



Chapter Two

La Vie á Ste-Anne de Beaupre



At the age of forty, Martin Poulain, son of Claude, married Jeanne Barette, daughter of Jean Barette and Jeanne Bitousset, in the Church of Ste-Anne de Beaupre on January 19, 1688, in the year following the death of his parents.¹ The Barettes were also among the first colonists of Ste-Anne. That same year, the twenty-year peace with the Iroquois came to an end with a shattering vengeance. On the night of the 4th of August, 1688, no less than 1500 warriors assaulted the sleeping town of La Chine, located about six miles outside of Montreal. La Chine was reduced to ashes with many bodies lying about. Just as the bewildered soldiers were about begin retaliation they were ordered back on the defensive. It was a bad call since the drunken warriors could have been easily overcome at that time. The Iroquois army spent some time in the area almost completely unmolested and then crossed the river to the south bank where they held an orgy of “indescribable and nameless horror.” About thirty of their captives, especially women and children, were roasted alive and eaten that night. Ninety more were taken to the Iroquois towns for more torture. The lucky ones, numbering about two hundred, had been slain. The French were stunned. They had been caught completely unprepared, but the enormity of the tragedy was sinking in. A wrath was slowly building, a wrath which would color the strategies of the Canadians for generations. It was said that the English Colonists did not know about the raid, but though they may have not known about that specific raid, they had been urging the Iroquois to raid the French. The Iroquois said that the French had broken their treaty by building forts, seemingly a strange excuse. To make matters worse, the news of another war between England and France arrived. The Canadians had no choice except to prepare for war. In a short time, war parties would be traveling south instead of north.² Thus began a decade of bloody guerrilla warfare waged mostly on civilians.



Map of Colonial Quebec showing major villages and their dates of incorporation.

¹ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 57.

² Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 133-137.

Conditions in Canada were such that each man of the age of 16-60 was required to be a member of a militia company (milice) organized by community or parish, beginning in 1669.³ One problem was that each company could have several men of similar or even the same names. The military did not yet use serial numbers so it was the practice for each man to choose a unique name to identify himself. 'Dit' meant 'called' or 'said,' for example, Claude Poulain dit Tousainct (a possible explanation of the "Mitairie nom de Tousainct" mentioned above). Each man was given a hunting musket (fusil de chasse) which he had to pay off in a certain amount of time. The men were expected to use the muskets for hunting and defense. In 1650 Claude may have had a matchlock musket similar to one depicted in the picture of the soldier of the Carignon-Saliere Regiment. These were mostly made in Tulle, France, and cost 14 livres each. Etienne de Lessard was the ensign (2nd lieutenant) of Ste-Anne's company. Women, boys, and even young girls of all classes were taught how to shoot.

Later that year, in November, 1688, during a snowstorm, another Iroquois war party struck the town of La Chesnaye, now called Riviere-du-Loup located on the south bank of the St. Laurence, downriver from Beupre. It was known as Wolf River because the French called seals 'sea-wolves'.⁴ Across the river, our ancestors in Beupre must have thought they would be next. The terror that reigned throughout the colony was complete, perhaps increased by the ineffective leadership of Governor Denonville. In this situation, Martin Poulain and his new bride, Jeanne Barette, prepared for the birth of their first child. It can be assumed that while Jeanne was giving birth to their first son, Jean, Martin was assisting a vigilant watch by the village Milice for Iroquois or English raiders. Jean (**our 3rd ancestor**), also sometimes referred to as Jean-Baptiste, was born on the 26th of November in 1688. The next day he was baptized by Father Germain Morin, a priest of the Seminary of Quebec, in the church of Ste-Anne de Beupre. The Godfather was the baby's maternal grandfather, Jean Barette, and the godmother was his aunt, Marie Poulain (the 2nd Marie), now the wife of Etienne Lessard, son of Etienne de Lessard.⁵

