Marie-Madeleine Normand, *Fille du Roi*Using the FAN Principle to Discover and Tell Her Story

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Not that long ago, genealogists were primarily concerned with tracing only the direct lineage of someone's ancestors. They focused on basic facts: who begat whom; dates and places of birth, marriage, death, and the names of children, if known. Old-timers will remember filling out countless pedigree charts and family group sheets. Now, we want to know more of the story. Just how do we go about researching our ancestors' narrative, particularly when they lived and died hundreds of years ago?

Elizabeth Shown Mills, noted author and genealogist, has encouraged the use of the FAN principle, or cluster research, to break through brick walls in family history. FAN is the acronym for family, associations, and neighbors; this method encourages looking beyond the immediate family to discover previously unknown facts about our ancestors. It also makes good sense to use this method in reconstructing the lives of our forebears. Seeing them in the context of their extended families, their friends, and the places they lived can round out the picture and bring new life to these individuals. This is the method I have employed to expand upon the story of the *fille du roi*, Marie-Madeleine Norman.

Those of us with French-Canadian ancestry are very fortunate to have access to the large online database of the *Programme de recherche en démographie historique* (The Research Program in Historical Demography) or PRDH, operated through the University of Montréal. This database provides dates and locations for all of the births, marriages, and deaths of the individuals of European descent who lived in New France as they were recorded in the Catholic parish records of Old Québec. The early census records and some marriage contracts from the civil records are also included. Of great importance to genealogists is the fact that the database also links individuals to their spouses, children, parents, and siblings. It makes it so much easier to explore a variety of documents in our efforts to glean as much information as possible about our ancestors.

I began the research for this story by looking at the records for Marie-Madeleine Normand in the PRDH database. The PRDH family reconstruction, linking her with other members of her family, gave me a solid base for reconstructing her life. I perused the birth, marriage, death, and census records connected to Marie-Madeleine. Next, I found Marie-Madeleine listed in the *Fichier-Origine Database*. A digital copy of the original marriage contract was obtained from the Bibliothéque et Archives Nacionales du Québec (BAnQ). Relevant property transactions,

recorded by civil authorities, were found in the Pistard online database, also offered by the BAnQ. A search of Google and Google Books provided information on Marie-Madeleine's place of birth in France, as well as on the area where she settled in the New World. I went to FamilySearch.org to look at their collection of digital images of the parish records of Québec to see if the actual church records yielded more detail. I wanted information on Marie-Madeleine's life; I also wanted to see where and how her life intersected with other lives and with the events of that era. In all cases, I attempted to use only credible sources for this family history. I should add here that I cited the sources of my information, so that others might consult these repositories and publications, if so desired.

This then is the story of Marie-Madeleine Normand:

In the summer of 1669, Marie-Madeleine crossed the Atlantic to New France. She was one of 150 girls and women who sailed from Dieppe, France on the Saint-Jean-Baptiste. All were marriageable women sponsored by the King to come to the French colony, to marry, and to increase the population. Marie-Madeleine would certainly have had the qualms and trepidations of the other girls also making the trip. However, she could take some comfort in the fact that her older sister had made the same trip four years earlier and would be there to welcome her when she landed in Québec.

Marie-Madeleine and Catherine Normand were the daughters of Jean-Baptiste Normand and Catherine Pageau (Pageot). Marie Madeleine was baptized on August 29, 1646 in Sens, France, in the parish of St-Hilaire. Her sister had been baptized in the same parish two years earlier on May 17, 1644.² Sens is an ancient city in the Yonne Department in north-central France, 120 km from Paris. In the seventeenth century, it remained an important cultural and religious center of France. It still had traces of its Roman heritage. It was also at this time a city ringed by a circle of churches, known as a "crown of prayer." This circle included Sens Cathedral, one of the earliest and largest gothic cathedrals in France. The Cathedral is still standing.³

Both girls' marriage records state that their father, a bourgeois from Paris, was deceased at the time of their marriages.⁴ This means he had died sometime before the summer of 1665, when Catherine, the eldest daughter, traveled to Québec and married. Their mother was still alive when the girls married.⁵ We don't know anything more about the mother. It is very likely that she did not have the money to provide a suitable dowry for her two daughters, limiting their opportunities for marriage in France. The girls had had some schooling, as evidenced by their signatures on their marriage contracts.

