



Chapter 3 Les Beaucerons



At the end of the 17th century the area around the region of Quebec was full of settlers and the area of the Cote de Beaupre and the Isle d'Orleans were also fully occupied. It was not easy for the Governor to create new seigneuries at this time because of the constant wars. But finally in 1714 the King agreed to create new ones because the lack of expansion was harming the colony. The colonization and clearing of the area in the valley of the River Chaudiere, located south of Quebec was now about to begin. The English were unceasingly obsessed on the subject of delimitations of the border between the two colonies. They claimed all the land up to the south bank of the St. Laurence River.¹ On the other hand, the French hoped to control all the land down to the coast of Maine. This kind of situation usually means that the border will eventually be somewhere in the middle.



On the 23rd of September, 1736, the Marquis de Beauharnois and Gilles Hocquart, Governor and Intendant of New France, conceded to Thomas-Jacques Taschereau, councilor of the Superior Council (an early legislature), the Seigneurie of St.-Marie; Francois-Pierre Rigaud de Vaudreuil, equerry, the Seigneuries of Beauceville; and to Joseph Fleury of Gorgendiere, agent of the company of Indes au Canada, the Seigneurie of Saint-Joseph. The following day, 24 September, 1736, Dame Therese de la Lande Gayon, widow of Francois Aubert, councilor of the Superior Council, and Gabriel Aubin de l'Isle, also received two other Seigneuries on the south and north banks of the Chaudiere River known as Saint-George West and Saint-George East, today. These seigneuries were the southernmost and are located not far from the current northern border of Maine. The Seigneur de la Gorgendiere and his two sons-in-law, Taschereau and Vaudreuil, were very actively occupied in the colonization of his domains, respectively called, St.-Joseph, Ste-Marie, and Beauceville.

Beginning in early 1737 the Seigneur de Joseph Fleury de la Gorgendiere, sent word to the Cote de Beaupre for interested settlers to come and clear their new lots. Three brothers, Joseph, Pierre, and Claude Poulain responded to the call. The first concessions were done later that year at Saint-Joseph, on the 17th of December, 1737.²

At the age of 24, on the 13th of May, 1739, Joseph Poulain married a young girl by the name of Angelique Pare, daughter of Etienne Pare and Anne Lacroix, of Ste-Anne de Beaupre. Those present were Jean Pare, Prisque Pare, and Etienne Pare, grandfather, uncle, and father, respectively of the bride; and Etienne Racine, Pierre Poulain, friend and brother respectively of the groom; and many other friends and family. Jean-Baptiste, Joseph's father, did not attend the marriage. He was undoubtedly gone on a voyage in his capacity as a sergeant of the Milice.³ During this time the French were not making raids and the men of the milice were frequently busy with other tasks: moving supplies, building roads, garrisoning distant locations, and guarding travelers. Usually the younger men, or the necessary older leaders, were called for voyages. Being 52 years old at the time Jean must have been in very good shape.

The following year, according to the custom of the day, on February 18th, 1740, the young Poulain couple received a visit from the savages. Without doubt this was for the celebration of the birth of their

¹ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 66.

² Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 67-72.

³ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 71-72, and Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 108.

first son, who was given the name of Joseph (**our 5th ancestor**), known as Joseph the son, and was baptized in the Church of Ste-Anne de Beauce.⁴ The savages spoken of must have been some of the friendly Mission Indians who often came to Ste-Anne. The Canadians and the Mission Indians usually lived separately but they mixed freely during their daily routines. Infant Joseph was baptized on that day by a Jesuit, Jean-Baptiste Maurice, who was standing in while the regular parish priest, Father M. Naviere was away.⁵



This house rests on the site of the original home built by Joseph Poulin, the father, in 1741. It is situated on the west coast of the Chaudiere Riviere between the towns of St-Joseph and Vallee-Jonction.

