

LIFE IN THE POSTS AND TOWNS
DURING
THE FRENCH RÉGIME IN CANADA

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INTRODUCTION

In studying the intimate life of the people in Canada during the French Régime, it is necessary to know something about the general government of the Colonies. It was a "system of authority, monopoly, and exclusion, in which the government and not the individual acted always the foremost part."

Pelham, Edgar, Struggle For a Continent, p. 165.

This policy was begun early in the great trading companies, established by Richelieu in the Company of One Hundred Associates. This guarded the monopoly but did not regard the general welfare. Finally in 1663, Colbert resumed the rights and erected Canada to a Royal Government, with good effects. In 1674, other important changes were wrought. The officers and soldiers employed in wars here were given grants of land; free trade was allowed; and there was an importation of females. With all this prosperity grew.

Dionne, N. E., "Champlain," Makers of Canada Series, Ch. 5.
Bosworth, Newton, Hochelaga Depicta, pp. 41-49.

Life in New France was not easy. Starvation was common due to the ignorant use of the limited natural resources. These people who came primarily for religious and political reasons were almost entirely from West France, from the provinces of Normandy and Picardy, which comprise

the strongest and most energetic stock of France. The colonists, however, stressed national rather than provincial traits, which produced a unity of mental, moral and religious development.

Bracq, C. H., Evolution of French Canada, pp. 3-6.

Thwaites, Reuben Gold, France in America, p. 125.

The kind of life they led here was the result of the very basis of the French character, clearness, logic and simplicity, coupled with a close family unity.

Cambon, Jules, Essays and Addresses, p. 40.

The colony was established principally through the efforts of the government at Versailles. It was ruled through commercial monopolies till 1663, at which time it became a royal province, giving bounties to the immigrants, importing women, ostracizing the unmarried, and rewarding the parents of large families. But even with all this stress the population was only eight thousand after one hundred and fifty years.

The colony was ruled by a governor who was both a soldier and statesman, administering civil and military authority. He had two primary assistants, the intendant who was usually drawn from the legal class and was virtually a spy on the governor and the Bishop who watched the interests of the Church. There were also five resident counsellors, the number of which was later raised to twelve. These formed a sub-council. This autocratic form of government was created by Richelieu in 1627.

Quebec was the center of all government. There were local governors at Montreal and Three Rivers, but they amounted to little. There were no local governments.

The government was full of corruption. "The governor and ecclesiastics were seldom under ban of suspicion; but the intendant was quite apt to be a rare rascal, and from him down to the commandant of the most far away stockade, extended a graded, well organized system, whereby public moneys and supplies from France were unconscionably preyed upon."

Thwaites, R. G., op. cit., p. 134.

Parkman, Frances, Old Régime in Canada, pp. 207-214.

The Bishop and Priests were real "fathers" of their flock. They ruled in temporal and spiritual affairs of daily life. The Church was the nucleus of the village. "No community, whether of fishers, habitants, fur traders or soldiers was without either its secular priest or its missionary friar."

Ibid., p. 136.

A noblesse class was artificially produced,--"None was needed in so raw a colony, where poverty was the rule, and democracy more nearly fitted the needs of the situation."

Ibid., p. 130.

The people had little individual enterprise, free association among them was discouraged. The population was

small in comparison to the vast area to be settled, and, as a result, the colonists were widely scattered.

In this wild country, hunting and fur trading prospered, but there was practically no manufacturing and little commerce. The land was not cultivated except for the bare necessities. The fisheries had to be artificially stimulated. There was a lack of sea power due to the neglect of the motherland. The people did not resent this indifference because they had been trained to a childlike obedience to the Church and the King. What they had greatest need of was the support of a strong power, and France could not supply it.

Thwaites, R. G., op. cit., pp. 127-141.

Pelham, E., op. cit., pp. 164-169.

CLASSES OF PEOPLE

As previously mentioned, a class of nobility was established in Canada. The Seigniories were given to these nobles. However, most of these were great only in name and area. They were often uninhabited except for Indians and wild life, or peasants--"whose log houses, whitewashed, and dormer-windowed, lines the common highway, perhaps a half mile back from the water's edge, down to which sloped the fields of the seigneur's tenants, narrow, ribbon-like strips, generally less than eight hundred feet wide, for those light-hearted people were gregarious and loved to be near their neighbors."

Thwaites, R. G., op. cit., p. 131.

Kingsford, W., History of Canada, Vol. I, pp. 364-365.

The lord or seigneur had the fishing rights for which the tenants paid him a toll. This was often his only income. The lands that were given had to be cleared in a specified time or they were forfeited. If they were sold, he received only one-fifth of the price. This happened in a number of cases as there were few seigneurs who tilled the soil. Many of them went into fur trading, a very roving life, and if they could not receive a license they became coureurs de bois.

Thwaites, R. G., op. cit., pp. 131-134.

The seigneurs in turn granted land to people known as habitants. This was granted by deeds. The land was

usually in the form of a parallelogram, the shorter end facing the river. The length on the river was from five to ten lineal arpents, and the depth from ten to eighty lineal arpents. (An arpent is equal to one hundred and ninety-two feet and an arpen of area to five-sixths of an acre.)

Everyone wanted to be on the river and was until many years later when the population became greater. The population was always dense in a village and a mile either side of the church, then thinned out, but stretched for miles. Communication was assured by canoes on the water in summer and carriages in the winter. The house and clearing were, of course, near the water, then the pasture and lastly the woodland. Because of the unfortunate shape of these grants, being almost ten times longer than wide, little of the land was easily accessible from the house. Thus a comparatively small amount of the land was cleared. The farms became narrower when the land was passed on to the second generation because each child shared equally in his father's estate. Each heir wanted some river frontage; so the individual farms were ribbon-like in appearance, being often only one hundred and fifty feet wide and many times that in length. The first road skirted the North Shore of the Saint Lawrence; so farms in that territory began to be in demand.

Ibid., pp. 132 and 134.

Munro, W. B., "Seignors of Old Canada," in Chronicles of Canada, pp. 40-43 and pp. 90-94.

Schlarman, J. H., From Quebec to New Orleans, p. 299.

Kingsford, W., op. cit., p. 364.

MANOR LIFE

Classes of People

Houses and Furniture

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Schlarman, J. H., From Quebec to New Orleans, p. 299.

Kingsford, W., op. cit., p. 364.

The duties of the habitant were very many, and were called censitaires. The most important was the paying for the use of the land. This was done through cens, or money, and rentes, or produce. These were paid each year. The payments varied from ten to twelve sous to half a dozen chickens or bushels of grain. The price paid for the land was about fifty cents an acre, which was not heavy. Rents were paid on Saint Martin's Day in November. This was made a general holiday; all the habitants met at the manor house, bringing the women and children along. All the gossip was related from Quebec and Montreal. The men and some women smoked. Brandy was often served. This, together with the noise caused by the squawking of the tied fowl, made a very gay and colorful gathering. At dusk they parted with a general handshaking as every neighbor was a friend.

The lods et ventes was a duty infrequently imposed. This was a mutation fine due when the property changed hands by sale or descent to other but direct heirs. It was set at one-twelfth the value, but there was usually a rebate of one-third of this.

Banalités were duties imposed upon the habitant through the rules that only seigneurs could own a grist mill, wine press, and slaughter house. However, in Canada, only the toll for the grist mill was collected. This mill was a crude and clumsy affair, operated by a windmill; therefore, it was always necessary to wait for a wind before the mill could be put in use. It was tower-like and often had loopholes for defence against the Indians.

The corvée was the free labor which the lord could demand. Three days a year was the average amount expected although six could be asked. These were often required at ploughing time, seedtime, and harvest time. During such periods of imposed labor, the seigneur had to provide the food and tools for them; so this again was not a heavy task.

There were duties or tolls that could be levied on fishing and gathering wood and stone, but, as a rule, these were not collected.

Thwaites, R. G., op. cit., p. 132.

Colby, C. W., Canadian Types of the Old Régime, pp. 141-147.

Munro, W., op. cit., pp. 94-101.

The most charming "duty" imposed, was the May Pole obligation. Each May Day the habitants planted a pole in front of the seigneur's door.

"Le premier jour de mai
Labourez
J'm'en fus planter un mai
Labourez
A la porte à m'amie."

Munro, W., op. cit., p. 102.

"Bright and early in the morning the whole neighborhood appeared, decked out fantastically, and greeted the manor house with a salvo of blank musketry. With them, they bore a tall fir-tree, its branches cut and its bark peeled to within a few feet of the top. There the tuft of green remained. The pole, having been gaudily embellished, was majestically reared aloft and planted firmly in the ground. Round it the men and maidens danced, while the seigneur and his family, enthroned in chairs, looked on with approval."

Ibid., pp. 102-103.

Refreshments, consisting of brandy and cakes, were then served indoors. On that day especially "the seigneur was more than a mere landlord."

Ibid., p. 103.

Wrong, G. M., Rise and Fall of New France, Vol. I, p. 413.

IMPORTATION OF WIVES

In speaking of the different classes of people, it is necessary to mention a trend of affairs which influenced all classes and which finally necessitated the importation of wives from France.