The *filles du roi* who made the crossing in 1669 were accompanied by Anne Gasnier. She was the widow of Jean Bourdon, a prominent citizen of Québec. Upon their arrival, Madame Bourdon also provided lodging for many of the girls in the home she owned in the Lower Town of Québec. Undoubtedly, Marie-Madeleine stayed with her sister. Catherine had married Pierre Normand Briere (no relation) on September 7, 1665 and had settled in Québec City to raise her

family.⁷ One can imagine that it was a joyful reunion for the sisters. Catherine would have provided valuable instruction on what life was like in the young colony and what would be expected of a wife. Certainly, she would have also counseled Marie-Madeleine on the merits of the various eligible men. The first record we have of Marie-Madeleine in New France is the baptism record of Catherine's baby, Charles, who was born on September 13, 1669.⁸ Marie-Madeleine was named the godmother of the infant; the merchant Charles Bazire was listed as the godfather.

On November 25, 1669, Marie-Madeleine signed a contract to marry Alphonse Morin, the son of Noël Morin and Hélène Desportes. She brought to the marriage goods worth 250 *livres*. In addition, she had received the King's dowry of 50 *livres*. It has been said that the first question many of the girls asked of their suitors was, "Did they have a home?" Alphonse was the son of the seigneur Noël Morin. His parents were among the first inhabitants of the Upper Town of Québec. We can assume that Alphonse had some sort of abode in Québec in 1669. Marie-Madeleine would have also been assured by her sister that Alphonse was a man of good character. Otherwise, Marie-Madeleine probably would not have chosen to marry him.

The notation that Marie-Madeleine and Catherine were the daughters of a "bourgeois of Paris" and the fact that both women married young men considered bourgeois in the New World ¹² suggest that the girls were of higher social standing than many of the girls who came as *filles du roi*.

On February 10, 1670, Marie-Madeleine Normand, age twenty-three, married Alphonse Morin, ¹³ age twenty, at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame-de-Québec. After their marriage, the couple settled in Québec, where they would be surrounded and supported by a network of extended family. François-Alphonse, their first child was born in December of that year. Hélène Desportes, François' grandmother, was identified as his godmother. The godfather was Pierre Normand Labrière, Marie-Madeleine's brother-in-law (married to her sister Catherine). Two other sons would be born to Alphonse and Marie-Madeleine in the next couple of years and also be baptized in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame-de-Québec.

On January 4, 1671 Alphonse and his brother Charles were given their parents' household possessions and farm animals in exchange for providing care for their parents in their old age. 14

On August 22, 1672, Alphonse received from his father a parcel of land on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. Almost twenty years earlier, on November 15, 1653, Noël Morin had been granted a small *arriere-fief* located at what was known as Pointe-de-la-Caille, some thirty miles east of Québec. This *arriere-fief*, known as the *fief St-Luc* or the *fief-Morin*, was within the Rivière-du-Sud seigneury owned by Louis Couillard de Lespinay. Alphonse was not the only one granted land at Pointe-de-la-Caille by Noël. In addition, Alphonse's brother-in-law Guillaume Fournier also received a parcel of land, as well as Jean Prou, Jean Ballie, and Michel Isabel. In June of 1674, according to a document in the civil records of Québec, the *fief-Morin* was

surveyed and boundaries established among the different owners. Louis Couillard de Lespinay, Guillaume Fournier, Jean Prou, Jean Ballie, Michel Isabel, and Pierre Blanche are listed on this record. ¹⁶ These men and their wives, along with family who remained in Québec, are the people with whom Alphonse and Marie-Madeleine would spend the rest of their lives. Their names are recorded in the parish records; they served as godparents to each other's children. They celebrated together in the good times. They helped each other out and supported each other in the difficult times.

The properties of these French settlers were narrow rectangles with the short side facing the river. The colonists would build their homes near the water's edge. The waterways of the New World were the means of transportation. The nearness of each homestead also afforded assistance and security for the pioneers.

