



Chapter One Les Premier Ancetres



In 1608 Samuel de Champlain built a fortified settlement at the site of Quebec with 28 men. It was a fur trading post by which Champlain developed a large network of allies with Montagnais and Huron Amerindians. The first winter did not go well. By the next spring there were only Champlain and seven men left, and four of them were sick. Although merchants pressured Champlain to keep Quebec as a trading post he wanted to make it the hub a flourishing colony.¹ Somehow the colony survived. One of Champlain's companions in the early days was M. Olivier Letardif. He had come to Quebec in 1618 in the service of *La Compagnie des Marchands*. He worked with Champlain to establish fur trade ties with the Amerindians and during this time he became skilled in the Montagnais, Huron, and Algonquin languages. In this capacity he traveled extensively in the wilds of Canada. In 1621 he attended an assembly called by Champlain and sided with him against two trading companies in support of the habitants (colonists). In 1623 he became a Clerk Interpreter under the Superintendent of New France, Guillaume de Caen. The little colony struggled along until an English squadron of three ships arrived in 1628. They were commanded by brothers, David, Lewis, and Thomas Kirk. The Canadians under Champlain were without food, or powder, and their fort was falling apart. There were only sixteen men to defend the settlement – they had to surrender. Letardif was chosen by Champlain to surrender the keys of the colony to them, which was done on the 20th of July, 1628. The family of early settler Louis Hebert was allowed to stay – the others were deported and Letardif sailed with Champlain back to France.²



Left: a sketch of Champlain's 1608 fort based on his own depiction³; right: typical male dress of the early 1600s.

¹ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001505>; retrieved 5/21/10.

² <http://www.upperstjohn.com/nellie/d706.htm>; retrieved 6/15/10.

³ <http://www.telusplanet.net/dgarneau/french4.htm>; retrieved 5/20/10.

Four years later the treaty of St-Germain-en-Laye was made in which England agreed to return New France back to France, and in 1632, the Emery de Caen was commissioned by the French Crown to reoccupy Quebec and manage it for a year in the name of the company of 'One Hundred Associates.' Olivier Letardif returned with him as an employee of the company. Because of the treatment received by the English most of the Amerindians had fled the area but they soon returned. In 1633 Champlain again took over command of the city. One of his chief accomplishments during this time was the construction of the Notre-Dame-de-la-Recouvrance Church, which he had vowed to build upon his return. Champlain died there at the age of 65 in 1635. The political situation at this time was that France was in the midst of the Huguenot Rebellion so the colony still suffered from neglect.⁴



Most of the French colonists came from Normandy. Paris is the large red square to the right.

The first generation Poulin (**our first ancestor**) to arrive in Canada was Claude Poulain. He was born in 1615 in Saint-Maclou de Rouen, France, located on the Seine River, a short distance from Le Havre. He was baptized in the 16th century church of St-Maclou de Rouen on the 26th of January, 1615. His parents were Pascal Poulain and Marie Levert.⁵ He went to school as a boy and during his adolescence he worked for the monks at St-Maclou de Rouen. Perhaps that is where he apprenticed as a carpenter. He decided at the age of 21 to leave for adventure in New France in America. In the springtime he boarded the vessel of Sieur de Courpon in company with other new families who were making the voyage to increase the colony.⁶ He was a skilled carpenter (journeyman) by this time. Imagine Claude's wonder after the difficult crossing of eight to twelve weeks, when he saw the buildings of Quebec, in the afternoon of June 11, 1636. Quebec was then a very small town swarming with life; bustling with sailors, hunters, pioneers, and merchants. The construction of this era was plentiful, so he did not have a lack of work. We

⁴ Parkman, *France and England*, Voll I, 251-260.

⁵ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 41. The names of his parents were furnished by Vaillancourt in his book titled, *La Conquete du Canada par les Normands*.

