgeon
16. BOUVIER, Michel - La Flèche (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and mason
17. BOUZÉ, Pierre - Sablé-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
18. BRASSIER, Jacques -? -?
19. BROSSARD, Urbain - La Flèche (Sarthe) - Mason and land-clearer
20. CADET, René - St-Germain-d=Arcé (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
21. CADIEUX, Jean - Pringé-sur-Loir (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and locksmith
22. CHARTIER dit ROBERT, Guillaume - La Flèche (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and tailor
23. CHARTIER, Louis -? - Surgeon
24. CHAUDRONNIER, Jean - Bailleul (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
25. CHAUVIN dit le Grand-Pierre, Pierre - Vion (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and miller
26. CHEVALIER, Louis - Caen (Calvados) - Land-clearer and cobbler
27. CHEVASSET, Antoine -? - Land-clearer
28. CRUSSON dit PILOTE, François -? - Land-clearer
29. DANIS dit TOURANGEAU, Honoré - Montlouis (Indre-et-Loire) - Carpenter
30. DAUBIGEON, Julien - Clisson (Loire-Atlantique) - Land-clearer and labourer
31. DAVOUST, Jean - Clermont-Créans (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and hatmaker
32. DENIAU, Jean - Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) - Land-clearer and top sawer
33. DENIAU dit DESTAILLIS, Marin - Luché-Pringé (Sarthe) - Land-clearer

34. DESAUTELS dit LAPOINTE, Pierre - Malicorne-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
35. DESORSON, Zacharie -? - Carpenter and top sawer
36. DESPRÉS dit BERRI, Simon - Blois (Loire-et-Cher) - Land-clearer
37. DOGUET, Louis - Luché-Pringé (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
38. DOUSSIN, René -? - Top sawer
39. DUCHARME dit LAFONTAINE, Fiacre - Paris (Seine) - Carpenter
40. DUVAL, Nicolas - Forges-en-Brie (Seine-et-Marne) - Land-clearer
41. FONTAINE dit Le Petit Louis, Louis -? - Top sawer
42. FRESNOT, Jean - Ruillé-en-Champagne (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and roofer
43. FRUITIER, Jean -? - Land-clearer
44. GAILLARD dit LEPRIEUR, Christophe - Verron (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and gardener
45. GALBRUN, Simon - Verron (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
46. GASTEAU, Jean - Clermont-Créans (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
47. GAUDIN dit CHASTILLON, Pierre - Chatillon-sur-Seine (Côte d=Or) - Carpenter
48. GENDRON dit LA ROLANDIÈRE, Guillaume - Blain (Loire-Atlantique) - Butcher and roofer
49. GERVAIS (or GERVAISE), Jean - Souvigné (Indre-et-Loire) - Land-clearer and baker
50. GRÉGOIRE, Louis -? - Land-clearer
51. GUERTIN dit LE SABOTIER, Louis - Daumeray (Maine-et-Loire) - Land-clearer and clog-maker
52. GUYET (or GUYOT), Jean - Villiers-au-Bouin (Indre-et-Loire) - Land-clearer
53. HARDY, Pierre - Bailleul (Sarthe) - Labourer and land-clearer
54. HOURAY dit GRANDMONT, René - Azay-le-Rideau (Indre-et-Loire) - Land-clearer
55. HUDIN, François - La Flèche (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and baker
56. HUNAULT dit DESCHAMPS, Toussaint - St-Pierre-ès-Champs (Oise) - Land-clearer
57. HURTEBISE (or HURTIBISE), André - Rouessé-Vassé (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
58. HURTEBISE (or HURTIBISE), Marin - Rouessé-Vassé (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
59. JANNEAU (ou JANNOT) dit LACHAPELLE, Marin - La Chapelle-Monthodon (Aisne) - Carpenter
60. JETTÉ, Urbain - Saint-Germain-le-Val (Sarthe) - Top sawer, mason and land-clearer
61. JOUANNEAU, Mathurin - Aubigné-Racan (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
62. JOUSSELIN (ou JOSSELIN), Nicolas - Solesmes (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
63. JOUSSET dit LALOIRE, Mathurin - Saint-Germain-d=Arcé (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
64. LAIRT (ou LERT), Étienne - Villaines-sous-Malicorne (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
65. LANGEVIN dit LACROIX, Mathurin - Le Lude (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
66. LA SOUDRAYE, Louis -? - Land-clearer
67. LAUZON, Gilles - Caen (Calvados) - Land-clearer and kettle-maker
68. LECOMTE, Jean - Chemiré-en-Charnie (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
69. LECOMTE, Michel - Chemiré-en-Charnie (Sarthe) - Land-clearer