Alphonse is listed simply as *habitant on* all existing records. No trade has ever been listed for him. It is recorded that on December 11, 1673 Alphonse petitioned the Sovereign Council of Québec for a payment of thirty-three *livres* for delivery of nineteen cords of wood ordered by the lieutenant-general to heat the courtroom. The Sieur Bazire, agent of the West Indies Company, was ordered to make payment.¹⁷ His father's gift of farm animals and this record in the civil archives suggest that Alphonse made his living as a farmer.

By 1675, the family had settled on their property on the south side of the St. Lawrence River. At the baptism of their son Joseph, their fourth child, in May of 1675, Alphonse and Marie-Madeleine were listed as residents of Rivière-de-la-Caille. It was also at this time that Alphonse began using the surname Morin Valcour (Valcourt). For at least some part of these early years at Rivière-de-la-Caille, the household also included Noël, Alphonse's father. Noël died there on February 10, 1680. 19

Alphonse and Marie-Madeleine were among the first families to settle at what would become Montmagny. They were truly establishing a homestead in the wilderness. According to historians, Montmagny was founded in 1678, a few years after the arrival of the first settlers, and was named in honor of Charles de Montmagny, the second governor of New France.²⁰ Also in 1678, the first chapel was built at Pointe-à-la-Caille, near the river, on land donated by Guillaume Fournier, Alphonse's brother-in-law. Guillaume is considered the founder of the parish of Saint-Thomas de Montmagny.²¹

Alphone and Marie-Madeleine are found in the census of 1681, listed in the district of Berthiersur-Mer, which included the seigneurie of La Rivière-du-Sud and the parish of St-Thomas. Five children are listed in this census: Alphonse, Pierre, Joseph, Catherine and Jean.²² Two other children, Germain and Nicolas born in 1673 and in 1679 respectively, had apparently not survived infancy.

In 1683, Msgr. François de Laval wrote to his superiors concerning the status of the missions in New France. He noted that the seigneurie of La Rivière-du-Sud, in the parish of St-Thomas,

contained some 10 families and 26 "souls." The handful of cottages and cabins clustered together at river's edge, with smoke curling from the chimneys, would have looked idyllic while sailing along the St. Lawrence River on a pretty summer day. The picturesque scene would belie the difficulties of life in the wilderness in the seventeenth-century. In particular, the handful of families living there would spend six months every year virtually isolated from the rest of the world; travel even to Québec in the winter months would be challenging.

Marie-Madeleine died on April 27, 1690, five days after the birth of her eleventh child.²⁴ She was forty-three years old. One can presume that her death was a result of complications from childbirth. The first birth and a birth to a woman over the age of forty are the times when a woman is most at risk of death in childbirth.

Marie-Madeleine had lived the first half of her life in or near Sens, one of the more prominent French cities of that era. She spent the second half in New France: about five years in Québec and fifteen years in Montmagny, which was never more than a hamlet during her lifetime. The records can only hint at her joys and heartaches. If she had any time at all to reflect on her life, how she would have felt about her decision to emigrate? She had a husband, a home, a houseful of children, and friends. Would these things make up for the hardships of pioneer life?

Five days after Marie-Madeleine's death, on May 2, the couple's newborn son Charles died. In June, their three-year-old son Louis died, followed by eight-year-old Marie-Madeleine in September of that year.²⁵ Alphonse would suffer the loss of four family members within six months! The cause of death of the children is not known. No local epidemic is reflected in the records. The parish recorded only five burials in 1690, three of them being members of this family. (Marie-Madeleine was buried in Québec.)

Marie-Madeleine had given birth to nine boys and two girls. At the time of her death, son François-Alphonse was age nineteen, Pierre-Noël, age eighteen, and Joseph, age fifteen. Certainly these young men were of enormous help to their father in maintaining the farm. Marie-Catherine, the couple's oldest daughter, was twelve at the time. No doubt she assumed the cooking, the childcare, the maintenance of the kitchen garden, and all of the other tasks that fell to women of that era. Françoise Hébert, wife of Guillaume Fournier and Marie-Madeleine's sister-in-law, lived nearby and would have been there to help in the wake of the tragic demise of so many family members.