After the king decided that an army could no longer be maintained in New France, there were a great many men released from service. Many returned home, but, on the other hand, others were induced to come from France. Besides this, there had been systematic shipments of men to Canada since the days of the trading companies. Often these men were bound to service, but, after three years, they were free to settle as they pleased. The army officers who settled here were given a grant of land and one hundred livres or fifty livres and provisions for a year. Thus the population grew under Louis XIV in all but the natural way.

The Sulpicians were the first to see this and sent some women over to Canada. The king continued the practice and sent many from the hospitals of Paris and Lyons. Soon there was a complaint that these girls were not strong enough for the work and from then on, peasant girls, drawn from over-burdened families, were sent. These were so well liked that the supply could not meet the demand. In 1667 a special group of young ladies was sent here for the officers.

"After the regiment of Carignan was disbanded, ships were sent out freighted with girls of indifferent virtue, under the direction of a few pious old duennas, who divided them into three classes. These vestals were, so to speak, piled

one on the other in three halls where the bridegrooms chose their brides as a butcher chooses his sheep out of the midst of the flock."

Parkman, Francis, Old Régime in Canada, p. 220.

The girls were often criticized as being of doubtful character, but Parkman says that the men were of even more doubtful character. At a later period each girl had to bring a certificate from the curé stating that she was free to marry. Sometimes both the men and women were found to have "previous" husbands and wives. The whole idea is repulsive to anyone today, yet it was an important event in the development of New France.

In order to further this plan the king granted bounties on marriage and withheld certain privileges from the unmarried. He made a gift of twenty livres if a man married before twenty and a girl before sixteen. A dowry was also given, which varied, but usually was made up of a house and provisions for eight months, and fifty livres in household supplies. In addition, any father who had sons of twenty or girls of sixteen not married was fined. Unmarried men were forbidden to hunt and fish.

This was sometimes carried to extremes, as it is recorded that one widow was remarried before her husband was buried.

There were bounties on children as well. For ten living children born in wedlock three hundred livres a year were granted and for twelve children four hundred livres a year. Every man and wife, therefore, declared every June the number of children they had.

King Louis XIV thus well deserves to be called the
"Father of New France."

Ibid., pp. 215-227.

Wrong, G. H., op. cit., pp. 392-395, Ch. 13.

Bosworth, N., Hochelaga Depicta, pp. 47-49.

RELATIONS TO ONE ANOTHER

The demobilizing of the Cardignan Regiment in Canada brought many changes in the life there. The large number of men released was the reason for the importation of wives and caused much begging, idleness, and bad conduct.

The average habitant wife had married at fifteen and by the time she reached forty was the mother of from eight to eighteen children. Her chief ambitions were to feed the children, protect them from the Iroquois and teach them the catechism. In the larger cities the nuns helped in the education of the young girls.

Colby, Ch. W., Canadian Types of the Old Régime, pp. 330-352.

Each girl began her married life with a dowry which varied according to the position of her family. The following dowry is that of a girl of distinguished family.

200 francs in money

4 sheets

2 tablecloths

6 napkins of linen

1 mattress and blanket

2 dishes, 6 spoons, 6 tin plates, a pot, a kettle

1 table, 2 benches, a kneading-trough

1 chest with locks and keys

1 cow

2 hogs

The average girl did not have as large a dowry.

A neighborly spirit was evident at all weddings. Immediately after the ceremony, the bride and groom lead a procession to the homes of the neighbors for two little drinks of rum.

The colonists were happy and contented in their domestic relations. They showed affection for their children and were faithful to their vows. If they had servants, they were kind to them and nursed them when they were ill.

Neighbors were usually well behaved to each other. However, we find an amusing fondness for going to law on the slightest pretext. As there were no fences in those early days and legal documents were loosely drawn, there were plenty of excuses for dispute. But the chief cause was a superabundance of spare time in the winter.

Funerals in most primitive countries offer an interesting study of folk customs and the Canadian is no exception. For instance, a man's friends and the degree of their friendship were shown by his funeral. After the body had lain in the house for two days it was carried out by the neighbors. The places in the procession were allotted according to the degree of friendship between the deceased and the mourners. The cross bearers led the entire group, and as the procession passed from the home to the cemetery, it did not stop before any home because of the prevailing superstition that to do so would cause a death there within

the year. If the person who had just died had in his lifetime attended all the funerals in the neighborhood, the number of mourners at his own funeral was great. After the ceremony, everyone returned to the home of the deceased for food. The number of masses sung for the departed indicated the depth of feeling of the mourners.

The immediate neighbors shared in the family life, and the door of the home was never closed to them. The frequent Indian attacks necessitated this close association because of the sense of protection it gave.

There were various ways in which these people cooperated with one another. For instance, when a pig was slaughtered, a piece of fresh meat was sent "next door." If the housewife needed a loaf of bread, she sent to the neighbor for it and returned another the next day. If a cow fell in the ditch, the entire neighborhood came to the rescue. Any neighbor would go miles to get the curé for a sick friend. In winter the community went en masse to the forest for a few days to cut wood. New Year's Day was celebrated with a general exchange of gifts. If anyone was driving for a great distance from home, he could stop anywhere and be assured of a welcome and food and shelter in exchange for current gossip.

Wrong, G. M., "Conquest of New France," in Chronicles of America, p. 410.

Bouchard, George, Other Days and Other Ways, pp. 63-64 and pp. 135-141.

Schlarman, J. H., From Quebec to New Orleans, pp. 302-303.

Munro, Will B., op. cit., pp. 111 and 118.

During August, September and October, there was a general migration to Quebec for supplies for the winter months. The ships from France had landed by that time. All during the summer season market was held in the square on Tuesdays and Fridays; here they were able to buy provisions, such as beets, carrots, potatoes, cabbages, meat, fowl, game, fish and eels. There were two peculiar rules enforced during this period; all dogs had to be home at nine o'clock, and all smoking was forbidden on the street. The latter was adopted because of the danger of fire. After the cold weather set in, the shops were closed. Those who came to Quebec from neighboring posts then returned home. The work of pushing the boundaries of civilized New France farther into the wilderness was then continued.

Parkman, Francis, Old Régime in Canada, pp. 368-386.

RELATIONS TO THE INDIANS

The relations between the French and the Indians in Canada proper were very friendly. There were many different tribes of Indians, each considering itself an independent nation. These tribes were divided into sub-tribes, bands or villages. The French treated the Indians with kindness and consideration on all occasions. The versatility of the French gained their friendship and confidence.

Each Indian was his own master. He hated restraint but recognized existing authority. Each of these tribes had an hereditary chief. Usually the civil and military authority was vested in one of these people although a military chief could be anyone who could gain the confidence of the men and establish his leadership. The hereditary chief was occasionally disqualified for cowardliness or a similar trait.

The Indians were generally free from petty strife because of the few necessities needed in a hunter's life; the small size of the community; the enforced self control and sense of dignity; the adherence to customs; the principle of hero worship; and the rudeness of the conditions.

Their religion was a "cloudy bewilderment." They believed that every mountain, lake and bird contained a spirit. The sun was a god and the moon a goddess. The belief in a Great Spirit was very vague and their idea of moral good was very shadowy. Their belief in a future reward was not universal among the Indians.

The character of the Indian was very contradictory; they were proud, but were willing to beg for whiskey; they were cautious, but often acted with insane recklessness; they were brave, but fought from ambush; they were suspicious of others, but were good judges of character. The ruling passions of their lives were ambition, revenge, envy, jealousy, love of liberty and love of glory.

Pelham, Edgar, Struggle For a Continent, pp. 460-472.

The traders, explorers, adventures and well-loved missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church lived among the Indians. In the very early days, there were no French women in Canada; therefore, many men married Indians and also adopted the Indian form of divorce. Often, as there was no priest at hand, a marriage was performed "without benefit of clergy." Some couples later voyaged to town taking their children with them, and the marriage and christening were performed at the same time. The finer French remained true to these native women who became models of conduct, good housekeepers and respected residents of a community. They were, however, often bothered by Indian relatives. This inter-marriage did not bring the two races any closer together, as the half-breeds either went to one side or the other, depending upon their education and environment.

Thwaites speaks of marriages with Indians or half-breeds for limited periods of time. An agreement was made with the parents as to the time and payment of a girl's services. The contract, which was renewable, was usually

1

made for six or twelve months. The agreement was paid for in clothing, provisions or supplies. Occasionally such an arrangement was permanent. The women believed themselves to be lawful wives.

Thwaites, R. G., op. cit., pp. 213-214.

Whether the Indians gained more than they lost by intermarriage is a debatable question. The morale of the French certainly was not improved on the whole, and as a race, they gained nothing.

Wallace, Joseph, History of Illinois and Louisiana, pp. 410-411.

Kellogg, Louise, French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest, pp. 388-89, 395-96.

Nute, Grace, The Voyageur, pp. 87 ff.

Thwaites, R. G., op. cit., p. 140.

Munro, Will B., op. cit., p. 120.