By this time King Louis IV was becoming tired of his colony. Despite all his considerable efforts it had not prospered as well as he had hoped. To fill the gap in leadership, he sent Count Frontenac back to lead Canada in those dark times. But, entertaining a false belief in the power of his name, Frontenac believed he could still make negotiations of peace with the Iroquois, so in 1689 he sent envoys to the Iroquois nation, and raiders to the English colonies. Perhaps he should have sent envoys to the English and raiders to the Iroquois. Three separate raiding columns moved south, one from Montreal, one from Trois-Rivieres, and one from Quebec. Instead of using regular soldiers, and leaving Canada open to counterattack, he turned to the beaver trappers known as coureur-de-bois (bush rangers) or voyageurs (travelers) for help. The first party consisted of 114 voyageurs and ninety-six Christianized Iroquois headed for Albany, NY, the second included twenty-four voyageurs and fifteen Abenakis and five Algonquins aimed at the settlements of New Hampshire, and the third was composed of fifty French and sixty Mission Abenakis whose destination was the settlements in Maine.⁶

The previously mentioned war, known as King William's War, broke out in 1689. In response to the vicious raids, in May 1690 the English Colonists met in New York and devised a plan to capture Canada. Part of their force was to travel to Quebec by sea and part was to venture north to Montreal by land. The Iroquois had pledged to support the endeavor, but in truth, they had no taste for European warfare. Meanwhile, unaware of their plans, Frontenac was busy fortifying Quebec. He kept garrisons of

³ René Chartrand, *The French Soldier in Colonial America*, Historical Arms Series No. 18, printed for Museum Restoration Service, Alexandria Bay, N.Y., U.S.A., 1984, 9.

⁴ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 145.

⁵ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 59.

⁶ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 138-154.

regular troops along the river and maintained vigilance through continual scouting parties sent out into the wilds. Even so, Iroquois war parties still broke through at certain points and continued their slaughter. A French scout found the English land army, under the command of a man named Walker building canoes at Lake George to travel to Montreal. Frontenac assembled his Regulars and sallied out with 1200 men. But they could not find the enemy because Walker and his men had given up and returned to Albany, all except for Captain John Shuyler who made a raid with twenty-nine whites and 120 Iroquois on the village of La Prairie, located across the river from Montreal. They were unsuccessful at catching anyone unawares and his party was driven off by a combination of Regulars, Milice, and Natives.⁷

Then Frontenac received news that a fleet of enemy ships had reached Tadoussac, the location of the mission of St-Croix, downriver from Beauport. He ordered the Regulars near Montreal to make their way to Quebec and he hurried there himself. He found that the defenses of the town had been almost completed. After two days there were two hundred Regulars and Milice ready for the defense. The parish militias of Beauport and Beauport had been ordered to watch the river from vantage points near their towns. Finally, on the 16th, the sails of 34 ships were seen passing the Pointe d'Orleans, under the command of Sir William Phips. Les Bostonnais, as the French called the New Englanders, had arrived. Frontenac quickly refused a demand to surrender.



The aging Frontenac (right) refuses the offer to surrender. "I have no reply to make to your general other than from the mouth of my cannons and muskets."⁸

While Phips and his commanders deliberated the next move they lost the favor of the tides. That evening a great shouting with the sound of fifes and drums reached the English ears. One of their prisoners knew what it was – Callierres of Montreal with 700-800 men, Regulars, Milice, and coureurs-de-

⁷ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 172-188.

⁸ <http://wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/91/Frontenac...>; retrieved 5/20/10