⁶ Yvan Poulin, *Origine de L'Histoire des Poulin*, a typed manuscript printed at Sante-Marie, Beauce, June 1991, 33; Bibliotheque Nationale du Quebec.

may assume that after thirty years of difficult colonization, give or take, that some houses of wood and stone were already built in the Place Royale and part of Old Quebec.⁷

In such a small town it can be supposed that Claude frequently encountered Jeanne Mercier whom he would eventually marry. Jeanne was the daughter of Loup Mercier and Jeanne Gaillard who had been married in France on September 25, 1611. Jeanne was born on the 25th of November in 1621, at Mortagne, France and was baptized in 1622. She came to Canada in 1638 at the age of 17 where she met Claude. They were married on August 8, 1639 by Father Nicolas Adam, of the Compagnie de Jesus (Jesuits), who was functioning as the parish priest of Champlain's newly built Notre-Dame-de-la-Recouvrance Church in Quebec. Present were Guillaume Boivin and the surgeon Robert Giffard, Seigneur de Beauport.⁸ Their marriage was the 18th celebrated in Quebec. The church was located in the Old Quebec quarter on the corner of Buade and Tresor Streets.⁹ It burned to the ground the following year in 1640 and all the parish records were completely destroyed.¹⁰

Surprisingly, the newlyweds went to live in Trois-Rivieres for a time, with Claude most likely still working as a carpenter. Trois-Rivieres was a new village which had been founded in 1634 and Claude must have heard of available work there. Apparently he got along well with the Jesuits. Claude and Jeanne baptized their first child, a daughter who was born on January 1, 1641. Her name was Marie. Then it seems that they were overtaken by homesickness because they returned to Rouen, France, in 1642. It was there that two more children were born, Pascal, on February 15, 1645 and Madeleine on the 27 of June, 1646. Just before the birth of Madeleine, on April 17th, 1646, in Paris, Olivier Letardif passed an Act before the Notary Levasseur which conceded six arpents of land to Claude Poulain in the Seigneurie de Beaupre. The land was located about 20 miles, approximately seven French leagues, northeast of Quebec City, on the north bank of the St. Lawrence River, across from northeastern end of the Ile d'Orleans. Letardif had recently become co-seigneur and Procurer General of Beaupre by purchasing one eighth of the Seigneurie. He also took over duties as the Seigneurial Judge. Perhaps Olivier had met up with Claude somehow and convinced him to return to Canada. Olivier himself owned a plot of land with a five-arpent frontage on the St. Lawrence which ran back a depth of five miles. It was probably located on the east side of the Riviere Ste-Anne, less than three miles east of Claude's land. Olivier built a home there and made over fifteen concessions to habitants.¹¹

In order to maintain feudalism in the New World, the King had decreed that large land grants, referred to as seigneuries, would be given to aristocrats and they, in turn, would consign land to the common settlers. An arpent was a French acre of land that, in this case, signified a width of a strip of land that reached from the Saint Lawrence River back some distance to interior. In Quebec, the arpent was often used as a linear measurement of 191.8 feet. Therefore, Claude's concession of six arpents was a strip of land 1151 feet wide.¹² In the year after receiving the land, in 1647, the Poulain family, which now consisted of five members, rented space in a ship to recross the ocean. This time, however, Claude had the promise of owning land in New France. Since it was nearly impossible for a common man to procure land

⁷ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 34.

⁸ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, 43.

⁹ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 41.

¹⁰ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, 44. In spite of this statement Claude's marriage contract was not destroyed (see copy at the end of this chapter).

¹¹ <http://www.upperstjohn.com/nellie/d706.htm>; from the book *Madawaskan Heritage* by Leo G. Cyr; retrieved 6/16/10. Also: <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:262140&id=I247>; Translation by M. Mangum; retrieved 6/17/10. One translation said 1/8 of the seigneurie and the other said Lot 8 by which I located the plot he owned. Perhaps both are true.

¹² *Barron's French-English Dictionary*, 2006; in Quebec the arpent could be a linear measurement of 191.8 feet or a surface area of 36, 802sf, just under one American acre.

in France, this was an exciting opportunity. Why did Claude, a commoner, receive six arpents when most of his neighbors received only three or four? It may be because in these early days the seigneurs were attempting to induce skilled craftsmen to come live in their town.

