

Catherine Ducharme (1657-1719), Fille du Roi City Girl Survives and Thrives on Pioneer Life in La Prairie

© Susan McNelley

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In Montréal on December 27, 1671, Catherine Ducharme¹, a young girl of fourteen, stood before the notary while her marriage contract was being drawn up.² One wonders what was going through her mind on that day. She had been in the French colony only a short time and her life was changing rapidly and drastically.

Although no record of her arrival has survived, it is assumed that she came in the spring or summer of 1671. Catherine would have been among the last of the King's Daughters sent to the colony. The first of these marriageable women sponsored by the King had arrived in 1663. Ten years later, in 1673, the King stopped the program in the belief that there were now enough women to successfully populate New France. Catherine was among the eighteen percent of King's Daughters who settled in the Montréal area. Seventy percent initially settled in Québec City and twelve percent in Trois-Rivières.³ She has the distinction of being the King's Daughter who produced the greatest number of children: eighteen in all. But that is getting ahead of the story.

According to her marriage records (both civil and church), Catherine was the daughter of Jean Ducharme, a master carpenter, and his deceased wife, Anne Lelièvre. She was from the parish of St-Benoit on the Île-de-France (Paris). Fortunately, quite a bit is known about her background thanks to the efforts of Jean-Paul Macouin, a researcher in Paris who has contributed significantly to the Fichier Origine database.⁴ He found a number of family documents in the notarial files in Paris. Her parents signed a marriage contract on August 3, 1645 before the notary Pierre Houdic. It appears that Catherine's mother died in 1657, about the time that Catherine was born. It is possible that Anne Lelièvre died in childbirth.⁵ On June 14, 1657, an inventory of the

¹ The name Ducharme is also spelled Ducharme in various civil and church documents related to Catherine, her father Jean and her uncle Fiacre.

² *Parchemin – Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAAnQ). Québec, Canada. Marriage contract of Pierre Roy and Catherine Ducharme, dated December 27, 1671 and signed before the notary Bénigne Basset Des Lauriers.

³ Runyan, Aimie Kathleen. "Daughters of the King and Founders of a Nation: Les *Filles du roi* in New France." Master's Thesis, University of North Texas, May, 2010. Web. 13 Mar. 2012, 58. Runyan cites Silvio Dumas' *Les filles du roi en Nouvelle-France* for these percentages.

⁴ Macouin, Jean-Paul. "Ducharme/Lafontaine, Fiacre," *Fichier Origine Database*. Québec Federation of Genealogical Societies. Web. 1 Jan 2014; Macouin, Jean-Paul. "Quelques pionniers parisiens retracés dans le minutier central des notaires de Paris." *Fichier Origine Database*. Québec Federation of Genealogical Societies. Web. 15 Jan 2014.

⁵ The researcher Jean-Paul Macouin, affiliated with the Fichier Origine, speculated that Catherine was the daughter of Jean Ducharme and his second wife because she is not listed among the children for whom Jean is guardian in the inventory of property after the death of his first wife. However, it is clearly stated in Catherine's marriage contract and in the church record of her marriage that she is the daughter of Jean Ducharme and Ann Lelièvre. Her age given

property of Jean Ducharme and the deceased Anne Lelièvre was recorded in Paris before the notaries Charles Quarré and Jacques Ricordeau. In the inventory it notes that Jean had a house with a cellar, a shop, a workshop, two bedrooms above the workshop, and a stock of lumber on the rue des Poirées, very close to the Pont-Neuf. The house belonged to gentlemen from the Sorbonne, which was on the Left Bank, just across the river. Shortly after the inventory, Jean married Catherine Dupré. According to the 1657 inventory taken after the death of Catherine Ducharme's mother, Catherine's siblings included sisters Marguerite (born about 1649), Madeleine (born about 1652), and Barbe (born about 1654). She also had sister Françoise (married in 1677, died in 1679), and two brothers, Pierre and Antoine. The latter three were likely the children of her father and his second wife. Pierre and Antoine would follow in their father's footsteps and become master carpenters as well. Carpentry appears to be the family trade: Catherine's uncle Fiacre Ducharme, who had already immigrated to Montréal, was also a carpenter.