BARTER AND MONEY

Before 1669, beaver skins were used as currency. In 1669 wheat was made legal tender, allowing four francs to the minot which was equal to three French bushels. Moose skins were given a market rate in 1674.

Since all the coins that were brought to Canada were to be returned to France on the next ship, French currency was valued less than these objects of barter. The franc was worth fifteen sous instead of twenty which it brought in France. Thus most of the selling was done by negotiable notes, payable in furs, goods or farm produce.

Card currency was manufactured in 1685 to pay the soldiers. This was nothing more than common playing cards cut in four pieces, stamped with the fleur-de-lis and a crown, and signed by the governor, intendant and clerk. This scrip had no value outside of Canada.

John Law's theory came into prominence in 1716. The basis of it was that the wealth of the country consists of the money contained therein. Law advocated the issuing of paper money based on the bank reserve. This was issued to twice its value to stimulate trade. Law convinced the government that the "state should be the banker and make the profits instead of the individual." In this year, 1716, the Banque Générale de France was established on this plan. Taxes were made payable in these bank notes. The Company of the West was established, upon the capital of the bank, to settle the land on the lower Mississippi River. This company was widely advertised but overvalued. The people lost confidence and the "system" failed in 1720, and the

paper money was no longer accepted. These notes had been accepted in Canada up to this time.

In 1714 the amount of card money that had been issued was two million livres. Since the confidence of the people was undermined, the government redeemed it at one half its value. In 1717 this was stopped and instead more paper money was issued. This was continued until the money was valueless.

Parkman, Francis, Old Régime in Canada, pp. 299-300.

Schlarman, J. H., From Quebec to New Orleans, pp. 172-190.

From 1717 to 1763, barter and exchange were the principal means of trade. Some coins began to circulate, the French franc, which was valued at \$5.95, the louis d'or, valued at \$4.84, and the Spanish doubloon, valued at \$15.93. Little money was needed because of the primitive and simple lives that the people led. Each family produced for themselves their chief requirements. When England came into control of Canada in 1763, her system of coinage was established.

Wallace, Joseph, History of Illinois and Louisiana, p. 412.

HOUSES AND FURNITURE

The houses were established in irregular, compact villages with narrow streets. Usually these villages were situated on the banks of a river near good timber and prairie land and, if possible, near a fort. The St. Lawrence was, of course, the main thoroughfare upon which the first colonists settled.

The home of the ordinary habitant was certainly crude, but still comfortable and homelike. It was made of posts set upright a few inches apart so as to form a framework of timbers. The space in between the logs was filled with sticks, stones, mud, clay, moss, or cut straw. Above the door and windows the logs were placed horizontally. The windows were small and few. Usually, the panes were of glass although in the earliest periods skins or oiled paper was used. Hinges allowed them to swing inward. In winter they were tightly battened to keep out the cold, and in consequence, the air in the rooms became unwholesome. The doors were of walnut with plain batten work. Few of them had locks. The houses were primarily of one story and very simple. They were long, narrow, low and heavily built, with eaves projecting over the walls. The roof was steep and thatched with wild grass or straw. A few were made of clapboards and had high peaked little dormers. A wooden cross was sometimes placed on the roof. In the eighteenth century porches or galleries were put around the entire

house. The houses always looked neat and clean as the exterior was whitewashed each spring.

The chimneys were on the outside with a huge fire pit inside. The pits were so large that the people were able to burn "half trees," enormous logs obtained by cutting the trunk of a medium sized tree into three or four pieces.

The floors were cemented with clay or laid with puncheons which were waxed occasionally. The walls were whitewashed frequently which gave a neat appearance to the interior.

Wallace, Joseph, History of Illinois and Louisiana, pp. 404-406.

Munro, W. B., Seigneurs of Old Canada, pp. 105-108.

Schlarman, J. H., From Quebec to New Orleans, p. 300.

Wrong, G. M., op. cit., p. 411.

In order to visualize these homes in their actual setting, one must have a general idea of the buildings around them. Immediately adjoining the house was a storeroom or "lean-to" which contained principally wood and vegetables. The barn and stable which stood a short distance away were constructed by piling timbers horizontally. These were cemented with chinks and mortar. Nearer the house was a root cellar, half dug in the ground. This supplied the people with vegetables most of the winter. Sometimes selected roots were brought into the house and allowed to sprout, and in this way they obtained greens for their diet. Each house had a bake oven, built of boulders, mortar and

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earth, near which was a wood pile for convenience. According to the law in France, bread had to be baked in the ovens at the manor house. This, however, was not enforced in Canada as fuel was so plentiful. The families baked once or twice a week. As the family grew, or more spare time was had, a stone or rail fence was built around the house. Next to the fence in one corner of the yard, there was always a garden. Here the people grew a great many of the vegetables and some tobacco for their own consumption. To complete the picture, it is necessary to include the neighbor's house as it was never very far away.

Munro, W. B., op. cit., p. 106.

Upon entering one of these dwellings, the visitor stepped into the combined living room and kitchen. This, of course, was the main room and often the only one except a bedroom. There were never over three rooms in an ordinary habitant's home.

The ceiling was low and open beamed, with a flint lock hanging from the middle roof tree. The fireplace was the main feature of the room. There were a pine table and chairs with seats woven of underbark. Often there was a sideboard or cupboard that reached to the ceiling. The spinning wheel was set in the corner and used almost daily. Every room had a great square bed, upon which even the poorest habitant had an ornamental cover. The cradle occupied a prominent position near the bed. It was always made by the

father from the wood of the nearby forests, and often decorated with intricate carving. It was known as the blue box and passed down through the generations as the possession of the eldest daughter.

On the walls were cheap pictures of the Savior or the Virgin Mary. The floor was covered with colorful hooked or braided rugs for which these people have become known.

The dishes were usually of earthenware, with tin spoons, iron forks, and a zinc coffee pot. Everyone had a copper dipper which was considered a household necessity. Men and women both wore two dagger-like clasp knives for protection which were fastened to the belt by a chain and were also used at mealtime. This does not indicate an ideal sanitary condition. That, however, seems to have made little difference, as a traveler of the time notes that their houses on the whole were not very clean. A few of the families had small services of china or plate, or single pieces of silver. Some also had treasured pieces of furniture which they had managed to bring from their homes in France.

The larger table in the kitchen was used by the family as a dining table. Near it was placed a smaller table or a large wooden block on which meat was cut. Here the smaller children ate, as they were not allowed to come to the larger table until they had taken their first Holy Communion.

Munro, W. B., op. cit., pp. 106-108.

Schlarman, J. H., op. cit., pp. 300-301.

Wrong, G. M., op. cit., p. 411.

Wallace, J., op. cit., p. 405.

In the larger houses the kitchen was set off on one side of the living room. Directly opposite the kitchen was the bedroom which contained a large bed and perhaps a small table and chair. Everyone went to bed as soon as it was dark for lack of anything else to do.

The attic was a very important feature of the house. It was usually reached by a ladder and was so low that one could scarcely stand up in it. The children slept here, and as most families numbered at least a dozen offspring, it was very crowded. As candles were a luxury, the only light they had, unless there were dormer windows, was from a wick burning in a shallow bowl of tallow.

Munro, W. B., op. cit., p. 108.

The manor house differed very little from the habitant's home.

"Sur cette terre encore sauvage,
Les vieux titres sont inconnus;
La noblesse est dans la courage,
Dans les talents, dans les virtus."

Ibid., p. 105.

The manor was not a mansion, as the families of title (or seigneurs) were often as poor as the habitants. It was made of roughhewn timber or stone, roomy and comfortable. There were three or four rooms on the ground floor, and a large attic. The furniture which usually came from France

gave the "interior an air of distinction."

Ibid., pp. 104-106.

Although there were class distinctions in Canada as there had been in Normandy, the material environment of all classes was very similar. Side by side they all worked for the well-being of their new homeland and tried to make of Canada a new France.

CLOTHING

The costume of the women was made up of a blue or scarlet sleeveless bodice, a skirt of a different color and a straw hat. The weekday skirt hardly reached below the knee. The bodice was made of a woolen stuff, while the skirt was of dimity, red or white striped cotton or drugget. This drugget was the étouffe du pays, made of wool on the hand looms. It wore well and was very cheap. The women carried handkerchiefs of vary-colored cotton, muslin or silk. Jewelry, with the exception of wedding rings, silver rings or crosses, was seldom worn. On festive days they wore brighter garments imported from France. In winter everyone wore furs--usually beaver--as furs were almost as cheap as cloth.

The men wore capotes of homespun gray, with belts of red or checkered wool. Their shoes were clogs of hide or moccasins of oiled and home-tanned skins which laced above the ankles. Under these they wore coarse woolen stockings. Their summer hats were made of straw plaited by the women. On Sunday they wore Norman Hats made of beaver, with a ribbon around the crown and hanging down on one side. In winter they wore tuques or knitted caps. These were made of double folds of yarn, worn over the ears with a tassel hanging down. In the vicinity of Quebec, these caps were red, in Three Rivers, white, and in Montreal, blue. For further protection in winter, they wore hoods on their coats called capuchins. This was drawn over the tuque. Their gloves were of home-knit woolen or sheepskin with the wool outside.