It was in the next year, 1741, that Joseph was finally installed on the land of the west bank of the Chaudiere River (near Vallee-Jonction). Today this land is identified by a rock placed in June 1987, where one can read: “In honor of our ancestors Poulin of Beauce.” This was the land that Joseph had cleared before, which was located near that of the Seigneur situated at the foot of Cote des Fermes of the present day. Meanwhile in Ste-Anne, on the 2nd of November, 1741, Agnes died and Jean-Baptiste, was alone. He never remarried and remained a widower for the rest of his life. Among those attending the funeral, besides Jean, was Prisque Lessart, grandson of Etienne de Lessart and captain of the militia company. Father Don Derobles conducted the service. Prisque was about 67 years old at the time. His son, Francois-Malo would also settle in the Seigneurie de Beauce. He had been married on November 28th, in 1724 to Angelique Racine. The church at this time was the third church built at Beauce by Claude Poulain and others.⁶ On the 9th of November, 1741, Joseph and Angelique baptized their new daughter, Marie-Veronique, in the chapel of Saint-Joseph on the west shore of the Chaudiere River. This first wooden chapel had been constructed earlier by the Seigneur Joseph Fleury de la Gorgendiere in 1739. A white cross today marks the location of this first chapel in order to show for generations present and future, the site of the first chapel in the land of la Beauce, where were baptized our first ancestors – 213 of the

⁴ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 72-73.

⁵ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 81. The picture of the Poulin house is from this book also.

⁶ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 103.

early colonists are buried in the first cemetery of the Beauce.⁷ Incidentally, when they moved to Beauce the three brothers, Joseph, Pierre, and Claude, changed the spelling of their name from Poulain to Poulin. It is not known why. In 1742 on October 22nd Joseph and Angelique's second son, Etienne was born. He was baptized in the little chapel at Beauce by Father Carpentier, Missionary Recollet. In 1744 Jean-Baptiste and his children left Ste-Anne de Beaupre and went to stay with his son Jean in Quebec. Jean the younger was a blacksmith by trade. He had married Mary-Louise Renault in 1736 at Charlesburg, a suburb of Quebec. They had six children, all of whom were baptized at Quebec.⁸ Another son, Athenase who was a mason, also lived in Quebec at this time. He was described as "le type parfait du nomade" (the perfect type of nomad). He also had a small family at this time. Being skilled craftsmen they may have served the military with their respective trades.

In May 1744 another war broke out. This time it was known as King George's War. When the news of war arrived a French force from Fortress Louisbourg attacked an English colony at Canso, in Nova Scotia. After that the English sent a fleet to capture Fort Louisbourg. In the west, the English motivated the Iroquois to make raids against the Canadians again. A large fleet was sent from France but it was decimated in a storm and the few ships that arrived off Louisburg were easily defeated. In November 1745 Fortress Louisburg surrendered to the English while in the west the village of Saratoga, New York, was destroyed by French responses to the Iroquois raids. The English Colonies suffered badly and lost many men in this war, which finally ended with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle on October 18, 1748. Both nations were weary of the war and agreed to restore former possessions. Louisbourg and the island of Cape Breton was returned to New France, much to the disgust of les Bostonnais.⁹

During the war life went on. In 1744, on the 26th of March, Joseph became the father of another child who was baptized as Louis-Joseph by Father Hyacinthe, Missionary Recollet. A fourth child, a girl, followed in 1745. She was baptized in November by Abbe Leclerc (the record is almost invisible). Brothers Pierre and Claude, both now married, also moved to Beauce circa 1744 and 1745 respectively. On the 28th of June, 1747, Angelique Pare, wife of Joseph Poulin, the father, died at the young age of 30 years old. Her body was buried in the little cemetery near the chapel. The attending priest-missionary was Alexis Duburon. Of this first marriage four children had been born. Their ages at this time were seven, four, three, and one. With such a young family care for, Joseph stayed a widower only four months. A farmer needs a wife, not to mention that young children need a mother. Even with a war going on he went to Beaupre to find a new woman to brighten their home and returned on the 10th of November, 1747 to the little house he had built on the riverbank. Her name was Marie-Marguerite Huot and she was from the parish of Ange-Gardien. She was the daughter of Rene Huot and Louise Parent (now deceased). Attending the wedding were Jean Poulin, father of the groom, Louis, brother of the bride, Louis Fafard, brother-in-law, and other friends and family. Of this second union ten children were born, Pierre (1748), Genevieve (?), Louise (1753), Marguerite (1754), Marie-Joseph (1756), Cecile (1758), Marie-Charles (1760), Charles (1762), and Jean (1766).¹⁰ In 1748, Joseph was elected 'Marguillier,' a church warden. The position of church warden had begun in 1741. The wardens caused friction with the parish priest and the bishops. According to Father Nadeau they politely refused to turn over one of the keys to the safe that had two locks. Over the years the wardens rendered great service to the church, but the position of warden has become a position of honor today.¹¹