It isn't known why Catherine came to New France as one of the *filles du roi*. She was not an orphan: her father was still alive. His signature is on a document in Paris dated October 15, 1682.⁶ It is most likely that, with several girls in the family, Jean Ducharme lacked the dowry for a suitable match for this daughter. In 1671, he had a brother Fiacre in Montréal who was married with four children. Jean must have felt that Catherine's chances for marriage and family were better in the New World.

Catherine's known ancestry goes back to her great-grandparents. Catherine's family had lived in Paris for at least three generations. Her paternal grandparents, Toussaint Ducharme and Jacqueline Drouet, signed a marriage contract in Paris on June 2, 1616. Her two sets of great-grandparents on her father's side were Jean Ducharme, his wife Marguerite Faulqueur, and Jean Drouet and his wife Jeanne from Saint-Cyr. Jean Ducharme was a cooper and Jean Drouet was a laborer from nearby Jouey-en Josas.⁷

Undoubtedly Catherine ended up in Montréal rather than in Québec City because her uncle Fiacre had settled there some eighteen years before Catherine's arrival. It would have been a great comfort to have a relative in this new country to welcome the girl and provide some assistance in getting settled. He was also well acquainted with Marguerite Bourgeoys, founder of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, a secular religious community whose mission was the education of young girls, native and French alike. Fiacre and Marguerite had crossed the Atlantic together in 1653 on a ship sailing from Saint-Nazaire to join the settlers at Ville Marie, as Montréal was originally known. Certainly Catherine made the acquaintance of Marguerite Bourgeoys soon after her coming to Montréal. In 1668, Marguerite had purchased the Maison Saint-Gabriel to house marriageable girls sent by the King. She understood that these girls were key to the success of the colony and she wanted to give them as much support as possible before they assumed their roles as frontier wives and mothers. It is not known whether Catherine stayed

on various civil documents in Montréal indicates that she was born in 1657, the year Jean's first wife died. After her mother's death, perhaps another couple assumed guardianship of the newborn infant.

⁶ Macouin, Jean-Paul. "Quelques pionniers parisiens retracés dans le minutier central des notaires de Paris." *Fichier Origine Database*. Québec Federation of Genealogical Societies. Web. 1 Jan 2014.

⁷ Macouin, Jean-Paul. "Ducharme/Lafontaine, Fiacre," *Fichier Origine Database*. Québec Federation of Genealogical Societies. Web. 1 Jan 2014.

with Marguerite or went straight to the home of her uncle upon her arrival. No doubt the young girl had a lot to learn about pioneer life in New France. Both Marguerite and Fiacre's wife were there to teach her.

Montréal could not have been more different from Catherine's native city. Paris in the seventeenth century had long been the largest city in France and vied with Naples, Italy as the largest city in Europe at that time. By the 1630s, the population of Paris was 430,000. Paris had been a center of trade since Roman times. With the creation of its university in the twelfth century, it had become a center of learning and higher education. It was the seat of the French kings and the attendant government administration.⁸ Twenty-first century visitors to Paris see landmarks that were familiar to Catherine Ducharme: Notre-Dame Cathedral, the Pont-Neuf, the Louvre, and the Sorbonne, to name just a few.

The Paris in which Catherine grew up was also filthy, foul-smelling, and boisterous. The streets were dark, narrow, deeply rutted, muddy, and littered with all manner of sewage. Household waste was routinely tossed out the windows and doors onto the streets. Shopkeepers shouted their wares from open-front shops. People on foot shared the passageways with horses, donkey-pulled carts, foraging pigs and chickens. The River Seine was an open sewer, with all manner of waste tossed in. In the summer, Parisians bathed in the river and women washed their clothes there. It was also a source of drinking water. No wonder Parisians preferred to drink wine.⁹

Meal preparation in Paris was in sharp contrast to the labor-intensive work required of families in the frontier settlements of New France. Meat, fish, fowl, and all manner of fresh produce was to be found in the markets throughout the city. There were a number of culinary guilds that supplied customers with a variety of ready-to-eat meals.¹⁰ Catherine grew up in the household of a master tradesman; it is likely that her family ate better than the poorest citizens. They would have purchased bread from a bakery and probably had money for some fresh meat and produce.