Two years later, on November 24, 1692, Alphonse married Angélique Destroismaisons, the twenty-two-year-old daughter of Philippe Destroismaisons and Martine Crosnier, at nearby Cap St-Ignace. Alphonse and Angélique had four children, all born in Montmagny, but the oldest and the youngest died before they were a month old. Alphonse himself died on August 29, 1711, at the age of sixty. This was two weeks before his last child, a little girl named Hélène, was born. With his two wives, Alphonse fathered fifteen children. On April 30, 1714, Angélique married Jean François Langlois, son of Jean Langlois and Marie Charlotte Belanger. No children resulted from this union. Angélique died on February 26, 1744 and was buried in Montmagny.²⁶

Children of Alphonse Morin dit Valcourt and Marie-Madeleine Normand

- 1. **François-Alphonse** was born in Québec on December 2, 1670 and baptized the following day. His godparents were Hélène Desportes, his grandmother, and Pierre Normand Labrière, his uncle. On November 11, 1697, François married Marie Catherine Chamaillard, the daughter of Vincent Chamaillard and Catherine Renusson, in Montmagny. The couple had three children, all of whom grew to adulthood and married. François died on June 3, 1737, at the age of 66, and was buried in Montmagny. Marie Catherine Chamaillard died on April 22, 1753, some fifteen years after her husband died, and was also buried in Montmagny. She never remarried.²⁷
- 2. **Pierre-Noël** was born in Québec on February 26, 1672 and baptized two days later. His godparents were Marie-Françoise Chavrier and Pierre Noël Legardeur. On May 30, 1696, Pierre married Marguerite Rousseau, daughter of Thomas Rousseau and Marie-Madeleine Olivier. This couple had eleven children. After the death of his first wife, Pierre Noël married Marie-Hélène Maranda, the daughter of Michel Maranda and Suzanne Robert Jean. This couple had no children. No record of Pierre's death and burial has been found.²⁸
- 3. **Germain** was born in Québec on October 27, 1673 and baptized the following day. His godparents were his uncle Gilles Rageot and his aunt Catherine Belleau. No other records have been found. Germain does not appear in the Census of 1681, suggesting that he died in infancy or early childhood.²⁹
- 4. **Joseph** was born in Rivière-de-la-Caille on May 22, 1675 and baptized in Québec on June 9, 1675. His godparents were his uncle Guillaume Fournier and his aunt Marie-Madeleine Morin. On November 17, 1701, Joseph married Agnes Bouchard, daughter of Nicolas Bouchard and Anne Roy, in Cap-St-Ignace. This couple had nine children, seven of whom grew to adulthood and married. Joseph died in Montmagny on April 10, 1730 and was buried two days later. He was fifty-five. Agnes lived another twenty-eight years, dying on March 27, 1758 at the age of eighty-three. She never remarried.³⁰
- 5. **Marie-Catherine** was born in "Rivière-du-Sud" on July 16, 1677 and baptized five weeks later, on August 27 in Québec. Marie-Catherine's godparents were her uncle Jean-Baptiste Morin and aunt Catherine Normand. Marie-Catherine married Jacques Beaudoin, son of Jacques Beaudoin and Françoise Durand, on July 6, 1699 in Montmagny. The couple had seven children, five of whom grew to adulthood and married. Marie-Catherine died on July 1, 1734 in Berthier-sur-Mer (Berthier-en-Bas). Her husband, Jacques, born July 25, 1672, died on December 8, 1758 and was buried in the same settlement.³¹
- 6. **Nicolas** was born on March 23, 1679 in Pointe-A-La-Caille and baptized there two days later by the Missionary Pierre Thury. His baptism was later recorded at Notre-Dame-De-Québec by

the Parish Cure Henri Debernieres. His godparents were Nicolas Sarrazin and Françoise Hébert. The latter was Nicolas' aunt. Evidently, this child died in infancy. No other record has been found and a later child of Alphonse and Marie-Madeleine was also given the name Nicolas. The child is also not listed with the family in the census of 1681.³²