⁷ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 73-74.

⁸ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 103.

⁹ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 712-745

¹⁰ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 109-110. One of the children is not listed here.

¹¹ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 79 and Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 110; translated by Martha Poulin Kammer. A church warden was a person who looked after the church building and other property.

It is not in the scope of this work to write a description of the Seven Years War, even a short one. Suffice it to say that in the first years of the war 1754-1758 the French had many successes. Milice and Regulars alike were kept busy as bees in all the various campaigns conducted by Major General Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm. In the latter year, on the 6th of July 1758, Francois Desfosses dit Sanscrainte, a soldier with the Regiment de la Reine was killed at the battle of Fort Carillon (now called Ticonderoga) in which 17,600 English attacked 4,200 French. In the battle the French held their ground behind fieldworks and after a day long battle the British retreated in utter confusion. Francois was the husband of Jean-Baptiste Poulain's niece, Therese, the daughter of his brother Andre. Up to this time the French Regulars were always recruited in France. But during the war Montcalm did not receive adequate replacement troops for his Regular regiments. To fill the gaps he drafted thousands of Canadian militiamen. At the time of this battle almost half his Regulars were actually Canadian Milice. That is why Francois was a member of the Regulars. This was the last battle the Iroquois participated in. About 400 of them sat on a nearby hill, cooked some popcorn, and watched the battle from a distance.¹²



Left: French Milice in typical campaign clothing. Right: Montcalm (in red) with the Regulars at the Battle of Fort Carillon. The white coats with blue trim indicate the Royal-Roussillon Regiment.

During the summer campaigns the militiamen wore large cotton shirts tied with a sash around the waist. They were armed with a fusil de chasse (hunting musket) manufactured in Tulle, France. Usually, militiamen carried three knives, one around the neck, one in the waist sash, and one in a legging strap. The Militiamen are cited to have been “excellent marksmen.” Their leggings (mitasses) were made of wool and they often wore Indian style breech clouts instead of trousers. They carried a powder horn and a ‘possibles’ bag made of leather. Their knit caps (tuques) were said to have been worn in colors that indicated which of the three administrative departments they were from: red for Quebec, white for Trois-Rivieres, and blue for Montreal. In the winter they wore heavy moccasins, snowshoes, mittens, and a coat

¹² Chartrand, *Ticonderoga 1758*, pages 35 and 75; including the images below. The information on Francois Desfosses was found in Poulain, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 104. The part about the color of the tuques was found in The Company of Military Historians, *The French and Indian Wars, 1755-1770*, page 52.

made from a blanket (capot). They did not drill in the European style of fighting but did a lot of target practice and generally were very good shots.¹³ It is difficult to convey to a modern person the militant lifestyle of our ancestors. At this time Canada was one of the most militarized nations in the world in the sense that every able-bodied man was in the military. It was not by choice. It was for survival. In comparison the more numerous militia of the English Colonists were not so experienced. They normally met once a month and practiced European style drill. The Canadian Milice met once a week and practiced shooting. The Milice ranged throughout the woods in all seasons. A fact not lost on the anxious English Colonists who were fearful of the wild forests.