Munro, W. B., op. cit., pp. 108-109.

Colby, C. W., op. cit., pp. 322-327.

Schlarman, J. H., op. cit., p. 302.

In winter, the children dressed very much as did their parents. In the summer they were allowed to run bare-foot and wore sleeveless garments.

The average family lived more or less in poverty. With their daily toils and cares, they had little time to spend on fancy food or clothing. There was a gradual lessening of this poverty after the many members of the Carignan Regiment settled here. The women, especially, seemed to take more pride in their clothing, until in 1760, a traveler stated that he noticed a decided fondness for adorning the hair and that in general, the women were very "handsome" in appearance.

IMPLEMENTS

The implements, made of inferior materials and workmanship, were very crude. The plow was a "large wooden moldboard. The handles were short and stood almost perpendicular. The beam was nearly straight and rested on an axle supported by two small wheels, which made the plow unsteady."

Wallace, Joseph, History of Illinois and Louisiana, p. 407.

Kellogg, Louise Phelps, French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest, p. 389.

The oxen, if used, were joined by a strong wooden bar bound to the horns and guided by reins of untanned hide. Not only were the plows primitive, but threshing was done with hand flails.

Wallace, Joseph, op. cit., p. 408.

The carts were wooden-wheeled and clumsy. For pleasure the people used the calèche, a two-wheeled cart, with a seat for the driver which was high in the air and a box for two people which was supported by home-made leather straps. The carriole, a low sleigh on solid wood runners, was used in winter. It had a high back to protect the riders from the cold. There were, perhaps, no four-wheeled carriages except those owned by the governors. The people took much pleasure in making and decorating harnesses.

Munro, Will B., op. cit., p. 115.

Wrong, G. M., "Conquest of New France," in Chronicles of America, pp. 409-411.

Thwaites, R. G., "France in America," in American Nation Series, Vol. VII, p. 211.

Schlarman, J. H., From Quebec to New Orleans, p. 313.

It was many years before there was any change in the methods and implements used in cultivating the soil around Quebec. The French people have been very prejudiced against any improvements, and some still use the oxen and old type plows; their threshing is done by hand, while two-wheeled carts are still employed as a means of transportation.

PROVIDING THE "DAILY BREAD"

Each villager was allotted a part of the common field in proportion to the size of his family. If any act of the villager injured the common interest, his claim was forfeited. The plowing, planting, etc. was done according to regulations made by the village council.

The farming was not very scientific. They fertilized the land only to the extent of burning the stubble in the spring. There was little rotation of crops. Occasionally a portion of the farm was allowed to lie fallow. The annual plowing was done in ridges, and the land between the furrows was wasted. However, in spite of this waste, farming was very successful in the St. Lawrence Valley because of the fertility of the land.

The chief crops were white wheat, oats, rye, barley and maize. The vegetables raised were potatoes, peas, beans, cucumbers, cabbage, pumpkins, coarse melons, onions and squash. Some of the people grew flax and hemp. Wild hay was had for the cutting.

Because of this abundance of wild hay, cattle and horses were raised. Everyone had two or three horses which were really a luxury as they were used only half of the year.

Both the men and women worked as there was little extra labor to be had. In the busy season, the seigneur's wife and daughters were often seen at work in the fields. In the autumn, tallow, lard, sausage and headcheese were made. Gelatine was obtained by boiling calves' feet. They also roasted their own coffee.

The food was nourishing and adequate. They made bread of wheat and ground maize. Meat and fish were cured by smoke. The meat consisted of venison, bear meat, porcupine, geese and ducks as well as domestic animals. Peas were a staple food out of which they made their daily soupe aux pais. Fruit was obtained from their small orchards of one or two trees. From these they were provided with apples, plums, cherries and French gooseberries. Raspberries, cranberries and grapes grew wild.

The people obtained tea and coffee which was very costly from the traders. Milk was cheap and plentiful. Wine was made from the wild grapes, and brandy was sent from France. The poorer class made beer which they drank "not wisely but too well."

A great deal of smoking was done by the men and sometimes by the women. The children often smoked before they could read or write. The tobacco was grown in the colony and cured in the sun. It had a terrible odor.

There, life was comfortable considering the primitive conditions of the country.

Munro, Will B., op. cit., pp. 110-116.

Kellogg, Louise Phelps, The French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest, pp. 390-393.

Thwaites, R. G., "France in America," in American Nation Series, Vol. VII, pp. 216-217.

Wallace, J., History of Illinois and Louisiana, p. 405.

TRADE LIFE

Coureur de Bois

Voyageur

COUREUR DE BOIS

The voyageur and the coureur de bois are often confused. The difference should be kept well in mind. The coureur de bois were the "illicit traders of the French Régime--men who ventured into the wilderness without licenses."

Nute, Grace L., op. cit., p. 7.

They were the "vagabonds of the wilderness," and "indulged in the liberty and license of the forest."

Colby, C. W., Canadian Types of the Old Régime, p. 185 and p. 191.

The class of traders known as coureur de bois rose out of the beaver trade. As they hunted without permission, they escaped the supervision of the intendants, councils and priests.

The fur trade was the most important in Canada. In the very earliest years, the Indians brought their skins to Montreal, but soon the traders, wishing to drive better bargains, went to the Indian villages. The richest pelts were now to be found in the middle of the continent. This, coupled with the fact that the Indians were willing to do business with them, made trading good here.

Many men of good birth went into this business. At every French post there were at least thirty to forty of them, sometimes parties of one hundred and fifty. They felt they were too good to marry a habitant's daughter, but had no scruples about having relations with these native women and undoubtedly had many children. These men set a

bad example to the Indians and taught them all the vices of the French civilization while swindling them out of furs. They were condemned severely for selling brandy to the Indians. Their argument was that the Indians would sell only to those giving "fire water," and to protect their trade from the Dutch and English, they must be permitted to do this.

The coureur de bois built a chain of forts of which Michellimackimac was the chief post. The men came here and to Montreal when they sought special amusement or relaxation. While here, they became so wild that the streets were cleared and all the shops were turned into drinking places. When these men "bedizened with a strange mixture of Indian and French finery" or naked as a Sioux took over the town, rioting reached a high pitch.

Parkman, Francis, Old Régime, p. 312.

As soon as they were sober, they sought absolutism for their sins, and the priests felt they could not be too hard on them or they would break from the Church entirely.

They were punished by the Church for the selling of whiskey but again they replied that they did it to protect their trade from the Dutch and English. The King punished them for their infringements on the monopolies. If any were found in the woods without licenses, they were to be whipped and branded. In the event of a second offense, they were sent to the galleys. This law was well made but could not be enforced because of the elusiveness of the coureur de bois and because of the fear that the trade would go to

the Dutch and English. The roving, carefree life of these men tended to defeat the King's plan for increase in population because they did not settle down to raise families. Many edicts were issued against them, but again the officials could not be too severe for fear of driving them to the English.

To give the government time to relent in their vigilance against the *coureur de bois*, De Lhut formed a large company of them to go out to remain for four years. Eight hundred men out of a population of ten thousand, it has been estimated, went out into the wilderness at this time. Thus, this was not a problem of just a few men.

Pelham, Edgar, Struggle for a Continent, pp. 180-183.

Wrong, G. M., Rise and Fall of New France, p. 415.

Munro, Will B., op. cit., p. 123.

Thwaites, R. G., "France in America," in American Nation Series, Vol. VII, pp. 126-127.

Colby, C. W., op. cit., pp. 185-191.

Parkman, Francis, Old Régime in Canada, pp. 310-313.

Nute, G. L., op. cit., p. 7.

While, according to fiction, the *coureur de bois* appear as picturesque, dashing, romantic figures, history reveals them in quite a different light. They were dashing and they were romantic if adventure and a wild life are all that these terms imply. It is true they did establish forts and furthered communications with the Indian tribes, but the evil that followed their license and lawlessness completely overshadows the good which they may have accomplished.

THE VOYAGEUR.

The voyageur is one of the most romantic and adventurous characters in all history. "The term 'voyageur,' a French word meaning 'traveler,' was applied originally in Canadian history to all explorers, fur-traders, and travelers. It came in time to be restricted to the men who operated the canoes and batteaux of the fur-traders, and who, if serving at all as traders, labored as subordinates to a clerk or proprietor."

Nute, Grace Lee, The Voyageur, p. 3.

The Indians, at first, had taken their skins to the fairs at Montreal and Quebec, but soon some traders intercepted them, to gain advantage over others. These went even farther into the "untouched" regions to obtain furs from Indians who had never traded before. A license was necessary to enter this Indian country; it was possible to use only certain articles in trade, and only a specified number of licenses were permitted in one year. A man with sufficient capital received a license and hired subtraders or voyageurs to go into the Indian country and barter knives, beads, wampum, blankets, vermilion and other trinkets for furs. These men scattered from the Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, and from Montreal to the Rocky Mountains. They formed a distinct class in customs, traditions, dress and language.