Back to Montréal on this December day of 1671: The other party in the marriage contract was Pierre Roy (Le Roy), the son of Charles Roy and Jeanne Boyer. Pierre was from the parish of St-Michel-Le-Clou in Poitou, a province of west-central France. Pierre was a young man who had immigrated to Canada as an engagé. In the census of 1666, Pierre, age 22, was listed as a domestic in the household of Jacques LeBer. It is likely due to this relationship that LeBer and his brother-in-law Charles LeMoyne, two well-to-do merchants and respected men of Montréal, were present to witness and add their signatures to the marriage contract of Catherine and Pierre. Catherine's uncle Fiacre Ducharme was also present for the signing of the marriage contract. Three weeks later, on January 12, 1672, the couple was married in the chapel of Notre-Dame on the rue Saint-Paul in Montréal.¹¹

⁸ Pinkard, Susan. *A Revolution in Taste: The Rise of French Cuisine, 1650 – 1800*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 51-54.

⁹ Lewis, W. H. *The Splendid Century: Life in the France of Louis XIV*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1953. 172.

¹⁰ Pinkard, Susan. *A Revolution in Taste: The Rise of French Cuisine, 1650 – 1800*. 58-59.

¹¹ The digitized church record of the marriage of Pierre Roy and Catherine Ducharme is found in the collection of Québec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1979; Montréal; Notre-Dame; Baptêmes, mariages, sépultures 1642-1694, Image 343; Downloaded from FamilySearch.org in August, 2013.

Pierre is listed as a resident of La Prairie on their marriage documents.¹² No doubt he had accepted the invitation of the Jesuits to establish a homestead on their seigneurie of La Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River directly across from the island of Montréal. He did what it was hoped that all young men who came to the colony would do, that is, at the end of their contract they would stay in the colony, obtain a piece of property, marry, and have a large family.

The seigneurie of La Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine was granted by the French king to the Jesuits about 1647. La Prairie was described by the missionaries as an elevated plain at the entrance to a vast prairie. The soil was considered excellent for the cultivation of grain and the pasturing of animals. In 1667, a small number of Christian Oneidas (one of the five founding nations of the Iroquois Confederacy) were persuaded by the Jesuits to settle at the mission. They called their village Kentake “at the meadow.” That same year, a few French families established homes at La Tortue and Saint-Lambert, specific areas of the Seigneurie of La Prairie. By 1673 there was a French population of 79 persons. A chapel and a mill had also been constructed. The Amerindian population at La Prairie, primarily Christian Iroquois but also natives of other tribes, grew considerably between 1673 and 1674. In 1676, the native settlement relocated to a site on the Lachine Rapids and that mission was renamed Saint-François-Xavier du Sault.¹³

After their marriage in Montréal, Pierre and Catherine took up residence in La Prairie. Before long, the children started coming along. The first child was born when Catherine was about seventeen. Nine years after their marriage, Pierre Roy (39), his wife Catherine (24) and six children, ages 7 and under, are listed in the Census of 1681 for La Prairie.¹⁴

There are a number of land records in the civil archives of Montréal that confirm Pierre’s presence on the seigneurie of La Prairie. On December 8, 1672, Pierre obtained from the Jesuits 80 arpents of land located at St-Lambert within the seigneurie of La Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine.¹⁵ Pierre worked hard to establish his homestead. On April 7, 1675, 15-year-old Mathurin Valliquet was contracted to work for a period of three years for Pierre Roy “of La Prairie-St Lambert.” On July 7, 1683, Pierre purchased an additional parcel of land at St-Lambert from Claude Carron and Madeleine Varene.¹⁶

Life in La Prairie would not be easy for the pioneer settlers. In New France, two decades of relative peace had followed the defeat in 1667 of the Iroquois in New York by the French soldiers of the Carignan-Salières regiment. Things began to change in the late 1680s. The

¹² Pierre, listed as a domestic in the household of Jacques La Ber in the census of 1666, is not listed in the census of 1667. He is listed on the baptism record of Marguerite Boyer in Montréal in 1668. The next time he is found in the civil and church records of Montréal is in 1671, when he signed the contract to marry Catherine Ducharme.