A Tulle Fusil de Chasse of the 1729/1734 pattern, thousands of these were manufactured in France and shipped to Canada for the Milice. The caliber was 28 balls to the pound. They cost 17 livres each and the men were given three years in which to pay them off. The long barrel ensured better accuracy. These muskets were very good quality because Tulle tested and inspected each one to rigid specifications. They were inspected again upon arrival in Canada.¹⁴

In the latter part of the war, after 1758, the English numbers and strength began to tell. It was 75,000 French colonists against a million and a half English Colonists, and the military strength invested by their mother countries was also of similar proportions. In the following year, 1759, with news of the approach of the English fleet many people from Quebec and the coast of Beauport sought refuge in other locations, including Quebec city, to escape the horrors of war, and some had gone to Beauce. The Canadian Milice, numbering about 15,000 men, were extremely active in the defense of Canada at this time, though only a portion of them were active at any one time. The Milice de Ste-Anne was most likely deployed at the defenses near Beauport again.¹⁵

The plan was the same as before. One force would attack Montreal by land while another would attack Fort Louisbourg and then Quebec by sea. After capturing Louisbourg (again), the English fleet, including 9,000 men under the command of General James Wolfe sailed into the St. Laurence River and approached Quebec. Facing them were 14,000 French who had to defend many miles of coastline (from Beauport to Montreal) while the English could focus their forces at any point. This time New France had run out of miracles. The English landed on the Ile d'Orleans on June 27th and found the French troops across the water building earthworks on the heights of Beauport. The French defenses under the command of General Montcalm extended from Quebec about six miles northeast to the falls of Montmorency. This placed Beauport outside of this zone. Landing places upriver from Quebec were also defended. Some English troops were put ashore on the south shore of the St. Laurence. They marched to St-Levis and made camp there and began working on artillery emplacements. Other troops, an oversized brigade and many guns were landed just to the east of Montmorency Falls on July 9th. Bombardment of the city began six days later on the 15th. Mission Indians attacked the force at Montmorency but they were driven off.

¹³ Rene Chartrand, *Louis XV's Army (5), Colonial and Naval Troops*, Oxford, UK, 1998, pages 21-22.

¹⁴ Russel Bouchard, *The Fusil de Tulle in New France 1691-1741*, Historical Arms Series No. 36, Museum Restoration Service, Canada, 1998.

¹⁵ Daniel Marston, *The French-Indian War 1754-1760*. Osprey Publishing Ltd., Oxford, UK, 2002. Also: Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War*, Vintage Books, NY, 2000.

Wolfe finally decided to make a full infantry assault at Beauport on the 31st of July. Meant to begin at 8am, the attack was stalled by the tide. A battalion of Grenadiers landed at 11am and made a mis-coordinated effort to attack the heights. It was said that the French put up a “thick fire” and “heavy cannonading.” Meanwhile the English force already on the other side of Montmorency attempted to cross the fords above the falls but was beaten back also. Finally two more English regiments were landed to cover the withdrawal of the Grenadiers. Towards evening a sudden and violent rainstorm ended the battle. Many of the English wounded were left on the beach to the mercy of the Amerindians. Wolfe had lost almost a battalion’s worth of men with no gain.¹⁶

After the disaster at Montmorency, Wolfe was stymied. In his frustration with his lack of military success he decided to shell the civilians of the town. He hoped to “teach these Scoundrels to make war in a more gentlemanly fashion.”¹⁷ Suddenly the civilians who had fled to Quebec for safety found themselves in a war directed only at them. The bombardment continued for most of the month of August. Jean-Baptiste’s grandson, Pierre Poulain, was killed by the English in the month of August. Since there was no other activity at this time it must be that he was killed by the cannonade. It is not known whether he was a civilian or militiaman but since no record of him was found at Ste-Anne de Beaupre it’s possible he was a civilian. If he was Jean the younger’s son he would not have been more than fourteen at the most. The body of Pierre was reburied a year later with religious ceremony on the 20th of December, 1760.¹⁸ Meanwhile, early in September Wolfe’s troops above Montmorency were withdrawn. Another landing was attempted at Pointe aux Trembles, far upriver from Quebec on the 9th and 10th of August with similar losses. Wolfe was getting anxious, winter was coming.