70. LEFEBVRE dit LAPIERRE, Pierre - Paris (Seine) - Land-clearer
71. LEMERCHER dit LAROCHE, Jean - Paris (Sarthe) - Carpenter
72. LEPALLIER, Joachim - Clermont-Créans (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
73. LEROY (ou ROY), Simon - Ligron (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
74. LOUVARD dit DESJARDINS, Michel - Parcé (Sarthe) or Hambers (Mayenne) - Miller and land-clearer
75. MARTIN dit LAMONTAGNE, Olivier - Auray (Morbihan) - Land-clearer and mason
76. MARTIN dit LARIVIÈRE, Pierre - Sainte-Colombe (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
77. MILLET dit LE BEAUCERON, Nicolas - Neuville-aux-Bois (Loiret) - Carpenter and top sawer
78. MILLOT (or MILHAUT) dit LAVAL, Jacques - Crouzille (Mayenne) - Land-clearer
79. MOTAIN (or MOTAIS), Guy - Meslay-du-Maine (Mayenne) - Land-clearer
80. MOULIÈRES, Pierre - Mareuil (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and toolmaker
81. MOUSSEAU dit LAVIOLETTE, Jacques - Azay-le-Rideau (Indre-et-Loire) - Land-clearer
82. NAIL, Jacques - Solesmes (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
83. NOCHER, François - Chemiré-en-Charnie (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
84. OLIVIER dit LE PETIT BRETON, Jean - Chemiré-en-Charnie (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
85. PAPIN, Pierre - Sablé-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
86. PICARD dit LAFORTUNE, Hugues - Pont-James (Loire-Atlantique) - Land-clearer and top sawer
87. PICHARD, Jean - Rouez (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
88. PIRON dit LAVALLÉE, François - La Suze (Sarthe) - Locksmith and land-clearer
89. PIRON, Pierre - Malicorne-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe) - Digger and surgeon
90. PRESTROT dit LAVIOLETTE, Jean - Parcé-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and miller
91. RAGUIDEAU dit ST-GERMAIN, Pierre - La Flèche (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
92. RENNES dit PACHANE, Bertrand de -? - Land-clearer
93. ROBIN dit DESFORGES, Étienne -? - Land-clearer
94. ROBUTEL DE ST-ANDRÉ, Claude - Frencq (Pas-de-Calais) -?
95. RODAILLER, René-? - Land-clearer
96. ROGER, Christophe - Clermont-Créans (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
97. ROINAY, François - Sablé-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
98. TAVERNIER dit LAFORÊT, Jean - Roëzé-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and weapon maker
99. THÉODORE dit GILLES, Michel - Tours (Indre-et-Loire) - Land-clearer and digger
100. VACHER dit ST-JULIEN, Sylvestre - St-Julien-sur-Cher (Loire-et-Cher) - Carpenter
101. VALLETS (or VALLAYS), Jean - Teillé (Sarthe) - Land-clearer
102. VALIQUET dit LAVERDURE, Jean - Le Lude (Sarthe) - Land-clearer and locksmith
*Research: Michel Langlois (Société généalogique canadienne-française)

* A “dit name” is an alias added to a family name and used for many members of the family. The “dit name”served to indicate a surname used in the army, a place of origin, land owned or inhabited by an ancestor, the full name of an ancestor, the first name of an ancestor, an original name that was kept when names were standardized in French, and so on. Such names were almost exclusively used in France and New France.