¹³ Trudel, Marcel. *La seigneurie de la Compagnie des Indes, - 1663-1674*. Canada: Fides, 1963, 391; Reid, Gerald F. *Kahnawà:Ke: Factionalism, Traditionalism, and Nationalism in a Mohawk Community*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2004, 6.

¹⁴ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH) Genealogical Database*. University of Montréal, 2005. Web. 1 Jan 2014. Census record # 97440.

¹⁵ *Pistard Database*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ), Québec, Canada. Web. 7 Jan 2014. Document dated December 8, 1672. The “concession” was noted by Joseph Tissot, private secretary for the Jesuits.

¹⁶ *Parchemin – Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ). Québec, Canada. The engagement of Mathurin Valliquet was signed before the notary B. Basset dit Deslauriers. The sale of land to Pierre Roy by Claude Carron is found in the notary records of C. Maugue.

Iroquois, aided and abetted by the English colonists in New York, were becoming increasingly bold in their attacks on the French settlements along the St. Lawrence River. The inhabitants of La Prairie became worried that they might be attacked by Iroquois war parties at any time. Between 1687 and 1689, a palisade was constructed around the village to provide protection for the pioneers and their animals.¹⁷

In 1689, the Iroquois attacked the French settlers at Lachine, near Montréal. Records show that twenty-four French were killed and seventy taken prisoner. Many families on the Seigneurie of La Prairie, French and Amerindian alike, took refuge in Montréal following this attack. Pierre and Catherine were among those who moved to Montréal, renting a house on St-Jacques street from the Sisters of Notre-Dame of Montréal.¹⁸ However, they would soon return to their homestead in La Prairie.

In June of 1690, La Prairie was attacked by a group of New York militiamen and their Iroquois allies under the leadership of Pieter Schuyler from New York. It was about this time that Pierre Roy donated a portion of his land for the construction of a small wooden fort at St-Lambert.¹⁹ It was some five miles to the village of La Prairie -- too great a distance for the inhabitants to travel in the case of a sudden attack. Between 1689 and 1697, La Prairie would be visited on a number of occasions by Iroquois and English raiding parties. Shortly before dawn on Aug. 11, 1691, a group of some 250 English militiamen from Albany, New York and their Mohawk allies led by Major Pieter Schuyler surprised a French force of 700-800 men that had been assembled by the local French governor at the fort at La Prairie. A short but bloody battle ensued.²⁰ A number of men were killed and wounded on both sides. (Casualty accounts vary.) One of those killed was Catherine's cousin, thirty-one-year-old Louis Ducharme, the eldest son of Catherine's uncle Fiacre Ducharme. Two months earlier, Louis' younger brother Claude was among seven men who were killed by Iroquois near Montréal.²¹

Pierre and Catherine were committed to maintaining their homestead at La Prairie St-Lambert. Children continued to come along every year or two; seven children would be born between 1690 and 1699, including twin sons born on January 8, 1691. There are baptism records in the church of La Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine for all of the children but one.²² Pierre continued to acquire land on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. On July 8, 1695, the Jesuits conceded to Pierre some additional land in the region of La Tortue, in the western part of the La Prairie

¹⁷ "Fort La Prairie, National Historical Site of Canada." *Canada's Historic Places*. Web 28 Mar 2014.

¹⁸ This information was provided by Stéphane Tremblay, Historian and President of the Société d'histoire de La Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine in March of 2014.

¹⁹ This information was provided by Stéphane Tremblay, Historian and President of the Société d'histoire de La Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine in March of 2014.

²⁰ Pell, John H.G. "Schuyler, Peter" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Canada: University of Toronto/ Université Laval, 2003. Web. 15 February 2014.

²¹ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH) Genealogical Database*. University of Montréal, 2005. Web. 1 Jan 2014. Burial records for Louis and Claude.