Wolfe’s assault at Foulon and subsequent battle on the Plains of Abraham.¹⁹

¹⁶ Stuart Reid, *Quebec 1759, the Battle that Won Canada*, Osprey Publishing Ltd., Oxford, UK, 2003, 32-42.

¹⁷ Reid, *Quebec 1759*, 45.

¹⁸ Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 103-104.

¹⁹ <http://wikipedia.org/Wikipedia Commons>; retrieved 5/20/10.

His next attempt was at Foulon, a small landing on the west side of Cap Diamant. It had a road leading to the top. There were French piquets (pickets) there guarding the place but when the English boats approached in the predawn darkness of September 13th a British officer convinced the guard they were friendly reinforcements. The surprise was complete. The English gained the heights and started moving up company after company of men. They were able to get more than 4,000 men on the shore. Montcalm rushed 2,000 Regulars to the area to oppose them. While he arranged his troops about 1500 Milice skirmished with the enemy from the front and flanks. The numbers actually in the battle appear to have been roughly equal. When the French Regulars were formed the skirmishers moved to their flanks. Montcalm had decided to charge, hoping to dislodge the English before many more men could be brought up, but this was a costly mistake, since attacking was usually more deadly than defending. As the French approached the English fired a devastating volley that broke up their lines and after a while they began to retreat back to the city. A Scottish regiment tried to cut off the retreat but the Canadian Milice decimated them (they had the highest casualties of any English unit). In all, the French lost about 640 killed and wounded. The English lost 658, about a third of them to the Milice.²⁰



The death of the Marquis de Montcalm. This picture shows the white uniforms of the French Regulars. The color of the trim designated the regiment to which they belonged.²¹

²⁰ Reid, *Quebec 1759*, 55-83; and Marston, *French-Indian War*, 60-64.

²¹ <http://wikipedia.org/Wikipedia Commons>; retrieved 5/20/10.

The numbers of casualties on both sides seem to belie the normal descriptions of the decisiveness of the English victory. There was obviously more desperate fighting than is usually depicted. Both generals, Wolfe and Montcalm, were mortally wounded. Wolfe was shot three times by the Milice on the British right and Montcalm was hit when he was about to enter the city during the retreat. One factor that had seriously weakened the French during this crisis was the jealousy of Governor Vaudreuil against General Montcalm. Vaudreuil had not supported opposing the English on the Plains of Abraham and, unknown to Montcalm, had stopped the reinforcements that were on their way there. Neither was Montcalm supported by Ramesay, the garrison commander of the City, who only sent him three field cannon and no troops.²² Some historians have speculated that Vaudreuil had revealed the weak spot at Foulon in return for political favors, just to get back at his political enemies but no one knows for sure. At any rate Quebec surrendered. It would never again be French. Incidentally, the Plains of Abraham is believed to have been named after Abraham Martin who was granted a tract of land there in 1635.²³



Quebec City in ruins 1760 Richard Short (NAC C-000357). "During the whole Siege from first to last, 535 Houses were burnt down, among which is the whole eastern Part of the lower Town (save 6 or 8 Houses) which make a very dismal Appearance. We also destroyed upwards of Fourteen Hundred fine Farm-Houses in the Country, &c."²⁴

²² Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 1397-1401. The men of Ste-Anne de Beupre must have been in the thick of the fighting because during his research, Joseph-Philippe Poulin found many names of deceased soldiers in the registers of Ste-Anne, St-Joachim (including the parish priest), and Ste-Famille (at Charlesburg).

²³ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0006320>; retrieved 5/21/10.

²⁴ From the diary of a British soldier in the campaign. <http://www.militaryheritage.com/quebec1.htm>; retrieved 5/27/10. The sacrifices made by the habitants are not mentioned in history books, but can be easily imagined by this scene of devastation. The picture appears to be of the lower town, looking east, since the sun is somewhat to the right. Jean, son of Jean-Baptiste likely lived in this section of town and this may have been the location in which Pierre was killed.