It is not known for sure whether the family lodged in Quebec or Beupre after they arrived in New France but it is known that Martin (**our 2nd ancestor**) was born in Quebec on the 26th of September, 1648, as shown in the Register of the Church of Notre Dame de Quebec. It is also related that in the absence of a missionary, Martin was baptized privately in the house of his parents on the day of his birth. It was not until the following month, on the 17th of October, that Father B. Vimont, of the Compagnie de Jesus formally conferred the ceremony of baptism, in the church at Quebec. The baby's godfather, Martin Gouvel, and godmother, Marie Couillard, gave him the name of Martin. In these days most settlements did not have a parish priest and had to rely on itinerant priests for religious services and sacraments. They were known as missionaries, usually Recollets, a branch of Franciscan monks, or failing that, Jesuits. Two and a half years later, on the 27th of January, 1651, Claude and Jeanne's fifth child, a boy, was born. He was baptized on the 2nd of February with the name of Rene, at the house of M. Olivier Letardif, by Father Ragueneau, who was serving as the parish priest. It was noted at this time that the father and mother were from the location called Cap Tourmente (and later Sainte-Anne du Petit-Cap), as the name of Sainte-Anne de Beupre was not yet in use at this time. It is apparent that Letardif and his wife Barbe figured heavily in the lives of the earliest colonists.

20	PIERRE LEPICARD	3
21	MARIE MICHEL, Vve de LOUIS GARNIER	3
22	JULIEN MERCIER	3,5
23	PIERRE MAUFILS	2,5
24	ROBERT SIGUERE	4
25	ETIENNE DELESSART	6
26	FABRIQUE DE SAINTE-ANNE	2
27	HELENE BOUIN	2
28	CLAUDE POULAIN	6
29	ROBERT FOUBERT	3
30	GEORGES PELLETIER	3
31	FRANCOIS BOIVIN	5
32	MATHURIN MOUSNIER	4
33	HOEL SIMARD	4
34	SIMON SIMARD	4

SAINT - LAURENT
FOLIE SAINTE-ANNE

This map from June 1663 is oriented with the top towards the east and shows the plot of land owned by Claude.

Nearby, just to the east is the plot owned by Etienne de Lessart (Lessard). A segment of land between them was donated by Etienne for the building of a church. This map shows 49 plots of land.¹³

By September, 1651, Claude and family were finally living on their own land after having made a contract with the Fabrique de Quebec, which was signed at Fort St-Louis, in Quebec. On November 8th, 1651, Claude Poulain and Abel Benoit accepted from Olivier Letardif, a "mitairie" name of "Tousaincts."¹⁴ Claude had to pay or was bound to pay 50 livres for the land.¹⁵ It can be assumed that Claude could now begin clearing the land and building a house if he had not begun it already.

¹³ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 48.

¹⁴ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 42. This is either a miss-spelling of the word 'métairie' or it is an old Quebec form of the word. In one book métairie meant a small farm (J. G. Keetels, *New Method of Learning the French Language*, Harvard College Library, 1924). But in more common and general usage, a métairie is a property outside of town used according to a 'métayage' contract. <http://www.larousse.com/en/dictionnaires/francais/mitairie>. This is a contract whereby the owner or the life-tenant of rural land leases the land for nine years as long as the lessee cultivates it and shares the gains and losses. (Information retrieved by Martha Poulin Kammer.) This share-cropping agreement is usually described as a 50/50 share between owner and tenant; it was practiced in large parts of 17th and 18th century France. But in Normandie and other northern provinces the practice was the

Claude Poulain, Robert Caron, and Etienne Racine were the first colonists on the Cote de Beaupre. They were established in the part which we know today as the parish of Ste-Anne and of St-Joachim. They were the patriarchs of families that preserved the heritage of their fathers with their religious sentiments and their good and ancient customs.¹⁶ The Poulain family remained at Sainte-Anne and witnessed a life of new beginnings. Claude was the godfather at the first baptism that is inscribed in the register of the Fabrique de Sainte-Anne. The infant baptized was Claude Pelletier, who would become the future Friar Didace, the first Canadian-born Recollet. On January 18, 1654, their oldest daughter Marie was married in Ste-Anne, just after her 13th birthday, to Julien Mercier, a neighbor whose land was a few lots away. Two more children were born into Claude and Jeanne's family. Ignace Poulain on the 19th of December, 1655, and Marguerite on October 4, 1658.¹⁷