Their clothing consisted of "a short skirt, a red woolen cap, a pair of deerskin leggings which reach from the ankles to a little above the knees, and are held up by a string secured to a belt about the waist, the azion ("breech cloth") of the Indians, and a pair of deerskin moccasins without stockings on the feet. The thighs are left bare. . . A blue capote, the inevitable pipe, a gaudy sash, and a gay beaded bag or pouch, hung from the sash," completed the costume.

Ibid., p. 13.

Voyageurs were usually small men as they required but little space in the canoes; seldom were they more than five feet eight inches tall. Their strength, however, was magnificent. They could paddle fifteen to eighteen hours a day for weeks and carry two hundred to four hundred and fifty pounds on their backs over portages. They took great pride in their canoes and decorated the bow and stern, as well as themselves, with red plumes, to indicate that they had been tried and found worthy. They had great imaginations and could tell amazing stories about themselves. They loved to sing and often put these stories to music.

Ibid., pp. 4-20.

The voyageurs had definite winter quarters. They settled in a fort, but if in a large company, they might establish one of their own. In the latter case, the Indians were helpful in choosing a good site. "A clearing was made, trees were cut and hewed in proper lengths, and a storehouse and 'shop' were erected,"

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Ibid., p. 77.

a clerk's house, a house for the men, and a high stockade. In addition there was always a flagstaff, a roothouse, a magazine cellar, and a well. It was a great day when the gate was finally hung in place and locked.

The roofs of the buildings were thatched; the chimneys were made of mud and sticks or stones. Logs were fitted together in grooves and held together by other logs in a vertical position. The interiors were plastered with clay and whitewashed. The windows were covered with oiled deerskin; rude tables were constructed as well as bunks. This, with a huge fireplace and the smell of roasting meat, served as a "homelike" atmosphere for the voyageur.

The fort was always situated near wooded sections and Indian villages and on a river or lake from which fish could be obtained. As approximately four fish a day were needed for each person it was necessary to catch many hundreds before the coldest weather set in. Great quantities were dried on twisted willow branches and stored. Wild rice and maple sugar were bought from the squaws of the neighborhood. One Indian was always chosen by the clerk to act as hunter for the fort, with everyone assisting.

In an established post, it was sometimes possible to raise chickens and pigs. Gardens also furnished potatoes, turnips, beans, peas, and other vegetables. Notwithstanding all these precautions, starvation was common.

Living under these conditions, any holiday was a source of merry-making. Christmas and New Year's Day were celebrated with great spontaneity. Dancing was the chief amusement. "The music consisted of a very bad performance of one vile, unvarying tune, upon a worse old fiddle, accompanied by a brilliant accompaniment upon a large tin pan."

Ibid., p. 84.

The half breed and Indian women were very fond of dancing and they, of course, served as the only partners available to the men. "The great hall was lit up by means of a number of tallow candles, stuck in tin sconces round the walls. The men, in their Sunday jackets and capotes, sat on benches and chairs. Around the stove, which had been removed to one side to leave space for the dancers, a strange group was collected. Squatting down on the floor in every ungraceful attitude imaginable, sat about a dozen Indian women, dressed in printed calico gowns, the chief peculiarity of which was the immense size of the baloon-shaped sleeves, and the extreme scantiness both in length and width of the skirts. Coloured handkerchiefs covered their heads, and ornamented moccasins decorated their feet; besides which, each one wore a blanket in the form of a shawl, which they put off before standing up to dance. They were chatting and talking to each other with great volubility, occasionally casting a glance behind them, where at least half a dozen infants stood bolt upright in their tight-laced cradles."

Ibid., pp. 84-85.

A special feast, consisting of fish cakes and rum, was prepared these days. A diary kept by the clerk recorded all this as well as the daily chores of hunting and fishing, of arrival of Indians, of illnesses, deaths and marriages. Another duty of the clerk was the care of the sick although the men were not often sick. "The principal trading establishments were supplied with well assorted medicine chests, containing books of directions. . . Each clerk must learn how to bleed and generally manage between low diet, salts, castor oil, opodeldoc, friar's balsam and phlebotomy, to preserve their health unimpaired and cure any common accident."

Ibid., pp. 91, 77-100.

Wrong, G. M., "Conquest of New France" in Chronicles of America, p. 415.

The hardships that the voyageurs endured were many, but they accepted them as a part of the life they had chosen. These men were the first to penetrate into the wilderness. Many became fired with the desire to explore the country, primarily for an outlet to the Pacific Ocean. The first maps of the country were attempted by them. They also provided information concerning the various Indian languages. Their services to New France thus included more than the mere trading of furs.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Religious Life

Education

Amusements

RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Jesuits were the spiritual guides of New France.

"Behold him on his way; his breviary
Which from his girdle hangs, his only shield.
That well known habit is his panoply,
That Cross the only weapon he will wield;
By day he bears it for his staff afield,
By night it is the pillow of his bed."

Munro, Will B., op. cit., p. 123.

The center of the organization of the Jesuits in New France was at Quebec. From here the priests were sent out to every little village or small community. They governed the lives of all the people.

The curé or parish priest had many and varied duties. At times he served as a healer of soul and body, a notary, a judge, a portrait painter or a watch repairer. As he entered a village, the women would run out to meet him, followed by their husbands and children. When he came into a home, all fell upon their knees to receive his blessing. He would then set about his religious duties to "say mass, hear confessions, impose penance, grant absolution, repeat the office of the dead over a grave made weeks before, or marry possibly some pair who may or may not have waited for his coming."

Parkman, Francis, Old Régime in Canada, p. 342.

In summer the curé traveled by canoe and in winter he traveled o

snowshoes. Once a year he visited Quebec.

Schlarman, J. H., From Quebec to New Orleans, p. 304.

Parkman, F., op. cit., pp. 342-359.

Bouchard, George, Other Days and Other Ways, pp. 43-45.

In towns where there was a church, important personages were the maître-chantre, or master singer, and the bedeau, or sexton. It was the chief duty of the choir master to set the pitch, perhaps with no instrument, and to hold it, often with competition.

"It was the privilege of the master singer to chant at the occasional grand masses (high masses) on weekdays, with the assistance of one of the other choristers. But he was not in the least upset if he happened to be without assistance for one of these ceremonies; he would soften his voice and drop the tone one key for the responses, and the attending faithful often had the illusion of hearing two different voices chanting duo parts."

Schlarman, J. H., op. cit., p. 305.

Occasionally he was called upon to lead in prayer and conduct funeral services.

Bouchard, George, op. cit., pp. 45-47.

The sexton often attempted to rival the choir master in importance. Each felt that his duties were more necessary than the other. The sexton was the attendant of the curé, master of ceremonies, grave-digger and farm hand.

"The divine office of mass is the occasion when his importance is especially evident; he has adorned the chancel, ornamented the altar, prepared the wine, taken out from their recesses the sacred

vessels and from their drawers, the sacerdotal vestments, and now, he hastens to summon, by a final play of bells, the faithful to gather within the church."

Ibid., p. 49.

He was truly the "power behind the throne." He watched the surpliced choir boys, prepared everything for a christening; at funerals, he was master of ceremonies, and he had as his final duty each night the locking of the church doors. The angelus was rung by him three times a day. These bells were depended upon and had to be very punctual. It is recorded that once the bell was three quarters of an hour late at night and the entire village was upset.

"A good housewife, placing her entire trust in the voice of the bells, allowed the soup prendre au fond; while healthy rural stomachs, which invariably function with the regularity of chronometers protested vehemently to their owners. Prompted by the stirrings of warm hearts the young girls of the parish anxiously scanned clock faces, their cavaliers delayed by the tardy angelus."

Ibid., pp. 49-51.

Schl~~er~~man, J. H., op. cit., p. 304.

Once a week he gathered together the children of the parish and taught them their catechism.

The curé was maintained by the goods or money which he received from the people. This he shared with the sexton. In addition, each September, the members of the parish gave special donations of food for "The Collection of the Infant Jesus." Because of the sexton's promise to provide a suitable burial for the generous, the gifts were exceedingly liberal.

Thus the curé and sexton were supplied with such winter provisions as heads of beef, pigs' livers and feet, eggs, potatoes, vegetables, wool, etc.

Bouchard, G., op. cit., pp. 53-54.

Another important and popular member of the town was le crieur, the crier. Every Sunday after the service, he mounted a small platform just outside the churchyard. This was a signal for all to assemble to hear news and announcements. Although the crier was often unkempt and crude in appearance, he was regarded as one of the dignitaries of the community. His discourse was one of the events of the week to which the people looked forward eagerly. The following is typical of the announcements he made:

'Come here, my friends; I have un prône bien chargé (a long list of announcements) for you to-day. I have something for everyone, even for les créatures (the women folk).

'First of all, I have a message from the seigneur (seignior, lord of the manor). He warns all those who set foot on any of his islands that they will be punished to the full extent of the law.

'Pierre Rivard wants it announced that those who trespass on his land will be liable to a fine.