bois, had arrived. The odds were more even now. The English had their own fanfare two days later when they landed 1300 men at Beauport, commanded by a Major Walley. The defenders, militiamen from Beauport and Beauport, made a good defense, but being vastly outnumbered, were driven off and the English advanced towards Quebec. Meanwhile Phips began a cannonade of the town with his biggest ships. Frontenac returned fire. The next day the firing began anew. Two of the English ships were badly mauled and one drew off from the fight. Phips' flagship lost a mast and with it his flag. The English gunners had done virtually no harm at all, having killed only two or three men. Thus engaged, Phips ignored sending Walley the small boats he needed to cross the St. Charles River and assault Quebec from the landward side. The next day while Walley was conferring with Phips his men made a mad dash against Frontenac and his Regulars. Though they were more numerous they were repulsed and to cap it all Phips had decided to recover them back to the ships. The next day the rambunctious English on shore attacked the Canadian Milice that had flanked them and detachments from Quebec crossed the River to join the fight. They were also joined by the militias of Beauport and Beauport. Along with the troops, many of the priests were in the thick of the fight encouraging their flock to fight harder against the heretics. The Milice fought in their usual way, as woodsmen, taking cover and reloading behind rocks or trees, for which the English taunted them. But neither force could defeat the other that day. In spite of their bragging, the pugnacious Bostonnais made a very hasty embarkation in a driving rain to the safety of their fleet, leaving their five field pieces behind. Phips wanted to make another landing but the rough weather convinced him not to do it. The English fleet retreated four leagues and stopped to repair the damaged ships. They were followed by a French detachment. This turned out to be a good chance to exchange prisoners, including those that had been brought to Canada from Maine and those who had been ransomed back from the Indians.⁹



A map of Quebec 1690, the original dwellings were along the shore; Cap Diamant is the name of the 320 foot high bluffs.

Martin Poulain and the men of Beauport had taken part in the vigilance along the river and the fight at the beach of Beauport and also the fords of the St. Charles. The women and children may have been

⁹ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 188-204.

sent to Quebec for shelter, many of whom took refuge at the Ursuline Convent. One of the nuns had had a corner of her apron removed by an English cannon ball; twenty-six shot in all landed in their courtyard, which they gathered up and gave to the French gunners, who, in turn, not-so-kindly returned them to the English. Some people were also sheltered at the Hotel Dieu. The villagers who did not come to Quebec



were said to have hidden in the woods. The Jesuits at their seminary prepared to repel attackers whom, they had heard, vowed to kill them all and cut off their ears to make necklaces. The victory was acclaimed by all as divine intervention. It was at this time that three French ships with large sums of money and supplies were making the yearly trip to Quebec. Somehow the English knew about them and hoped to capture them, but a thick fog came up and then a snowstorm. They were able to hide until the enemy fleet left. This particular miracle was ascribed to Ste-Anne de Beaupre. On the return journey Phips lost many men to cold and disease. They arrived at the dismal Colony of Massachusetts which now found itself in extreme debt. Phips also happens to be the man who botched the administration of the famous Salem witch trials.¹⁰ The picture on the left shows a typical militia musketeer in Phips's army, this example is of a private in the Dorchester Company from Massachusetts. The Canadian Milice, counterparts of the Massachusetts Militia would not have looked much different and the muskets and equipment were also much the same. The entire Dorchester Company was lost at sea on one of four ships that sank on the way home.¹¹

Later that year, a second son was born to Martin and Jeanne. His name was Andre and he was born on the 31st of December, 1690. He was baptized at Ste-Anne de Beaupre and his godfather was Francois Barette, his maternal uncle, and his godmother was Dorothee Lessart, daughter of Etienne Lessart.¹²

After the English left the Iroquois war resumed with a fury, and for the next nine years raids and counter raids traveled back and forth. But the Iroquois found that the Canadians were more robust now. Frontenac had revived their fighting spirit. The Canadiens also had use of all the forts and blockhouses they had built. The farmers of the villages worked their fields all together, concentrated in one field guarded by Regulars with Militia scouts ranging outward. Then when that field was done they moved on to the next, etc. At the first sign of trouble they retreated to a fortified place and fought the raiders off. Even girls had been taught to shoot and stories abounded of native attacks driven off by girls and boys. Also the response against the raids was much better now, and many raiders were caught and killed, and often, captives were freed. The upriver settlements were affected most since it was easier for the Iroquois to go that way. Downriver, the settlements along the Cote de Beaupre were relatively quiet. But south of the Saint Laurence the Iroquois began to range into the Beauce area to catch trappers and Christianized Indians from a mission located there. The English had made peace with France but the Amerindians continued fighting. The French were so infuriated at the way that the Iroquois burned their captives that they began to burn Iroquois captives – all of them. This had the desired effect and after a time the Iroquois ceased burning their prisoners.