In 1658, on the 8th of March, Etienne de Lessard (**another of our direct ancestors**), future father-in-law of the second Marie Poulain, and a neighbor of Claude, desiring to contribute towards the fulfillment of the long-standing desire of the community to have a place of worship, donated two arpents of land for the construction of a church and for living quarters of the parish priests who would come there. It is easy to locate with precision the first chapel of 1658, on the shore of the river to the west of the current Basilica of Sainte-Anne. A fragment of the framework that was found confirms that it was located there. The Society of Historical Monuments placed a commemorative plaque at this location near the Grand Chemin, in front of the Basilica.¹⁸ Etienne de Lessard was from Chamblais, a small town near Falaise in Normandy, which can be seen on the map of Normandie above (just below Caen), but Chamblais is too small to be seen. He was born in 1623, the son of Jacques de Lessart and Marie Herson, and came to New France in 1646. On April 8th, 1652, he married Marguerite, daughter of Charles Sevestre, the Seigneur de Lanoraie, and Marie Pichon.¹⁹ Work began on the new church and Claude, being a skilled carpenter worked on the construction. As he and several others began, a miracle occurred, the first miracle of Ste-Anne de Beaupre. Louis Guimont, who had a lame leg was cured after laying a few foundation stones. The site soon became the object of many pilgrimages and many other miracle healings occurred through the following centuries.

In 1659, on November 19, the Poulain's second daughter, Madeleine was married in Quebec to Pierre Maufiles, another neighbor who lived next to Julien Mercier. She was fourteen years old. Of the last two of Claude and Jeanne's children, Marie, was born on the 25th of May, 1661 and Pierre on the 7th of August, 1664. Thus Claude and Jeanne had a total of nine children, five girls and four boys. A few months after Marie was born, on the 8th of August, 1661, tragedy struck the family when two of their boys, Pascal and Rene, ages 16 and 10, were lost in the woods. It was supposed that hostile Iroquois had taken them since they had killed three men of the village on the same day. It is written in the Journal of Jesuits for the month of June 1661: *The news was carried the 8th. The night of the return of the afore-mentioned boat crew and at the same time that of Trois-Rivieres when the enemies have killed three men of Cap and*

payment of a money rent which worked out much better for the tenant. However in Canada it appears that the land was sold to the habitants, in Claude's case for 50 livres, which was much more reasonable. The name of "Tousaincts" may have been a name which referenced the parcel of land Claude received, and/or it might also have been a unique 'dit' name used to represent Claude in his militia service as well as in civil matters. But the mention of Abel Benoit as receiving the same name makes no sense and I suppose that either the author was confused or we have yet to discover the exact details.

¹⁵ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 46. The payments Claude made to the Fabrique over the years may have been for the paying off of this purchase price. The original copy of the sale is located in the Bureau des Archives Judiciaires du District de Quebec. The answer to the exact meaning of metairie or mitairie may be located there.

¹⁶ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 47. From the book by the priest, Ferland, entitled, *Brochures Canadiennes No. 9*.

¹⁷ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 41-46.

¹⁸ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 49.

¹⁹ *Lessard de Lessard*, an unsigned undated one page paper.

two children of Claude Poulain were lost in the woods, likely, they were taken by the Iroquois. What cruel anguish of the tears of the heart at the hearth Poulain.²⁰ What tears were cried by their mother when after searching through the forest near their land and they did not find them! What conjectures ran through the minds of Claude and Jeanne? Were they devoured by wild animals or carried off by the Iroquois? In this last alternative what type of appalling death was suffered by the two children?²¹ It can be assumed that the Milice (militia) of Ste-Anne kept a very vigilant watch for Iroquois after this.



At this time all Canadians, friendly natives, and even wild natives in Canada lived in mortal fear of the Iroquois. Without adequate garrisons of soldiers the colonists had been forced to defend themselves as best they could. Finally, four years later in 1665 the King took an interest in his colony (it had been under the control of a private company since 1627), and, taking over the administration of Canada, himself he sent a full regiment of 1300 musketeers to “subdue or destroy the Iroquois.” This regiment, the Carignan-Salieres (image at left) under the command of Colonel de Salieres, was the first regiment sent to support Canada. It was just in time because the fury and frequency of the Iroquois raids was seriously impeding the growth of the colony. Along with a new regiment came a new governor, Daniel de Remy, Sieur de Courcelle who was replacing Governor Marquis de Tracy. That winter, Courcelle with five hundred men made a forced march to the Iroquois country. In one sense the foray was a failure. The men of the regiment were not trained in survival in the Canadian winters and many men froze to death. There was no battle, but the attempted raid had a profound impact on the Iroquois

who realized they were not safe, even in winter, and they sent a delegation of peace to Quebec. However, the talks broke down and a new force of 1300 men marched south again with Tracy and Courcelle. They found seven Mohawk villages which they pillaged and burned. In each case, the warriors could not stand up to the din of twenty drums backed by many ranks of troops and ran away at the sound. The Iroquois again sued for a peace which lasted twenty years – a great boon to the colonists, who had less people than the Iroquois nation, not numbering more than 2500 at this time. Sadly, there was no mention of the restoration of captives.²² At any rate, this was a few years too late for the Poulain family. After the campaign, upon completion of their terms of service, the men of the Regiment were invited to stay in Canada as colonists and about 400 of them took the offer.