²² *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH) Genealogical Database*. University of Montréal, 2005. Web. 1 Jan 2014. Baptism records. The digitized but non-indexed baptism records are also found in the collection of Québec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1979, La-Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine, available at FamilySearch.org.

seigneurie. And on October 20, 1697, Pierre leased property at St-Lambert owned by Suzanne Beaujan. In this record, Pierre is referred to as a “resident of the fort at La Prairie St-Lambert.”²³

The eighteenth and last child of Pierre and Catherine was a daughter Angélique who was born in Montréal on July 15, 1701 but died the next day. Catherine was forty-four years old. It may well be that this had been a problem pregnancy. On the baptism record of Angélique it notes that Catherine was currently a resident of Montréal, while her husband Pierre was still in residence in La Prairie. The newborn infant was baptized by the sage-femme (midwife), an indication that the infant was not expected to live. It appears that there were always children in the household or nearby. Grandchildren were arriving before Catherine had borne her last child.

In retaliation for the Anglo/Iroquois massacres, French militiamen and their Amerindian allies raided New England villages. These raids occurred well into the eighteenth century. Homes and crops were destroyed. Men and beasts were killed, while women and children were often kidnapped and taken back to New France in the hopes that they might bring a large ransom. Evidently, many French-Canadian settlers sympathized with the plight of those abducted. Children were often adopted by Canadian families. A number converted to the Catholic faith, married French-Canadians and chose to stay in New France rather than return to their New England village.²⁴

Pierre and Catherine were apparently among those who provided shelter and support for English captives. At the baptism of their son Louis on August 20, 1694, the godmother was Marthe Mills, an Englishwoman who was born in New England. She, along with her seven-year-old son, were abducted by François Hertel and Amerindian allies on March 18, 1690 and brought to Montréal. Her husband and some of her other children had been killed in the raid. Marthe was placed in the service of Monsieur Crevier and baptized in Montréal on June 29, 1693. Pierre Boucher of Boucherville was her godfather.²⁵

In 1704, Pierre and Catherine took into their home Elizabeth Corse (Casse in French records), an eight-year-old English girl who had been captured by French-led Native-Americans in a raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts that occurred on February 29, 1704. Elizabeth was the daughter of James Corse and Elizabeth Catlin of Deerfield. Elizabeth’s mother and her aunt, Mary French, along with three female cousins, were also taken captive in the raid and marched north to Montréal. Her mother and her aunt died on the arduous 300-mile march.²⁶ Catherine Ducharme stood as her godmother when Elizabeth was baptized into the Catholic faith in Montréal on July 14, 1705. Elizabeth married Jean Dumontet dit Lagrandeur on November 6, 1712, at the age of sixteen. Elizabeth’s cousin Marthe Marguerite French, who had also been kidnapped and taken

²³ *Parchemin – Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ). Québec, Canada. Notary records of Adhémar dit Saint-Martin.

²⁴ Carley, Jeanne Marie Gendreau. “The Deerfield Captives and Their Descendants.” *Je Me Souviens*, A Publication of the American-French Genealogical Society. Vol. 27. No 2. Autumn 2004.

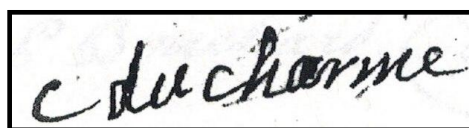
²⁵ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH) Genealogical Database*, Baptism record # 17884 for Louis LeRoy. Baptism record # 211022 for Marthe Mills.

²⁶ Carley, Jeanne Marie Gendreau. “The Deerfield Captives and Their Descendants.” *Je Me Souviens*, A Publication of the American-French Genealogical Society. Vol. 27. No 2. Autumn 2004.

to Montréal, married Pierre and Catherine's son Jacques on November 24, 1711. Both girls would produce large families and remain in the Montréal area for the rest of their lives.²⁷

Beginning in 1696, there are a number of land transactions recorded in the civil archives of Montréal indicating that Pierre and Catherine were helping their adult children to become established on the land. On April 24, 1696, Pierre and Catherine sold a piece of property situated on the seigneurie of La Prairie in the area of "La Tortue" to Antoine Rougie dit Lafrance, the husband of their daughter Catherine. On September 4, 1708, they sold land situated at the fort of La Prairie-St. Lambert as well as another piece of land situated on the Jesuit "censive" to their son Pierre. There is a document signed on October 3, 1713 indicating that son-in-law André Babu leased land at St. Lambert from Pierre and Catherine.²⁸ In September 23, 1715, Pierre and Catherine sold property to their son-in-law Jean Perras.²⁹

Interestingly, Catherine's signature appears twice on the land transaction of 1708.³⁰ Of the documents examined, it is the only one carrying her signature. On the baptism record of Elizabeth Corse (Casse) in 1705, Catherine declares that she is unable to sign. When did she learn to write, or at least sign her name? Did her daughter Marguerite de la Conception, a teaching nun, instruct her in some basic writing skills? We will never know the answers to these questions, but the fact that Catherine did sign this document shows some initiative on her part.