After the fighting subsided at Quebec Jean-Baptiste Poulain went to find his sons, Joseph, Pierre, and Claude, in Beauce and he stayed with them for the rest of his days.²⁵ Since he was over seventy years old he had surely not taken part in the fighting. Joseph and his brothers by now were used to the rigors of frontier life in the Vallee de la Chaudiere. In all likelihood they had been involved in a *Compagnie de Milice de Beauce* so they must have been involved in the fighting at Quebec and possibly later at Montreal. The *Milice de Ste-Anne* probably did not get to Quebec in time to be in the final fight.

But the war was not over yet. The French still had a sizable force outside of Quebec so the outcome of the campaign was not yet resolved. Both sides soon settled down to a long winter and most of the *Milice* were sent home to wait it out. In the spring of 1760 the fighting resumed. Brigadier General Francois Gaston Chevalier de Levis, now the commander of the French army, won a battle at St-Fois in April and the English retreated back to Quebec City, but Levis' troops did not have enough ammunition to attack them there. It became a matter of who would be resupplied and reinforced first. In May an English fleet arrived and Levis withdrew. On September 8, 1760 Montreal surrendered.²⁶ About two and a half years later on the 10th of February 1763 the Treaty of Paris gave Britain control of all of North America except for two small islands off of Newfoundland in exchange for two islands in the Caribbean. A poor trade. At the French court the famous Voltaire nonchalantly described the loss as "a few acres of snow." To appease their new French subjects the British kept the old French system of government including the parish *Milice* which was still organized under the three administrative centers, Quebec, Trois-Rivieres, and Montreal. The liberal British government policies and the freedom they gave to their captive people helped placate French Canadian sentiments.²⁷ "They were in fact treated with a kindness that seemed to surprise them."²⁸ The change was not entirely unwelcome. France had poorly supported its colony. And now that they were British subjects, for the first time in 124 years our ancestors could finally settle down to just being farmers and tradesmen. But as it turned out, that would not be so easy.

²⁵ Poulin, *Histoire de Poulin*, 62-63 and Poulin, *Troisieme Centenaire*, page 104.

²⁶ Marston, *French-Indian War*, 64-68.

²⁷ Brendan Morrissey, *Quebec 1775, The American Invasion of Canada*, Osprey Publishing, UK, 2003, pages 22-23.

²⁸ Parkman, *France and England*, Vol II, 1453.

"La Rose Blanche"
"The White Rose"

Par un matin je me suis levé, (bis)
Plus matin que ma tante. (bis)

Dans mon jardin jem'en suis allé (bis)
Cuellir la rose blanche (bis)

Je n'en sus eux pas sitot cueilli trois (bis)
Que mon amont y entre (bis)

"Ma mie, faites-moi z'un bouquet (bis)
Qu'il soit de roses blanches."

La belle en faisant ce bouquet (bis)
Elle s'est cassé la jambe (bis)

Fout aller qu'ri le medecin, (bis)
Le medecin de Nantes. (bis)

"Beau medecin, beau medecin (bis)
Que dis-tu de ma jambe?" (bis)

"Ta jambe, ell'n'en guérira pas (bis)
Qu'ell' soit dans l'eau baignante (bis)

Dans un bassin d'or et d'argent (bis)
Couvert de roses blanches." (bis)

Translation:

Early in the morning I got up, Much earlier than my aunt.
Into my garden I went To pick the white rose.
I had not yet picked three, When my sweetheart came in.
"Darling, make me a bouquet Of the white roses."
While making this bouquet The maiden broke her ankle.
We had to send for the doctor, The doctor came from Nantes.
"Good doctor, good doctor, What do you say about my ankle?
"Your ankle will not get better Unless it is bathed in water,
In a gold and silver basin, Covered with white roses."

This song was documented in 1846 as being used by French guides as a canoe paddling song. The woodsmen preferred the rambling and repetitious medieval songs to more modern ones; they were ideal for breaking the monotony on long canoe trips. Many of the old songs do not tell much of a story. Rather, they are meant to create a series of images and feelings.