'In the name of the Queen,' and for the first time the crieur uncovers his head, 'I ask all those who have sections of roadway in le rang de la Frenière (Ash-woods range), to attend to them this week without fail because one sinks in the ruts up to the naves. See about this right away if...' and the scolding voice takes on a tone of sly humor, 'you don't want lawyers to eat up your property entirely.

'Baptiste Rouleau of le village des Blagues (Tobacco-pouch village) tells you all, with due respect, that he has a fine litter of suckling pigs to sell. They are thoroughbred pigs, English pigs

that fatten quickly. He is selling them . . . you take your pick . . . at un écu (one crown, about sixty cents) a week.

'There will be a corvée (working bee) chez ce pauvre José à Baptiste à Noël (at the place of poor Jose, son of Baptiste, grandson of Noël), who had the misfortune of losing his horse before finishing his haymaking. All those who want to give him a helping hand will be entertained with good little spruce beer."

Bouchard, G., op. cit., p. 56.

In addition, he announced bills to be paid to the tinsmiths, merchants, blacksmiths, etc. on All Souls' Day. The produce offered to the church as an alms in honor of the souls in purgatory was given to the crier in payment of his services.

The Acts and Ordinances of the Church and State were not announced by the crier but were read from the pulpit. These included births, marriages, deaths of princes, victories, and treaties. Other accounts of the people, if kept at all, were sometimes carved with a pocketknife in the doorstep or casing of the church.

Schlarman, J. H., op. cit., p. 299.

These men--Bishop, priest, cure, sexton and crier--supervised the lives of the colonists who accepted this supervision without question.

EDUCATION

In 1635, the College of Jesuits was established in Quebec by Laval. In 1664, he began a Seminary for Priests since the king wished to train the Indian boys for priesthood. By 1668 a school for children, called the Little Seminary, had been established. That year eight French children and six Indians attended. In 1677, the school was enlarged to a building of four stories with walls seven feet in depth, vaulted cellars and storerooms, and a roof of slate. In 1686, a farm school for teaching the trades was begun with an enrollment of thirty-one boys. In the early schools, French and Indian children were given the same opportunities, but, later, they were separated and the Indians were sent to this trade school. Manual training, reading and writing, and some Latin was taught. However, the schools were more successful in making good Catholics than in developing masons and carpenters because the boys by nature preferred the woods and because there was no great demand for these trades. By that time grammar schools were also started at Cape Tourmente, Château-Richter, Notre Dame de Fay, Pointe de Lévis, Sainte Famille, and Three Rivers.

The Jesuits were by far the ablest teachers. They had started a University at Quebec three years before the English founded Harvard. They taught Latin, rhetoric and logic, but not to a great extent. They held logic tournaments and presented dramatic sketches of which the "Sage Visionnaire" was a favorite. The purpose of their schools was twofold,

to make priests and to teach the young people to be obedient servants of the Church and King.

In Montreal the Sulpicians had established a school for boys in 1666 and also had schools in Contrecoeur, Boucherville, and Longueirrit Lachine. In 1694, a school was begun in Montreal by the "Brothers Hospitaliers of St. Joseph de la Croix."

The girls were also taught in the first schools and in 1639, a girls' school was established. This was begun by the Ursulines in Quebec for the French and Indian girls. The tuition was paid in produce as a copy of a record shows:

Received Jan. 13, 3 cords of wood.

Received March 6, 4 cords of wood.

Received March 13, 1 jar butter, 13 pds.

Received Nov. 13, 1 fat pig, 1 barrel of salted eels.

The Ursulines established a similar school in Three Rivers in 1697. They found the Huron Indian girls twice as hard to handle as the French because the Indian mothers pampered them and encouraged resistance to study and discipline. This was due to the fact that there were seldom more than three children in these Indian families and they were catered to by their parents.

The Congregation of Notre Dame in Montreal began its own school in 1653 and soon after established schools in Pointe and Trembles and on the Isle of Orleans.

In 1690, the House of La Providence was begun. This was a housekeeping school, but, after 1692, they also prepared the girls for teaching.

Parkman, Francis, Old Régime in Canada, pp. 359-365.

Kingsford, Will, History of Canada, Vol. I, p. 366.

As the church lead in temporal and religious affairs, so it took the initial steps in education. By the end of the seventeenth century, schools had been well established in Canada not only for boys but girls as well.

AMUSEMENTS

In spite of the hardships which the people encountered daily, they created various forms of amusement and often turned their work into play. The work in obtaining sugar was made light by their inherent joviality. It was here while they were collecting and cooking the sugar that many of their native songs were improvised.

A number of these songs with their history are given in an excellent manner in "The Spell of French Canada," by Frank Oliver Call, chapter XV.

In the evening they met at the campfire and the time was spent in story-telling, singing and dancing.

Other gatherings, known as corvées récréatives, were held at their homes. The best known was the corn-husking corvée. Occasionally a habitant invited his neighbors to a corvée at which he read to them from one of his treasured books. All meetings, no matter what the purpose, ended in singing and drinking. Dancing, however, was their favorite amusement; card-playing ranked second in popularity.

There was much visiting between neighbors. Sunday, after church, was the usual time for social calls. There was, of course, no work done on Sundays or feastdays. Besides the feastdays of the Church, each town or hamlet had its own jour de fête. Frequently from May to October there were ninety holidays.

"Pretexts for merrymaking were many. If they killed a hog, they gave the choicest pieces to their friends. They exchanged blood sausage and liver sausage. St. John's fires were lighted;.....

the baptism of a baby was nearly always a pretext for a reunion of relatives and friends . . . It was not a real wedding if it did not last three days and three nights."

Schlarman, J. H., op. cit., p. 303.

Munro, Will B., op. cit., pp. 116-117.

Kellogg, Louise Phelps, The French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest, pp. 394-395.

Since music was a part of every gathering, almost every dwelling had some style of home-made violin. It was often fashioned by the grand-père "from a length of plain hard maple, free of knots, and a blank of fir." The hair of the fiddlestick was taken from La Grise (gray mare). The music of this fiddle accompanied all dances except those held at the forts where a military band did the honors. These parties were often impromptu affairs. A group of settlers gathered together at a friend's home where the women cleared one room for dancing and placed the babies in another. They sang and danced to Normand airs and folksongs, of which "Malbrouck's-en va-t-en guerre" was a favorite.

Thwaites, R. G., "France in America," in American Nation Series, Vol. VII, p. 217.

Munro, Will B., op. cit., p. 119.

Bouchard, George, op. cit., pp. 121-126.

Schlarman, J. H., op. cit., pp. 303-304.

The signing of the pre-nuptial contract by the notary in the presence of friends and relatives of the couple the Sunday preceding the wedding was an occasion for great

gaiety and dancing. At the end of the ceremony the groom would rush forward "for the bride and place a sonorous kiss on both cheeks," whereupon the dancing would commence. The fiddle was particularly in demand for weddings. The players "services were retained a long time ahead of the ceremony. The violoneux arrives with a flourish and is received with enthusiasm. . . After kissing the bride and greeting the guests, the violoneux allows himself to be steered into the grand chambre (the big room, the bedroom of the mother and father), where he lays his wraps on the bed and partakes of his customary p'tite coup (little drink). . . The fiddle is stripped of its shroud of checkered cotton to be tuned up and adjusted to the shoulder of its owner with a solemnity that compels the deepest silence. The silk handkerchief wraps itself around the neck of the artist. The dancers swiftly find their places in the middle of the floor for the opening cotillion. . . In the bottom of a glass of rum, the fiddler finds the fortitude to carry on to the end."

Ibid., pp. 304-305.

The ability to listen to and tell stories seems to be a national trait. These people loved to talk. They recounted their experiences, both real and imagined, in a glib manner, and though their listeners enjoyed these recitals, one can scarcely believe that they were unaware of the exaggeration.

. . . "and so they lived on in comparative happiness and tranquility, laughed and danced, loved and married, and died, and these made up their short and simple annals."

Ibid., p. 306.

Munro, Will B., op. cit., p. 120.

TOWN LIFE

Quebec

Montreal

QUEBEC

Quebec, or Kebec, which means "the narrowing of the river," was the first successful settlement made by the French in Canada. This site was chosen by Champlain and Pont Gravé in 1607 in one of their numerous searches for a suitable place which was to be the center of fur trade and colonial life in New France. Champlain in his diary says of Quebec:

"When I searched for a suitable place for our settlement, I could find none better than the point of Quebec, so called by the savages, which was covered with nut trees."

The location was a beautiful spot.

Dionne, M. E., "Champlain," Makers of Canada Series, p. 39,41.

Parker, Gilbert and Bryan, Claude, Old Quebec, p. 24.

Dawson, Samuel E., The Saint Lawrence, p. 253.

Doughty, Arthur, Cradle of New France, p. 25.

Colby, C. W., Canadian Types of the Old Régime, p. 66.

Browne, George, The St. Lawrence River, p. 53.

Machar, Agnes, Stories of New France, pp. 79-81.