Catherine Ducharme's signature on land transaction, dated September 4, 1708

By 1710, Pierre and Catherine were making plans to move to Montréal. On September 28 of that year, Pierre and Catherine purchased property located on the rue Saint-Paul from François Picard dit Laroche de Nyort and his wife Geneviève Picard.³¹ The rue Saint-Paul is Montréal's oldest street.³² It was named after Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, the founder of Québec. (Maisonneuve had left the colony in 1665.) In the early years it was the main thoroughfare. Paved in 1672, it ran from the fort to the Hôtel Dieu. The stone chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours, built in 1655 at the initiative of Marguerite Bourgeoys, was on this street. Jacques LeBer, one of the most influential men in the colony, had lived on the rue Saint-Paul in a two-story home enclosed by a wooden fence. Charles LeMoyne, another notable in the colony, had also resided on this street. According to a document of 1722 concerning the disposition of the property of the deceased Pierre Roy and Catherine Ducharme, their home was a stone house

²⁷ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH) Genealogical Database*. Baptism record #210968. for Elizabeth Casse; Marriage record # 48043 for Jacques Roy St-Lambert and Marthe Marguerite French.

²⁸ *Parchemin – Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ). Québec, Canada. Notary records of Adhémar dit Saint-Martin.

²⁹ *Pistard Database*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec. Québec, Canada. Web. 7 Jan 2014.

³⁰ *Parchemin – Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ). Québec, Canada. Notary records of Adhémar dit Saint-Martin. Document dated September 4, 1708.

³¹ *Parchemin – Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ). Québec, Canada. Notary records of Adhémar dit Saint-Martin.

³² For more information on Old Montréal, see Goldman, Norman. "A Summer Walk into Montréal's Early Years under..." *Boots n All Travel Guide*. Pub 28 Aug 2008. Web 4 Feb 2014.

located on the rue Saint-Paul across from the inn of Marguerite Bouat and her brother Jean Bouat, Lieutenant General of Montréal.³³

Catherine died in Montréal on February 21, 1719 at the age of sixty-two. Four months later, on June 18, 1719, Pierre Roy made out his will. In the document he stipulated that money be given to the Church for 50 Masses to be said on behalf of his departed wife. He also wanted money given for 300 Masses (200 from the Recollets and 100 from the Jesuits) for the repose of his own soul.³⁴ Pierre Roy died in Montréal on October 28, 1721 at the age of eighty-three. He was buried in the presence of his son Pierre and son-in-law André Babeu. The children inherited the house on the rue Saint-Paul in Montréal.³⁵

Catherine and Pierre had eighteen children between 1674 and 1701, ten sons and eight daughters.³⁶ At least thirteen of the children grew to adulthood. The oldest child became a nun. Eleven of the children married. It is known that four died in childhood. There are no records to indicate what happened to Antoine. Catherine Ducharme and Pierre Roy would have more than one hundred grandchildren, with the majority born and raised in La Prairie.

New France's Intendant Talon, Marguerite Bourgeoys, and many others voiced their concerns regarding the appropriateness of city girls for the demanding work required of women in New France.³⁷ Catherine Ducharme proved beyond any doubt that she had the mettle for pioneer life.

Catherine and Pierre's Children³⁸

1. Marguerite was born in La Prairie on June 4, 1675. At the age of fifteen, she joined the Congregation de Notre-Dame de Montréal, founded in 1657 by Marguerite Bourgeoys. On June 25, 1698, Marguerite LeRoy, taking the name Sister de la Conception, professed the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as a fourth vow to teach girls. Sister de la Conception was employed in several missions. It appears that Marguerite had a mind of her own and had trouble getting along with other religious men and women; no priest wanted her in his parish. The free-thinking nun did have the support of Bishop Saint-Vallier of Québec. In 1727, under his direction, the courageous woman founded the Louisburg Mission, a teaching institution, on Cape Breton Island, 900 miles from Montréal. Six years later in March of 1733,

³³ *Pistard Database*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ). Québec, Canada. Web. 7 Jan 2014. Document dated August 22, 1722.