Meanwhile, back in Beupre, the choice of the location of the first church had not taken into account the consequences of the great tides of springtime and the habitants had to resign themselves to build a new chapel. It was impossible to construct elsewhere on the plot given by Etienne because they could not place it on the riverbank and the land to the interior must have proved just as difficult. But by his generosity and desire to protect the future church, Etienne offered a plot of adjacent land to the east of the first. Monseigneur Francois de Laval, the first bishop of Quebec City, accepted the offer and work began in 1661. The ancient cemetery which is found beside the current Commemorative Chapel was the

²⁰ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 47.

²¹ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 45.

²² Parkman, *France and England*, Vol I, 1229-1249. This depiction of a man of the Regiment can be found at many sites on the web. I understand it comes from one of the five volumes of the Osprey Publishing Men-at-Arms-Series called *Louis XV's Army* but I could not determine which one, probably volume 2 or 3.

site chosen. It was built in record time as the account books of the Fabrique de Beupre indicate.²³ Bishop Laval also founded a school in St-Joachim, probably before 1676.

In the 1660s there are some records of transactions between Claude and the Fabrique de Beupre. According to these books, in 1661 Claude paid to the Fabrique sixteen livres, in 1662 twenty sols, in 1663 a bushel of wheat and forty sols. In 1663 the Fabrique paid Claude as a journeyman carpenter forty sols. In 1663 a receipt shows twenty-two livres and nine 'sols' for the 'tambour' [frame?] of the door of the church, and for a piece of wood to hold a quart of the 'water of life' [holy water?], and in 1664 he was paid twenty sols for candles. In 1664 Claude paid the Fabrique two minots of Indian wheat and in 1665 two more minots of Indian wheat, one minot of peas, etc.²⁴ In 1666, it is shown that Claude had cleared twenty arpents of arable land to farm.

Besides ordering the regiment of musketeers to the colony the King also began sending boatloads of immigrants and by 1667 the size of the colony had increased from 2,500 to over 4,000. Interestingly, the Cote de Beupre had more people at this time than the town of Quebec did.²⁵ In these later years Claude also obtained revenue by continuing to use his talents as a carpenter. In 1678 he worked as a 'Presbytere' (a church warden) of the parish – and he installed the bell in the new tower at this time. In colonial Canada the church bell was not just a fixture of the church. Besides announcing the time for mass it served all the community by indicating the hours of the day, calling assembly meetings, and giving warning in times of danger.

In 1679, Jeanne furnished the meals for the church roofers. As payment, the parish priest gave the family three minots of wheat and twelve pounds of butter. In the 1670s a fire razed the new church to the ground and work was begun on a third church in 1676. Daughter Marie's husband Julien Mercier died sometime in early 1682 and she was remarried on May 11 of that year with Charles de Montmaigni. In July 1686 the third church was finally finished. The modern commemorative Chapel is placed on the foundations of the transept of the third historical church. This church would serve the community for two hundred years.

The founding Poulain family was laborious, social, and sharp. After a life of many activities, after having supported Christianity, and after all the trials of living in the New World, Claude and Jeanne died within three days of each other, Jeanne on the 14th of December and Claude on the 17th, 1687. They were buried in the graveyard beside the church.²⁶

²³ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 49-50.