The first party of settlers, consisting of thirty men, arrived in 1608. The earliest construction in Quebec was L'Habitation of Champlain. This served as a community home until other dwellings could be built. This same year Pont Gravé returned home for supplies. Here, as in many of the colonies in the New World, the first winter was very difficult. The following spring when Pont Gravé returned with more colonist

he found only nine living. In the next few years the colony had a gradual growth. The St. Malo Trading Company established its chief post here. They realized that because Quebec was situated at the narrowing of the St. Lawrence River it was an ideal center for trade. With the establishment of the company and the resulting predominance of fur trading, the government of the town was actually in the hands of the merchants although Champlain was still the nominal head. These men forced the people to sell their furs at a low price. As a consequence, some of the settlers rebelled and went into the woods and became *coureur de bois*. This created a problem for Champlain in that his plan for colonization was met with opposition by this company. It was, of course, to their advantage to keep Quebec as a small trading post. Champlain never gave up his plan and visited France every year to encourage colonization.

Dionne, N. E., op. cit., pp. 40-42.

Champlain, S. de, Voyages, ed. Charles Otis, Vol. 2, pp. 3-10.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., pp. 28 and 31.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, pp. 123-125.

Colby, Charles W., op. cit., p. 66.

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., p. 33.

When Champlain returned to the colony in 1610, he succeeded in bringing eleven artisans with him. In 1615, four Récollet Friars arrived, Jamet, Dolbeau, le Caron and Plessis, who determined thereafter the character of the colony. With their coming the long regime of priesthood began.

The first real settlers arrived in 1616. These were Nicolas Pevert, Pierre Despartes, Abraham Martin, Louis Hébert

and their families. From this time on the colony prospered.

Dionne, N. E., op. cit., pp. 60 and 85.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., pp. 32 ff. and p. 34.

Dawson, Samuel, op. cit., p. 271.

Browne, George, op. cit., p. 72.

When in France in 1610, Champlain was married to H el ene Boul e. She continued to live with her parents for ten years. Her father was a Huguenot, but Champlain was able to convert her. In 1620, he brought her to New France. She lived for some time at Fort St. Louis where she gained a knowledge of the Algonquin language. This enabled her to teach the Indian children whom she loved. So devout was she that after Champlain's death she became an Ursuline nun.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, p. 123.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., pp. 32 ff.

Machar, Agnes, op. cit., p. 96.

In 1620, Henri L evis became Sieutenaney of Quebec. L evis was very much interested in its growth from a purely religious standpoint. The Jesuits were his instruments. Thus, in 1625, Charles Lalement, Enemond Masse, and Jean de Br ebeuf, Jesuits, landed at Quebec. They were refused shelter by de Caen, leader of the fur-trading merchants. The Recollets, however, offered them a home until September when they began their own convent.

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., p. 34.

Machar, Agnes, op. cit., p. 97.

Dionne, N. E., op. cit., p. 152.

The year 1626 brought misfortune to the town of Quebec. William and Emery de Caen became the leaders of the Saint Malo Trading Company. Under their guidance, the standards of this organization were lowered. Neither the traders nor the government received their just share of the profits. As a consequence, the trading company officials in France did not send the winter supplies. A famine resulted since the colonists devoted their energy primarily to the fur trade and failed to cultivate the soil. In addition, there was constant strife between the Protestants and Catholics over the singing of certain psalms and other trivial matters.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., p. 35 ff.

Douglas, James, Old France in the New World, pp. 134-169.

During this time in France a great many changes were taking place. Richelieu was made Cardinal in 1622, just when Champlain was meeting his greatest opposition in Canada. Richelieu accomplished many things: he killed feudalism, subjected higher nobility to the sway of the crown, abased the house of Austria, crushed Protestantism and began the establishment of an empire in the New World.

His scheme for founding this colonial empire was to build up the fur trade by a two-fold method. He discontinued the office of Admiral of France and created that of Grand Master and Superintendent of Navigation, of which he appointed

himself the head. Then he established a trading Company of One Hundred Associates, of which Champlain was one of the strongest members.

All of New France, Canada, Acadia, Newfoundland, and Florida, was granted to the Company of One Hundred Associates in its charter. Its members included priests, religious workers, traders and voyagers. Its objects were conversion of the Indians by the Jesuits; extension of the fur trade; and the continuance of the search for a route to the Pacific. No Huguenots or "other heretics" were accepted as members. It monopolized the fur trade for the next fifteen years and aided colonization by sending three hundred settlers the first year. As a proof of its fealty, a gold crown was presented to each heir to the throne. The king in return contributed two armed battleships to the venture.

Dionne, N. E., op. cit., Ch. IV.

Browne, G. W., op. cit., pp. 75 ff.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., pp. 36 ff.

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., pp. 35-100.

Machar, Agnes, op. cit., pp. 97 ff.

The Company was hardly established when the terrible siege of Quebec took place in 1629. The supply ships for that year were taken by the English under Kirke. This left the colony to a winter of starvation. The following spring, on July 19, Kirke, with three vessels, appeared demanding Quebec, and Champlain had to yield. He was taken to England where he appealed to the French Ambassador. Quebec, however, remained

under the English flag until March, 1632, when Canada was restored to France by the Treaty of Saint Germain-en-Laye.

Champlain became governor once more in 1633. Thus the fleur-de-lis again floated over Quebec.

An excellent account of the origin of the fleur-de-lis is given in Browne, G. W., op. cit., p. 81.

The next two years Champlain spent in reorganization and furthering immigration, agriculture and prosperity.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., pp. 37 ff.

Browne, G. W., op. cit., pp. 78-87.

Machar, Agnes, op. cit., pp. 98 ff.

Dionne, N. E., op. cit., pp. 173-183 and Ch. V and VI.

Douglas, James, op. cit., pp. 169-201.

The Jesuits were more firmly established when Père de Noue and Père Le Jeune came to Quebec in 1632. Le Jeune became an earnest religious leader and a strict disciplinarian. The air of Quebec became mission-like. Jesuits and scar-faced officers mingled, the lives of saints were read at meals, and everything began to hinge upon the mission. Many of the Indians were converted.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, pp. 125 ff.

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., pp. 34 ff.

Machar, Agnes op. cit., pp. 98 ff.

Dionne, N. E., op. cit., Ch. VII.

Champlain, "the man with the iron breast," was welcomed back by the Indians and the harbor was always full of

friendly canoes. Quebec became a commercial colony. At one time, there were seven hundred canoes in the harbor.

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., p. 40.

From this time on every midsummer on July 24, a fair, which usually lasted five days, was held in the lower town. On the second day the chiefs met, the next two were spent in trade and the fifth day was spent in feasting.

Ibid., pp. 41 ff.

In 1635, when the colony needed Champlain most, he died.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, p. 127.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., p. 41.

The new governor was Charles Huault de Montmagny, who was also very zealous. He brought with him military reinforcements and several families of high birth. Father Le Jeune, the Jesuit Superior was well pleased and Quebec was a model of decorum. Montmagny organized many civic affairs. He laid out streets and lots, established an official residence, the Chateau Saint Louis, drilled the soldiers, and organized a military escort. All this lent an atmosphere of old world pomp to Quebec.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., pp. 42 ff.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, pp. 127 ff.

Robert Gifford, a noted surgeon, arrived and in the next three years influenced fifty families to come and settle at Quebec.

Ibid., p. 42.

1640 was an important year in the development of Quebec. A great deal of interest was being aroused in France due to the "Jesuit Relations." The Marquis de Gamache became interested in the work and gave the Jesuits six thousand crowns. Immediately they began building a school for Indian children and a college for French boys. This was located four miles from Quebec at Sillery. Although Quebec had advanced under the leadership of the Jesuits, it was still sorely in need of colonists.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., p. 43.

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., pp. 49 ff.

This same year and also as a result of the publishing of the "Jesuit Relations" the Ursuline Nuns arrived. They established an Ursuline Convent and a Hospital chiefly due to the efforts of Madame de la Peltrie and d'Aiguillon.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, p. 130.

Doughty, Arthur, op. cit., p. 43.

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., pp. 50-54.

Douglas, James, op. cit., pp. 227-243 and 244-263.

The development of Quebec from this point on is very normal. In 1659, Laval came as Vicar Apostolic, and the famous

dispute ensued as to which was the more important, the church or the state.

Colby, Charles, op. cit., pp. 280 ff.

The priests, nuns, governor, officials and soldiers lived in the upper town over-looking the lower town. Commerce and the trades were carried on below. All the beaver skins were collected in this section and sent to France.

Parkman, Francis, Old Régime, p. 299.

By the census of 1667, Quebec had a population of 448, Côte de Beaupré, 656, Island d'Orleans, 529, Côte de Lauzon, 113, Trois-Rivières, 666, Montreal, 766 and other settlements under the Governor of Quebec, 1,011.

Ibid., p. 300.

Champlain is the chief figure in the founding of Quebec.

"His character gave the keynote, not only to the great fortress-capital, but to the whole history of New France. He was an embodiment at once of the religious zeal and of the mediaeval spirit of romance."

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., p. 19.