Some of the trades practised by the recruits

The previous episode of the history column provided details about the regions where the Recruits came from. However, the trades they practised were only briefly mentioned (see the List of the 1653 Recruits, Episode 11). The information we have on the recruits indicates that they practised 24 different trades. It should be noted that 70 men stated that they practised a single trade, while 28 said they practised two and two others claimed to have three distinct professions. We do not know the trades of two of the recruits.

Most of the recruits (84) said that they were land-clearers. This means that they had agreed to prepare the uncultivated lands of New France for agriculture. The other trades indicated include: carpenter (8), long sawyer (7), mason (4), surgeon (3), miller (3), locksmith (3), baker (2), roofer (2), labourer (2), joiner (2), weapon maker (1), digger (1), butcher (1), hat-maker (1), kettle-maker (1), nail-maker (1), cobbler (1), gardener (1), stone layer (1), clog maker (1), tailor (1), sharp tool maker (1) and, finally, rough masonry pointer (1). Most of these trades are still practised today, which causes no difficulties for us. However, some of them are more unusual and are not defined as they were in the past.

This is the case of the surgeon, for example. In the Middle Ages and up to the 18th century, doctors did not get involved in manual work, leaving this for the surgeon. The surgeon was, in fact, closely associated with the barber (commonly called a surgeon barber) and, as such, performed numerous small operations: treating injuries and external diseases, bleeding, reducing fractures and so on. It is interesting to note that “barbering” was only legally separated from surgery in 1743. The rough masonry pointer, likewise, was responsible for rough masonry work on a wall, partition or floor. This involved placing fieldstone or debris between the beams or joists

Other trades are a little more familiar – or at least we can guess at them – but it might be a good idea to explain them further. The sharp tool maker (taillandier in French) is responsible for making cutting tools (axes, planes, files, blades, pickaxes, spades, all types of knifes, etc.). The long sawyer cuts tree trunks into planks, sawing them lengthwise. Long sawyers always worked in twos. The kettle-maker made and sold kettles, along with a large number of kitchen utensils. In addition to making nails of all kinds, the nail-maker also made bit chains, bits, halter rings, etc. Finally, the stone layer covered streets, squares, churches and other public buildings with stones or slabs.

The Few Women Recruits

A few women also boarded the Saint-Nicolas-de-Nantes and sailed to New France. As you may recall, the massive arrival of the King's Wards only started in 1663. In 1653, the major concern was to bring men over to defend New France. R.-J. Auger (see the previous episode) recorded the names of fifteen female passengers. Recent research conducted by the Société de généalogie canadienne-française indicates that there were actually fourteen women. Let us start with the names and the cities or villages they came from:

1 ARTUS, Michelle - Noyen-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe / Pays de la Loire)
2 BOURGEOYS, Marguerite - Troyes (Aube / Champagne-Ardenne)
3 DUMESNIL, Marie - La Flèche (Sarthe / Pays de la Loire)
4 HURAULT, Catherine - La Flèche (Sarthe / Pays de la Loire)
5 LORGUEIL, Marie - Cognac (Charente / Région Poitou-Charentes)
6 LORION, Catherine - Saint-Soulle (Charente-Maritime / Poitou-Charentes)
7 MERRIN (ou MAIRÉ), Jeanne - Poitiers (Vienne / Poitou-Charentes)
8 MEUNIER (ou MOUNIER), Perrine - Nantes (Loire-Atlantique / Pays de la Loire)
9 PINSON, Marie-Marthe - La Flèche (Sarthe - Pays de la Loire)
10 RENAUD, Marie - Orléans (Loiret - Région Centre)
11 RENAUDIN, Marie - Nantes (Loire-Atlantique / Pays de la Loire)
12 ROUSSELIER, Jeanne - Moëze (Charente-Maritime / Poitou-Charentes)
13 SOLDÉ, Jeanne - La Flèche (Sarthe / Pays de la Loire)
14 VOIDY (ou VEDY ou VEDIÉ), Jeanne - Saint-Germain-du-Val (Sarthe / Pays de la Loire)