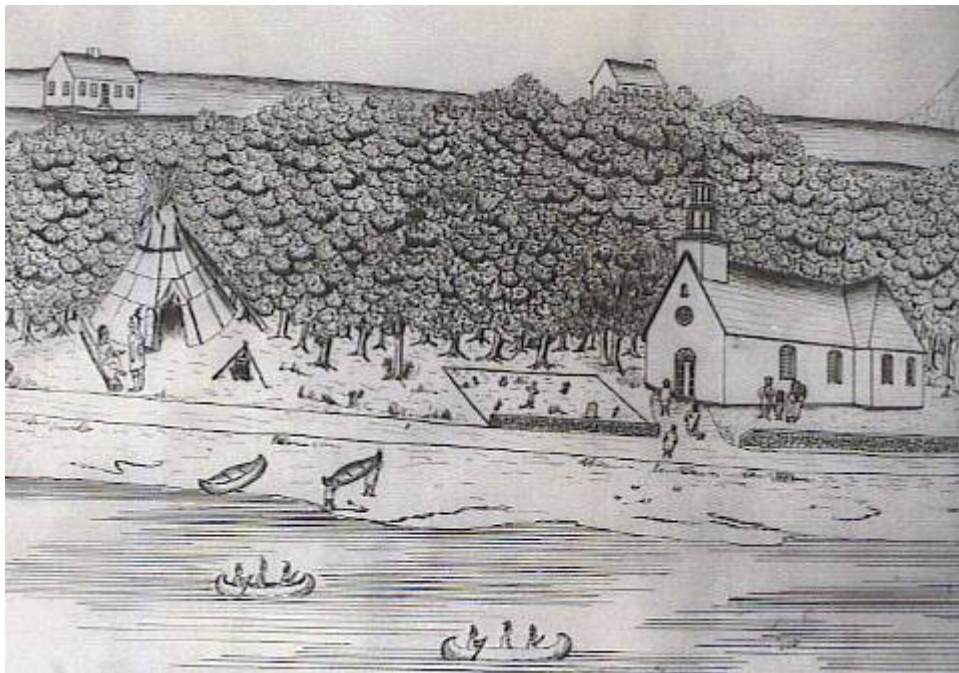
²⁴ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 50; information furnished by Father Ferland, parish priest of Ste-Anne de Beupre.

²⁵ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol I, 1270.

²⁶ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 50-52.



The First Miracle: “As the foundations were being laid for the first church in 1658, Louis Guimont, who was disabled, had only placed three small stones before he was miraculously cured.”²⁷ Claude is possibly meant to be one of the men depicted here. This is a good representation of workmen during this period. They usually wore breeches that were not tied at the knee (like sailors) and they also did not normally wear stockings as they would quickly wear out. The only omission is possibly a workman’s cap, since it was the custom in those days for every man to cover his head.



This sketch, showing the 2nd church, commemorates the first pilgrimage by Amerindians, the Huron-Windats, to the shrine of Ste-Anne in 1671. Other tribes followed, often setting up camp near the Church. French Canadians also arrived in small boats.²⁸

²⁷ Jean-Marie Level and Brigitte Ostiguy, *Saint Anne de Beaupre, An Inspiration*, Les Editions du Chien Rouge, Quebec, 1999, 5.

²⁸ Lebel and Ostiguy, *Saint Anne de Beaupre*, 38.



CHAPEL AND GROTTO AT STE. ANNE DE BEAUPRÉ.



The Louis Hebert Monument in the Parc Montmorency (near the Chateau-Frontenac) celebrates the earliest settlers of Quebec. Claude and Jeanne's names are placed on the plaque on the back of the pedestal.



The Plaque: Claude Poulain is the 8th name from last in the left column; Jeanne Mercier's name is opposite his.



To the left of the door of the modern Commemorative Chapel, a plaque for Claude Poulain reads: “1639-1939; Claude Poulin Jeanne Mercier; Arrived in Quebec in 1636; Married in Quebec in 1639; Established at Ste-Anne in 1651; Interred here in 1687; Jean Poulin Louise Pare; 1667 Ste Anne; General Committee of Celebration.”



To the right of the door a commemorative plaque for Etienne de Lessard reads: “To the memory of Etienne de Lessard who in 1658 gave the land on which was built the first public chapel dedicated to Ste-Anne in America. Hommage of the Families Lessard 21 September 1958.”

1638
 Le 28. D'oct. 1639. Le ban adieu estant fait p un pstant
 homme amy legitime supposé le P. Nicolas D'ayz
 faisant fonting de Curé a Quiberon de pstant
 amy p 2 pstant de la d'istinct Marie p
 St Pierre Mene, apres les amy Dubourg, sublede Crable l
 un hui conseil. Le P. M. de Biffard Esingus p
 Cille de Boing.