- 7. **Jean-Baptiste** was born on June 2, 1680 at Rivière-La-Caille and baptized six days later by the missionary Germain Morin who also happened to be his uncle. The baptism was recorded at Cap-St-Ignace. His godparents were Marie Fournier and Jean Prou. Jean-Baptiste is listed with the family in the Census of 1681. On May 7, 1703, he is listed as the godfather of his niece Elisabeth, daughter of Pierre-Noël Morin and Marguerite Rousseau. ³³ No other record has been found; perhaps he followed the life of a voyageur, disappearing from the church and civil records of New France.
- 8. **Marie-Madeleine** was born in Montmagny on February 23, 1682 and baptized there on March 7. Her godparents were Jacques Pose and Jacquette Fournier. This child died at the age of eight on September 4, 1690. According to church records, she was buried in Québec. Apparently no family members were present for the burial; witnesses were listed as Joseph Pinguet and Toussaint Dubaus.³⁴
- 9. **Nicolas** was baptized in Montmagny in 1684. Much of the baptism record is illegible. His godparents were a man by the surname Gamache and Françoise Hébert, his aunt. On November 15, 1706, Nicolas married Marie-Madeleine Mercier Colbec, the daughter of Pierre Mercier Colbec and Andree Martin, in Montmagny. Marie-Madeleine was born on April 27, 1682 in Acadia, Nova Scotia. The couple had one child who grew to adulthood and married.³⁵ Nicolas died on February 23, 1745 at the age of sixty-one. Marie-Madeleine died on April 22, 1774 at the age of ninety-two. She never remarried, living the last thirty years as a widow. Both Nicolas and Marie-Madeleine were buried in the parish of St-Pierre-de-la-Rivière-du-Sud. Their daughter had moved there with her husband and children in 1740.³⁶
- 10. **Louis** was born in Montmagny on March 19, 1686 and baptized there on April 7. His godparents were Louis Couillart and Genevieve Dechavignies. Louis died at the age of four on June 28, 1690, shortly after the deaths of his mother and brother in the spring of 1690. He was buried two days later in Montmagny.³⁷
- 11. **Charles** was born on April 22, 1690 and baptized six days later on April 28. His godparents were Jean Rolando and Barbe Girard of Montmagny. Charles, whose mother died giving birth to him, died on May 2, 1690; he was just 10 days old. He was buried in Montmagny on May 11.³⁸

¹ Peter J. Gagné, King's Daughters and Founding Mothers: The Filles du Roi, 1663-1673 (USA: 2001), 28-31.

² Pierre Le Clercq, "Normand, Marie-Madeleine" and "Normand, Catherine," *Fichier Origine Database*. Québec Federation of Genealogical Societies. Records as modified by Le Clercq on November 24, 2013, Web. 30 Jan 2017.

³ Gérard Daguin, *History of Sens City of Yonne*, Web. 10 Feb 2017. St-Hilaire, the church in which the Normand sisters were baptized, was destroyed in the French Revolution of the eighteenth century.

- ⁴ Cyprien Tanguay, *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes* (Québec: Eusebe Senecal, Imprimeur, 1871), *Google Books* Web. 21 Feb 2010.
- ⁵ Marriage contract dated November 25, 1669, *Parchemin Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothéque et Archives Nacionales du Québec (BAnQ) (Québec, Canada). This is the notary record of the Royal Notary Pierre Duquet.
- ⁶ Jean Hamelin, "Bourdon, Jean." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (University of Toronto/ Université Laval, 2003) Web. 4 May 2012.
- ⁷ Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH) Genealogical Database (University of Montréal, 2005), Web. 30 Jan 2017. Family Record #1859. Much of the information on Alphonse Morin, Marie-Madeleine Normand, and their family comes from this database (hereafter referred to as *PRDH*). The birth, marriage and death records in this database are linked to the digitized image of the record, available through the Druin Institute/ Québec Records website. The digitized but non-indexed records are also found in the collection of Québec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1979, available at FamilySearch.org. The PRDH also includes the Census Record of 1681.