Here is some additional information about these women. Perrine Meunier came over with her husband, Julien Daubigeon. It should be noted that she was pregnant during the crossing and gave birth to a daughter ten days after arriving! Two young girls married in Quebec City. They were Michelle Artus, who married Jean Descaries dit Le Houx, on November 5, 1654, and Marie Renaudin, who joined in matrimony with Nicolas Levieux, on September 9, 1654. Although both women eventually returned to France in 1670, it is interesting to note that one of their daughters became a nursing nun and died at the Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. Marie Dumesnil, a 12-year-old orphan was assigned to Marguerite Bourgeoys, who assumed responsibility for her until she married André Charly dit Saint-Ange (November 9, 1654).

Four of the new arrivals married recruits: Catherine Hurault married Jean Lemercher (October 13, 1654), Marie Lorgueil married Toussaint Hunault dit Deschamps (November 23, 1654), Marie Renaud married Mathurin Langevin dit Lacroix (September 5, 1654) and Jeanne Rousselier married Pierre Gaudin dit Chastillon (October 13, 1654). Five others married men from Montreal: Catherine Lorion married Pierre Vilain (October 13, 1654), Jeanne Merrin married Éloi Jarry dit Lahaye (September 11, 1654), Marie-Marthe Pinson married Jean Milot (January 7, 1654), Jeanne Soldé married Jean Beauvais (January 7, 1654) and Jeanne Voidy married Jean Dumay (November 9, 1654). Finally, one of the women was later called the Mother of the Colony – and for good cause. This was, of course, Marguerite Bourgeoys, the first educator and 'social worker' of Ville-Marie, who needs no introduction.

The extraordinary destiny of some of the recruits

We have a good deal of information about the male recruits, thanks to the work by R.-J. Auger (see Episode 11), which compiles all of the research done on this subject prior to 1955. That work presents a portrait of each of them, with some more detailed than others. Therefore, we know that most of the recruits got married and had children. Over the years, we find their names associated with several transactions (purchases or sales of concessions, contracts as employees or employers) and in a certain number of trials, both as witnesses and the accused. Several joined the ranks of the Milice de la Sainte-Famille (founded by De Maisonneuve, on January 27, 1663, to defend Ville-Marie) and it should be noted that many were rewarded for choosing to remain in New France. Some, however, had more unusual destinies.

Étienne Bouchard, for example, a surgeon who was born in Paris, soon obtained permission to break his commitment to the Company of Montreal since, as of March 1655, he signed a contract with about forty inhabitants of Ville-Marie, for "one hundred cents payable in two portions" His job was to "treat all kinds of illnesses, both natural and accidental", with the exception of certain diseases such as the plague, the pox, and leprosy. On October 6, 1657, he married Marguerite Boissel, but left the young woman as a result of her numerous activities. She had to answer in a matter of morals in June 1660. He decided to forgive her and was rewarded a year later when their first child was born, later followed by eight others. Étienne Bouchard died in 1676, at the age of 54.

Jean Gervaise also led a very active life. He was one of the first recruits to marry (February 3, 1654, Anne Archambault) and, in addition to his trade as a baker, he held numerous functions in Montreal: church warden, curator, fiscal solicitor and interim judge. Visibly loved by all, he appears in numerous transactions and had a great impact on the colony. Maurice Averty dit Léger lived a bittersweet life. He was a solder first, for ten years, then worked as a long sawyer in 1663, and only married in 1685, at Boucherville, with a very young girl, Marie Charles. The marriage was short-lived, however, since Marie died in 1688, leaving her husband with two young daughters. He inherited from a cousin a short while after that and, believing himself rich, overspent to such a point that he lost custody of his children. He was buried in 1724, at the age of 93!