As if life wasn't hard enough, in 1692 most of the crops in New France were destroyed by caterpillars.¹³ In 1693 on the 14th of February Martin and Jeanne had their third child, Marie-Anne. She was baptized the same day at Ste-Anne de Beaupre; her godfather was Pierre Poulain, her paternal uncle,

¹⁰ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 205-207.

¹¹ Rene Chartrand, *Colonial American Troops 1610-1774*, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2002, plate C3.

¹² Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 53.

¹³ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCETimelineBrowse&Params=A1CAT9>; retrieved 5/22/10.

and her godmother was Jeanne Bitouset, her maternal grandmother. The fourth child, Agnes, was born in 1695 and the next two children, Pierre and Ursule, were twins. They were born in August of 1699.¹⁴

South and southeast of Quebec the fighting was just as severe though the natives there were not given to such vicious tortures as those of the Iroquois. Most of the fighting took place in Maine and New Hampshire where the French could easily nurse the old hatred of the Abenakis for the English. All the while the Canadians kept up a detente of dialogue and gifts with non-Iroquois tribes. Things were touch and go for a while, but finally it worked. Almost all of those tribes became allied or at least neutral with the French, as opposed to the English who had only the Mohawk as their staunch allies. Just after this success, on the 28th of November, 1698, Frontenac died at the age of seventy-eight.¹⁵

In the following year, 1699, there was a grand council of native tribes held in Montreal. With the news that both the English and the French were bent on their extermination, and were even considering cooperation to do it, not to mention that most of the non-Iroquois tribes might have helped, and also the fact of their own considerable losses of warriors, the Iroquois finally thought of peace. The French and their allied native tribes promised the return of all Iroquois captives held by them, and the Iroquois promised to return their captives also. First came 200 Iroquois in canoes, the mission Indians were ranged along the shore to greet them. Then came a giant flotilla carrying the western and northern allies in hundreds of canoes. Twelve great chiefs led the council. In the end the northern and western allies gave up their Iroquois captives but the Iroquois only gave about twenty women and children back. One unexpected problem was that many of the Iroquois captives did not want to return, others were hidden. Regardless, the Iroquois were never again the powerful nation they once had been and no one was afraid of them now. In 1689 an English estimate put the number of Iroquois warriors at 2,550 and by 1698 only 1,230.¹⁶



Sketch of Quebec in 1700.¹⁷

¹⁴ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 54.

¹⁵ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 209-229.

¹⁶ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 315-324.

¹⁷ http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Quebec_nouvelle_france.jp; retrieved 5/20/10.

Martin and Jeanne eventually had nine children in all, three sons and six daughters: Jean (1688), Andre (1690), Marie-Anne (1693), Agnes (1695), Pierre (1699), and Ursule (1699), Marguerite (1702), Genevieve (1703), and Francoise (?).¹⁸ It is deduced by the *Procesverbaux de 1712* that Martin was not a farmer but on the other hand, it is unknown what he did for work. In all the extracts of baptism, marriage, civil state Martin's occupation is not mentioned. It's conceivable that he may have learned the carpentry trade from his father and had kept on in that occupation. Martin's brother Pierre, lived on Etienne de Lessard's land, next to the land of his father, Claude, and farmed it.¹⁹ Etienne died about this time, 1703, his wife would live on for some time.