 8 PRDH, Baptism Record #58345.
- ⁹ Marriage contract dated November 25, 1669. *Parchemin Banque de données notariales (1626-1789)*. Bibliothéque et Archives Nacionales du Québec (BAnQ) (Québec, Canada). Notary record of the Royal Notary Pierre Duquet.
- ¹⁰ Paul-André Dubé, "Mères De La Nation," *L'Ancêtre*. (The Société de généalogie de Québec. no 298, vol 38, printemps 2010), 150-151. Web 30 Jan 2017. Dubé cites information found in the marriage contract of Alphonse and Marie-Madeleine.
- ¹¹ The story of Noël Morin and Hélène Desportes is told in Hélène's World: Hélène Desportes of Seventeenth-Century Québec, a book by the author of this article on Marie-Madeleine Normand.
- ¹² PRDH, Marriage Record # 67654. This record of the marriage of Anne Normand, daughter of Pierre Normand Labrière and Catherine Normand, to Jerome Corda lists Anne's father as a "bourgeois" of Québec.
- ¹³ Alphonse Morin Valcourt was born on December 12, 1650 in Québec and baptized the following day. His godparents were Guillaume Odoart de St-Germain and Marguerite Besnard.
- ¹⁴ Parchemin Banque de données notariales (1626-1789). Bibliothéque et Archives Nacionales du Québec (BAnQ) (Québec, Canada). This agreement was known as the *pension alimentaire*. More information on this arrangement in found in *Hélène's World*, 229-230.
- ¹⁵ Michel Langlois, *Dictionnaire Biographique Des Ancétres Québécois (1608-1700) Tome III, Letres J à M.* (Sillery: La Maison Des Ancétres Québécois, 2000), 484.
- ¹⁶ Pistard Database. Bibliothéque et Archives Nacionales du Québec (BAnQ) (Québec, Canada) Web. 2 Feb 2017. Document dated June 19-21, 1674.
- ¹⁷ *Pistard Database*. Bibliothéque et Archives Nacionales du Québec (BAnQ) (Québec, Canada) Web. 2 Feb 2017. Document dated December 11, 1673.
- ¹⁸ This location on the southern banks of the St. Lawrence River was named after Adrien Dabancour la Caille, who drowned near Berthier, a short distance away, in 1640. The point on which the body was found was called Point-à-la-Caille. (Source: *First Annual Report of the Geographic Board of Canada*. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1899. Digitized by Google. 211 Web. 6 Feb 2017)
- ¹⁹ PRDH, Burial Record #69376.
- ²⁰ W. Steward Wallace, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Canada*, Vol. IV (Toronto: University Associates of Canada, 1948), 324. Web 10 Feb. 2017.
- ²¹ F.E.J. Casault, *Notes Historiques sur la paroisse de Saint-Thomas de Montmagny* (Québec: Dussault & Proulx, 1906), 17-18. Web 10 Feb. 2017.
- ²² PRDH, Census Record #97601
- ²³ F.E.J. Casault, *Notes Historiques sur la paroisse de Saint-Thomas de Montmagny* (Québec: Dussault & Proulx, 1906), 18-19. Web 10 Feb. 2017.
- ²⁴ Québec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1979, Montmagny, St-Thomas, Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials 1679-1785, Image 9. FamilySearch.org. Web 1 Mar 2017.
- ²⁵ PRDH, Family Record # 3137.
- ²⁶ PRDH, Individual Records #53397 and #24868; Family Record # 3137
- ²⁷ PRDH, Individual Records #53399 and #13738; Family Record #7916.
- ²⁸ PRDH, Individual Record #5340; Baptism Record 58688; Family Records #7647 and 17718.
- ²⁹ PRDH, Baptism Record #58964.
- ³⁰ PRDH, Baptism Record #59227; Individual Records #53402 and #3627; Family Record #8905.

³¹ PRDH, Baptism Record #59550; Individual Records #3867 and #3845; Family Record #8400.

³² PRDH, Baptism Record #59812.

³³ PRDH, Baptism Records #53571 and 25643.

³⁴ PRDH, Baptism Record #25461; Burial Record #69731.

³⁵ PRDH., On the Individual Record of Nicolas Morin (#53406) is a note stating that according to a civil record dated November 14, 1731, Nicolas was appointed guardian of the four minor children of Pierre Pellerin and Marie Anne Belanger.

³⁶ PRDH, Baptism Record #25466; Individual Records #53406 and #54075; Family Record #9957.

³⁷ PRDH, Baptism Record #25469; Burial Record #26290.

³⁸ PRDH, Baptism Record #25483; Burial Record #26289.