³⁴ The will is found in *Parchemin – Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)* Notary records of Lepailleur, Royal Notary. My gratitude is extended to Stéphane Tremblay, Historian and President of the Société d'histoire de La Prairie-de-la-Magdeleine for his help in translating this portion of the will. Unfortunately, the condition of the document was such that he was unable to determine if it mentions any specific property left to his descendants.

³⁵ *Pistard Database*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ). Québec, Canada. Web. 7 Jan 2014. Document dated August 22, 1722 regarding the sale of the home of the deceased Pierre Roy and Catherine Ducharme in Montréal.

³⁶ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH) Genealogical Database*. University of Montréal, 2005. Web. 1 Jan 2014. Various baptism, marriage and burial records, including Family Record #3874.

³⁷ McNelley, Susan. *Hélène's World: Hélène Desportes of Seventeenth-Century Québec*, 206-207.

³⁸ Most of the information on the children of Pierre Roy and Catherine Ducharme comes from the following source: *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH) Genealogical Database*. The digitized but non-indexed records are also found in the collection of Québec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1979, available at FamilySearch.org.

Bishop Pierre-Herman Dosquet, successor of Saint-Vallier, wrote, “She is the most deceitful, the most scheming nun, and the one most filled with illusions that I know.” Sister de la Conception was ordered to return to Montréal that same year. While she had her detractors, others among her contemporaries found traits to admire in Sister de la Conception. According to her obituary, she was “endowed with a quick and penetrating mind and a rare talent and skill in teaching pupils.” She died on December 13, 1749 at the age of 75.³⁹

2. Marie Anne (Anne): No baptism record exists. According to the PRDH, she was born before 1675 in a “lieu indéterminé au Québec.” According to the census record of 1681, she would have been born about 1677. She was therefore between twelve and fourteen when she married André Babeu on November 14, 1689 in La Prairie. Their firstborn, a child who died at birth, arrived more than four years later, in February of 1694. In all, seventeen children would be born to the couple: 8 boys, 8 girls, and the gender of the first child who died at birth unknown. All of the girls were given the first name of Marie, a tradition common among many French-Canadians. All but three of Marie’s children married. She died on July 4, 1744 in La Prairie. She would have been about 67 years old at the time of her death.

3. Pierre was born on January 3, 1677. Catherine’s uncle Fiacre Ducharme was his godfather. (Two months later, on March 17, Fiacre died.) Pierre established himself early on as a voyageur. There are civil records in Montréal where Pierre is listed as a voyageur as early as August 20, 1692.⁴⁰ He married Marguerite Ouacaikikoue Ouabankikoue, a native Miami woman, before 1703 at Ste-Anne-de-Détoit (later to become Detroit, MI). The couple had at least six children. Pierre was one of the first French-Canadian colonists at Detroit.⁴¹

4. Catherine was born on April 10, 1678. She married Antoine Rougier LaFrance on May 24, 1699 in lieu indetermine (au Québec). Twin girls were born on April 8, 1700 and died the next day. Catherine died a week later on April 16, less than a year after her marriage. She was twenty-two.

5. Pierre was the second son to carry this name. He was born on June 17, 1679 in Montréal. On his baptism record is the statement that his mother was staying at the home of the surgeon Antoine Forestier. It may be that Catherine was staying in Montréal at the time because she was having a difficult pregnancy. La Prairie was still very much an outpost. On April 20, 1705, at the age of twenty-six, this Pierre married Marie Angelique Faille Lafayette. Pierre died on April 26,

³⁹ For more information on Marguerite Roy, see Désilets, Andrée. “Roy, Marguerite dit de la Conception.” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Canada: University of Toronto/ Université Laval, 2003. Web. 8 Jan 2014. There is disagreement between Désilets and the PRDH concerning her date of birth and baptism. The records in the collection of Québec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1979 (La Prairie; Nativité de la Prairie-de-la-Magdaleine; Baptêmes, mariages, sépultures 1670-1755, Image 12; Downloaded from FamilySearch.org Mar 2014) show two entries for Marguerite, one below the other, with dates of June 4, 1674 and July 4, 1674. Is one the birth and the other the baptism? The record, written in Latin, is very difficult to read.