A dozen men chose to return to France at the end of their tour of duty (with the exception of Pierre Papin, who returned to France in 1696 to end his days there, his wife dead and his children grown). Two of them, however, returned to the colony: Michel Bouvier and Claude de Saint-André Robutel. Some of the recruits enjoyed the distinction of founding some of our important families. These include Jean Cadieux, the ancestor of all the Cadieux in Canada, Pierre Desautels dit Lapointe, the forbear of all the Désautels and several Lapointe families in Montreal and the surrounding areas, as well as Marin Hurtebise, who signed on with his brother André (who died in 1659), who founded all the Canadian Hurtubise families and, finally, Gilles Lauzon, the first of that name for Canada and the United States.

The tragic deaths of thirty recruits

As you will recall, eight of the recruits died during the crossing – Jacques Audru, Olivier Beaudoin, René Cadet, Jean Chaudronnier, Louis Doguet, Michel Lecomte, Joachim Lepallier and Pierre Moulières – since we can find no trace of them in the Canadian archives. The first two recruits to die in New France were René Rodailler, who passed away on November 22, 1653 (only six days after arriving at Ville-Marie), and François Hudin, who was buried on January 15, 1654. R.-J. Auger does not mention the cause of death.

Twelve men, for a fact, were killed by the Iroquois: Yves Bastard (1654), Julien Daubigeon (1655), Jacques Nail (1657), Sylvestre Vacher dit St-Julien (1659), Nicolas Duval (1660), Olivier Martin dit Lamontagne, Pierre Martin dit Larivière and Jean Pichard (1661), Simon Leroy (1662), Simon Després dit Berri and Michel Théodore dit Gilles (1664), Jean Deniau and his wife (1695). A thirteenth, Michel Louvard dit Desjardins, was assassinated by "drunken savages", which resulted in the enactment of a new order on June 24, 1662 prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages to Amerindians. Simon Leroy died at the side of the renowned Sergeant-Major Lambert Closse, whose heroic feats were recounted abundantly in 17th century writings and correspondence.

Seven of the recruits died in May 1660, in the Long-Sault battle, along with Dollard des Ormeaux: Jacques Brassier (25 years old), François Crusson dit Pilote (24 years old), René Doussin (30 years old), Nicolas Jousselin (25 years old), Jean Lecomte (27 years old), Étienne Robin dit Desforges (27 years old), Jean Tavernier dit Laforêt (28 years old) and Jean Vallets* (27 years old). At the start of 1660, Adam Dollard des Ormeaux recruited sixteen men to accompany him to the Long-Sault crossing, a route traditionally taken by the Iroquois on their way home from hunting. It was a military undertaking made in the spirit of a?little war? – to ambush small groups in order to intimidate them. The goal was to protect the return of allied hunters (French and Amerindian). The outcome of this operation is well known: all of the French died either during or after the battle, along with the forty Huron and Algonquin allies who had joined them, when the group was ambushed by a large Iroquois troop who had joined forces to attack the French colony.

Finally, three men drowned (Christophe Roger, in 1656, Jean Davoust, in 1657, and Louis Chartier, in 1660) and one last recruit, Toussaint Hunault dit Deschamps, was assassinated by a soldier in 1690. This large number of tragic deaths may give the impression that the recruits were decimated. However, the future of New France was assured by the descendents of some recruits and their other compatriots.

* One month before leaving, Jean Vallets gave his belongings to an old friend from the recruits, Jean Pichard, in the event that he did not return. In 1661, Jean Pichard was killed by an Iroquois. Just before this – did he have a premonition – he hired on Jacques Morin, with plans to establish himself on other lands. Jacques Morin married the widow Pichard.

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