As soon as things started to settled down the threat of war broke out again, this time it was known as Queen Anne's War, which was really a war of Spanish Succession regarding who would sit on that throne.²⁰ It began in 1702. Governor Vaudreuil, successor to Frontenac, followed his predecessor's penchant for instigating raids. Both sides in the New World were still quite weak and the savage fighting in the borderlands of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts continued on and on. It was during this time, on the 28th of February, 1704, that the attack on Deerfield, Massachusetts occurred. Fifty-four or fifty-seven villagers were killed and 111 had been made captive. Many other raids continued and there was heroism on the part of the English, even by their women. Almost every English village on the borderlands was hit by at least one attack. The wars in Maine would continue, off and on, until August 12th, 1724, when the mission village of Norridgewock was destroyed by the English. The missionary there, Father Sebastien Rale, was said to have been firing on them whereupon an officer broke into his house and shot him in the head.²¹ Meanwhile, in 1710 the English decided once again to capture Quebec.²² The English again planned a two-pronged attack, one against Montreal by land, and one against Quebec by sea, the same plan as before. On October 1st, 1710, Acadia surrendered to the English fleet.²³

In that year Martin Poulain died at midnight on January 15, 1710 at the age of sixty-one. He was buried the next day in the cemetery at Ste-Anne de Beaupre. Attending the service by Father Gauthier were Ignace Poulain, his brother-in-law Etienne-Simard, another brother-in-law William Morel, and many relatives and friends. His wife, Jeanne remarried and died thirty-seven years later in 1747 at Chateau-Richer. In the year following Martin's death, at the age of 23, his eldest son Jean-Baptiste Poulain married Agnes Druoin of Chateau-Richer in that church on the 21st of July, 1711. Agnes, 20 years old, was the daughter of Etienne Drouin and Catherine Loignon. At this time Jean's father, Martin, and Agnes's mother were both deceased. Those present were Francois Barette, Etienne Casillon, Nicolas Drouin, and Ignace Poulain.²⁴ Three of the Poulain children, Jean-Baptiste, Andre, and Agnes, eventually married three of the same Drouin family.

Early in August, 1711, the French in Quebec were warned of the approach of the English invasion and the Canadian Milice was pressed into service and mustered at Quebec, just about a week after Jean-Baptiste's marriage. Jean eventually became a sergeant of Milice de Ste-Anne de Beaupre, but he may have been a private at this time. The Captain of the company was Prisque Lessard, the son of Etienne

¹⁸ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 54.

¹⁹ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 49. This statement seems unlikely. Pierre had married the daughter of Robert Giguere whose land was next to that of Etienne's – so it would make more sense that he lived on Robert's land next to Etienne's, unless he was renting a plot from Etienne, though why he did not cultivate a portion of the Poulin land is a mystery, especially given the fact that his brother Martin was not a farmer. A *procesverbaux* was an account drawn up by a magistrate or official.

²⁰ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 339.

²¹ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 498-2501.

²² Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 373-404.

²³ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 438.

²⁴ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 71.

Lessard.²⁵ This invasion is known as the Walker Expedition. It was heavily supported by the English Crown, which sent warships and seven British infantry regiments. Things did not look good for Quebec. After the West appeared secure from the attempted invasion by land the French troops there were moved to Quebec. As mentioned earlier, the English in the west had retreated and the French did not know why. The powerful English fleet consisted of nine ships of war and two bomb ketches and about sixty troop carriers and support ships, the aforesaid British Regiments of 5500 men, 600 marines, and 1500 provincial Militia. Before setting out from Acadia, the English had captured a French sailor whom they bribed to pilot them safely to Quebec. When they were about to enter the St. Laurence River they found themselves on August 18th near the north shore, not in the center of the channel as they had supposed. Perhaps the French pilot had steered them off course. Just as they realized this mistake a storm came up and drove part of the fleet onto the rocks. The ships of war all escaped but eight British transports, one store ship and one sutler's sloop were all destroyed. 740 soldiers were killed and the number of deceased sailors is not known. The remaining naval captains decided that they did not have skilled enough pilots to continue on to Quebec. When the army in the west led by Nicholson got news of the disaster they had turned around and gone home. Meanwhile, in Quebec there was no lack of praise and wonder for the latest miracle that had occurred.²⁶ Queen Anne's War ended with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which gave the Hudson Bay area, Acadia, and Newfoundland to the English, while the French retained Cape Breton, Quebec, and other Islands in the St.-Laurence.