⁴⁰ *Parchemin – Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BAnQ). Québec, Canada. Notary records of Adhémar dit Saint-Martin.

⁴¹ For more information on Pierre, see Burton, C.M. *Cadillac’s Village: Detroit Under Cadillac with List of Property Owners and a History of the Settlement 1701-1710*. Detroit, 1896 *Google Books*. Web. 5 Jan 2014; Boivin-Sommerville, Suzanne. “Encountering Errors: Interpreting history from incomplete or unreliable sources.” *Késsinnimek-Roots-Racines*. Feb, 2003. Web 5 Jan 2014.

1743 at La Prairie. He and his wife had ten children, including seven girls. All of the girls were given the first name of Marie. Nine of the children grew to adulthood and married.

6. Marie was born on May 25, 1681 at La Prairie. On September 8, 1700, at the age of nineteen, she married Clément Leriger Laplante. The couple had thirteen children, eleven of them boys. The two girls were given the first name of Marie.

7. Jean was born on February 22, 1683 and died on March 2, 1689 at the age of six.

8. Marie Madeleine was born on August 19, 1684. She was seventeen when she married Jean Perras Fontaine on October 25, 1701. Jean Perras was the son of another pioneer settler at La Prairie. Marie Madeleine, who was Jean's second wife, died in Montréal on February 23, 1726 at the age of forty-two. The couple had twelve children, five girls and five boys. Two of their children died at birth and their gender is unknown. All of the girls were given the first name of Marie.

9. Gabriel was born on September 19, 1686 and died two years later on October 13, 1688.

10. Jacques was born on May 13, 1688. On November 24, 1711, at the age of twenty-three, Jacques married Marthe Marguerite French (Franche), one of the English children abducted in the raid on Deerfield, MA in 1703. The couple had eleven children, six girls and five boys. By 1731, the family was living in St-Laurent. Jacques died in Montréal on August 8, 1731, at the age of forty-three. Marthe remarried in 1733; her second husband was Jean Louis Ménard. This couple had five children. Marthe died on May 1, 1762 and was buried in Montréal.

11. Etienne, a twin was born on January 8, 1691. No further record is found in the church archives. Etienne apparently lived to adulthood as he is mentioned in a court document dated September 4, 1722 regarding the sale of his parents' home.

12. François, the other twin born on January 8, 1691, was forty years old when he married Marie Madeleine Marguerite Trudeau on August 27, 1731. The couple had fourteen children, all born in Montréal. Nine of the children were girls; five of them married. Five of the children were boys and apparently none of them married. François died on August 21, 1778, at the age of eighty-seven.

13. André was born on December 14, 1692. He married Suzanne Gourdon Lachasse on November 7, 1718. The couple had six children, three boys and three girls. All were born in Montréal, except the youngest who was born in La Prairie. André died on October 23, 1754 in Longueuil. He was sixty-one years old.

14. Louis was born on July 20, 1694. He married Marie Marguerite Demers Dumais on April 24, 1718. No further record of Louis exists. There is a note in his record in the PRDH database that he died outside of Québec.

15. Antoine was born on January 29, 1696. No further record has been found in the church archives.

16. **Marie Josephe** was born on May 20, 1697. She was twenty-two when she married Louis Trudeau on May 31, 1719. The couple had fourteen children, thirteen of them born in Montréal. Six died in infancy. Only four married. Marie Josephe died in Verchères on September 18, 1772 at the age of seventy-five.

17. **Geneviève** was born before 1699. No baptism record has been located. She died in Montréal on February 19, 1712.

18. **Angélique** was born in Montréal on July 15, 1701 and died the next day on July 16. On her baptism record it is noted that she was baptized by Marie Liardin, sage-femme. This emergency baptism was permitted when the infant was not expected to live long enough for a priest to visit and baptize the child.

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