1639
 Le 1. D'oct. 1639. Le ban adieu estant fait p un
 pstant homme amy legitime supposé le P. Nicolas D'ayz
 faisant fonting de Curé a Quiberon de pstant
 amy p 2 pstant de la d'istinct Marie p
 St Pierre Mene, apres les amy Dubourg, sublede Crable l
 un hui conseil. Le P. M. de Biffard Esingus p
 Cille de Boing.

Le 12. D'oct. 1639. Le ban adieu estant fait p un pstant
 homme amy legitime supposé le P. Nicolas D'ayz
 faisant fonting de Curé a Quiberon de pstant
 amy p 2 pstant de la d'istinct Marie p
 St Pierre Mene, apres les amy Dubourg, sublede Crable l
 un hui conseil. Le P. M. de Biffard Esingus p
 Cille de Boing.

Le 26. D'oct. 1639. Le ban adieu estant fait p un pstant
 homme amy legitime supposé le P. Nicolas D'ayz
 faisant fonting de Curé a Quiberon de pstant
 amy p 2 pstant de la d'istinct Marie p
 St Pierre Mene, apres les amy Dubourg, sublede Crable l
 un hui conseil. Le P. M. de Biffard Esingus p
 Cille de Boing.

A photocopy of Claude Poulain's marriage contract, 1639.

"Petit Rocher"

"Little Rock"

Petit rocher de la haute montagne,
Je viens ici finir cette campagne.
Ah! doux échos, entendez mes soupirs,
En languissant je vais bientôt mourir.

Little rock of the high mountain
I come here to finish this campaign.
Ah, sweet echos, hear my sighs;
Languishing, I am soon to die.

Seul en ces bois, que j'ai eu de soucis!
Pensant toujours à mes si chers amis,
Je demandais: Hélas! sont-ils noyés?
Les Iroquois les auraient-ils tué?

Alone in these woods, what cares I have had!
Thinking always of my friends so dear.
I asked: "Are they drowned?
Have the Iroquois killed them?

Un de ces jours que, m'étant éloigné,
En revenant je vis une fumée;
Je me suis dit: Ah! grand Dieu qu'est ceci?
M'ont mis le coeur d'une trop grande joie!

One day, when roaming alone,
And returning I saw smoke,
I asked myself, "Ah, great God, what is this?
Have the Iroquois taken my house?

Je me suis mis un peu à l'ambassade,
Afin de voir si c'était embuscade;
Alors je vis trois visages français!
Les Iroquois m'ont-ils pris mon logis?

I then set out as an ambassador
To see if it was an ambush;
Then I saw three French faces!
My heart beat with great joy.

Mes genoux poient, ma faible voix s'arrête,
Je tombe...Hélas! à partir ils s'apprêtent:
Je reste seul...Pas un qui me console,
Quand la mort vient par un si grand désol!

My knees bending, my weak voice stops,
I fall...Alas! they are going to leave.
I remain alone...No one to console me;
When death comes near one so desolate.

Rossignolet, va dire à ma maîtresse,
Ames enfants qu'un adieu je leur laisse;
Que j'ai gardé mon amour et ma foi,
Et désormais faut renoncer à moi!

Nightingale, go tell my mistress,
Carry word to the children I'm leaving,
That I have kept my love and my faith,
And henceforth they must give up hope of me.

C'est donc ici que le monde m'abandonne!
Mais j'ai secours en vous, Sauveur des hommes!
Très-Sainte Vierge, ah! m'abandonnez pas,
Permettez-moi d mourir entre vos bras!

It is here that the world abandoned me,
But I seek aid from you, Saviour of men!
Most holy Virgin, Ah, do not abandon me;
Let me die in your arms.

This is a song of the voyageurs (trappers, mountain men); one of the earliest songs of New World origin. This song is about a dying trapper named Cadieux who was known throughout the entire region on the Saint Lawrence River. According to legend, he saw his camp threatened by Iroquois. He quickly loaded his family in a canoe and sent them downriver. They made it to a French settlement. When he failed to rejoin them a search party was sent to look for him. His body was found in a shallow grave, apparently dug by his own hands, and beside it lay this song, written in blood on a piece of birch bark. This song is mentioned in many accounts throughout the nineteenth century, and would have been known to any 'Coureurs-de-bois' (bush rangers).