Amidst these dramatic events life went on. Of the union of Jean-Baptiste and Agnes Poulain ten children were born, Agnes (1712), Jean (1713), Joseph (1715), Madeleine (1717), Marguerite (1722), Pierre (1724), Claude (1727), Genevieve (1729), Athenase (1729), and Felicite-Jeanne (1732).²⁷ Joseph (**our 4th ancestor**) was born in the afternoon of May 27, 1715,²⁸ and was baptized the same day at Ste-Anne de Beaupre by Father Chabot. The godfather was Joseph Poulain, a grand-cousin, and the godmother was Catherine, aunt of the infant and daughter of Etienne Drouin of the Parish of Chateau-Richer. In French Canadian families it is a tradition to name some of the boys Joseph, and some the girls Marie. But this usually forces most of them to use their middle names. In his youth Joseph and his brothers must have gone to a local school, because he knew how to sign his name. Perhaps the parish priest had tutored some of the children, or it could have been an itinerant teacher.²⁹

²⁵ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 101.

²⁶ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 440-457.

²⁷ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 101-102; there is obviously a mistake in the records between Genevieve and Athenase who are listed as having been born within two months of each other.

²⁸ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 62.

²⁹ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 71, and Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 107.

1688

Le premier jour du Mois de Janvier de l'an 1688, qu'on a
 premier de vingt huit; par moy Germain Normin prestre de l'Ordre
 de Saint Benoist, parant fonction de curé en cette Eglise; à elle
 Marie Paray, baptisée chrestienne, fille de Joseph Paray et de M^{lle} Adeline
 Berthelot sa femme, née la Nuit précédente, son père en
 à elle Joseph Guinot, et sa Mère, Marie Gauthier sa
 grande Mère, habitants de cette parisse, lesquels ont déclaré
 ne savoir écrire ny signer, de ce jurepoutel suivant l'ordon-
 nance. Signé, Martin prestre.

L'an 1688 quatre vingt huit; Le vingt deuxiesme du mois
 de Janvier; apres la publication des trois bans de Mariage,
 faite au presbytere des Messes paroissiales, les Prestres, curés,
 et dix huchepres du dit mois; d'un cost Martin Poulain, age
 de trente neuf à quarante ans, fils de defunct Claude Poulain
 et de Jeanne Marie Desperre sa Mere, d'un cost de Jeanne
 Barthe, agee de dix neuf à vingt ans, fille de Jean Barthe
 et de Jeanne Bisoupe ses parents, mere d'autre cost; et ne
 restant de couvent aucun empeschement legitime, les Prestres
 prestres faisant fonction en cette Eglise, ont mis leur benediction
 sur le front de la mariée, et donne la benediction Nuptiale
 selon la forme prescrite de N^{re} Mere par l'Eglise, en presence
 de Charles D'Amboise, et d'Estienne Lefort, tous deux

"Les Trois Beaux Canards"
"The Three beautiful Ducks"

V' là l'bon vent,

V' là l'joli vent,

V' là l'bon vent m'amie m'appelle,

V' là l'bon vent,

V' là l'jolie vent,

V' là l'bon vent m'amie m'attend.

Derrière' chez nous y'a t'un étang (bis)

Trois beaux canards s'en vont baignant.

Translation:

Here's the good wind, here's the jolly wind,
Here's the good wind, my friend calls me,
Here's the good wind, here's the jolly wind,
Here's the good wind, my friend waits for me.

Behind our house there is a swamp (repeat)
Three fine ducks go swimming there.

This is a canoe 'paddling song' for the courier-de-bois and milice. These were meant to break the monotony on long canoe trips. There are 130 versions of this one, and this is just a scrap of this version. The voyageurs liked to ad lib their own verses, eventually creating their own version entirely. Apparently French Canadians sang a lot while on the move. There are stories of large groups of them singing their hearts out while driving mule trains across the American prairie in the 1850s.