MONTREAL

Montreal is one of the oldest cities in North America. It was founded in 1642, about one century after it was visited by Jacques Cartier. He was here in the autumn of 1535, when it was no more than a Huron village. Champlain, in 1608, found La Place Royale, the site of Montreal and describes it thus,

"Formerly savages tilled these lands. . . There is a large number of other fine pastures where any number of cattle can graze. After a careful examination, we found this place one of the finest on this river. I accordingly gave orders to cut down and clear up the woods, so as to level it and prepare it for building."

Dionne, M. E., "Champlain," in Makers of Canada Series, p. 69.

Champlain, however, was not destined to become the founder of Montreal. And during the next few years, there was no attempt to settle here.

In 1642, several priests were sent to Quebec to propagate the Roman Catholic religion among the Indians. They realized the necessity of holding the Isle of Montreal if they wished to overcome the Iroquois. They established a mission here and made plans for colonization. The Company of One Hundred Associates, who wished to keep Quebec as a center of all trade, refused to aid these priests in their venture. Therefore, it was sponsored by private individuals.

Bosworth, Newton, Hochelaga Depicta, p. 35.

Jerome le Royer de la Dauversière and Jean Jacques Olier became the founders of Montreal in 1642.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook of the Northern Tour, p. 105.

In order to further their enterprise, they established the Society of Notre-Dame of Montreal. The Society at this time consisted of only six members who directed the affairs of the new post and raised money to aid the colonists. Olier was the chief financial supporter of the group. Baron de Fancamp, a friend of Dauversière's subscribed seventy-five thousand livres to the Society.

The group proposed to establish at Montreal three religious communities, one composed of secular priests to direct the colonists and convert the Indians, another composed of nuns to nurse the people and lastly, a group of nuns to teach both the Indians and the French.

Ibid., p. 108.

Colby, Charles W., Canadian Types of the Old Régime, p. 107 ff.

Montreal, thus, arose out of a mission colony, an ideal--devoid of selfish interest. The plan, according to their charter, was "to found on the island of Montreal, one hundred eighty miles above Quebec, a fortified town, which should be both a bulwark against the Iroquois and a center whence the light of the Gospel might shine forth among the Indian tribes."

Colby, Charles W., op. cit., p. 106.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, p. 109.

The colonists were to be fervent Catholics who longed to "renew the life of the Primitive Church." The purpose of the Society is more fully defined in their memorial to Pope Urban VI reading,

"Most Holy Father, a certain number of persons putting away from themselves all thoughts of worldly profit or commercial interest, and proposing no other aim than the glory of God and the establishment in New France, have entered into this Society with the hopes of spreading the faith among savage nations, through their own effort and means, and their own emigration beyond the seas."

Colby, Charles W., op. cit., pp. 105-107.

The Indians were to be encouraged to settle around the town, to receive the arts of civilization and see Christianity exemplified in the actions of the colonists.

There are three conflicting statements as to how the Society obtained this land. Some authors state that the Island was granted to Messrs. Chairier and Le Royer and that no record can be found of forfeiture to the crown or any other disposal.

Bosworth, Newton, op. cit., p. 36.

Others merely state that in 1640 the king ceded the Island to the Society.

Colby, Charles W., op. cit., p. 105.

The most logical solution seems to be that of Parkman. He states that the Island belonged to Lauson, former president

of the Hundred Associates. Lauson transferred the title to the Society de Notre-Dame de Montreal, reserving the western extremity for a fort. This made Dauversière and Company seigneurs of Montreal. The Society was allowed to appoint a governor, establish courts, but was excluded from fur trade and forbidden to establish castles or forts except as needed against the Indians.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, p. 110.

Olier persuaded the priests at Vaugerard to establish a seminary at Montreal, and Dauversière was able to influence the nuns at La Flèche to found a hospital here. The Society planned to send out forty men to take possession of the land and raise crops, build a home for the priests and build two convents for the nuns.

Bosworth, Newton, op. cit., p. 36.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, pp. 110-112.

Colby, Charles, op. cit., p. 108.

The colony needed a soldier governor and Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve was eager to go. His father opposed this, but he followed the "Test of Saint Mark--There is no man that hath left house, or brethren or sisters or father for My sake, but he shall receive an hundred fold."

Ibid., p. 110.

Bosworth, Newton, op. cit., p. 36.

Browne, George Waldo, The St. Lawrence River, p. 110.

One might consider Mademoiselle Jeanne Mance a founder of Montreal. She was really a "nun" in the world. The "Jesuit Relations" and the example of Madame de la Peltrie, one of the leaders in Quebec, inspired her with an enthusiasm for Canada.

Parker, G. and Bryan, C., op. cit., pp. 50-54.

She journeyed to Paris where she met Dauversière, who was preparing to leave for Montreal with the first band of colonists.

Colby, Charles W., op. cit., p. 109.

In 1641, this party, containing forty men and three women, left France. They reached Quebec too late in the year to start up the river. Montmagny tried to persuade them to settle in Quebec, as he foresaw a rival governor. The people of Quebec wanted them to settle on the Isle d'Orleans and, therefore, did not offer them any shelter. Refuge was finally found in St. Michel at the M. Pereseaux Hospital.

Colby, Charles, op. cit., p. 108.

Browne, George, op. cit., p. 110.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, p. 116.

Montmagny also tried to instill into them a fear of the Indians. He informed them that only a short time before the Iroquois had sent a captured Frenchman, Marguerie, to demand the surrender of Three Rivers.

Ibid., p. 109.

Maisonneuve was very determined, saying that he would go if "every tree were an Iroquois."

On October 11, 1641, the site of the Villa Maria, or Montreal, was dedicated but the people returned to Quebec to spend that winter.

Machar, Agnes, Stories of New France, p. 148.

Browne, George, op. cit., p. 112.

By May 1, 1642, they were able to leave Quebec and arrived in Montreal May 17. Montmagny accompanied them to deliver the Island in the name of the Hundred Associates. He had by this time been somewhat reconciled to the settlement at Montreal. An altar was erected immediately, and mass was said by M. Barthelemy Vimont.

Ibid., pp. 111 ff.

Parkman, Francis, Historic Handbook, p. 118.

Maisonneuve addressed the people and prophesied in these words,

"You are a grain of mustard seed--. You are a few,
but your work is the work of God,"

and time has proved this to be true.

Yeigh, Frank, Through the Heart of Canada, p. 101.

The rest of the summer they were occupied in building a palisade, a stone hospital, and a group of small houses. During this period the Indians were ignorant of their presence. They had threatened to clear the country of the French, and as soon as they became aware of the new settlement, occasional skirmishes took place. Maisonneuve, however, was a prudent

and wise leader.

Browne, George, op. cit., pp. 114 ff.

Yeigh, Frank, op. cit., p. 102.

That December a great flood threatened all of the agricultural activity, but no great damage was done. As an expression of gratefulness, the colonists planted a cross on Mt. Royal which has been replaced recently by a large iron cruciform structure over a hundred feet high.

Machar, Agnes, op. cit., p. 151 ff.

In 1644, the country around became the property of the Order of St. Sulpicians at Paris. This is a body of secular priests who take no vows. It is not a monastic order, but a school for young men training for priesthood. This Order established a seminary and the students became the clergy of Montreal.

Colby, Charles, op. cit., p. 110.

Bosworth, Newton, op. cit., p. 37.

In 1648, a union of the French and English Colonies was proposed by the French Governor M. de D'Aillebout, against the Indians of the Five Nations, but it was rejected by England. This was a great mistake as it lead to many wars between the two countries.

By this time the colony has become a small town. Consequently the usual trading was carried on. An interesting account of the prices that prevailed is found in the Jesuit recor

1647 Public Sales

wood--1 shilling, 3 pence, Halifax currency, per
cord.
bread--7 pence, half penny for 6 lb. loaf.
labour--1 shilling, 3 pence per day.
eels--1 farthing per 100.
servants' wages--per year, 4 pounds, 3 shillings,
4 pence and a pair of shoes.

Ibid., p. 40.

Fur trade flourished. Three Rivers and Tadoussac were also prominent, as trading centers, but eventually Montreal became the chief center. The skins were sold at a fair which was established by the king. This lasted from June till the end of August. Early in June the savages camped along the river. The fair was opened by a grand council, held in the commons. The Governor General was present, and the visitors gathered around him. On the following day trading began. The merchants came from Quebec and had booths along the palisades of the town. Each had his own interpreter. The fair was very interesting. The town was, of course, filled with all sorts of people--naked Indians, priests, children, bush rangers, merchants and habitants mingling together.

Bosworth, Newton, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

Parkman, Francis, Old Regime in Canada, pp. 367 ff.

The Company of the One Hundred Associates guarded the monopoly here with no consideration for the general welfare. Finally in 1663, Louis the XIV, under the direction of Colbert, resumed the rights and erected Canada to a Royal Government. As a result, Montreal was controlled no longer by ecclesiastics

but had a temporal government which proved to have very good effects.

Bosworth, Newton, op. cit., pp. 42-46.

SUMMARY

These are the outstanding incidents of development, the characteristics, conditions and sentiments of the people of New France.

At the time that Canada was settled by the French a spirit of adventure flowed through Europe. This produced intense maritime activity as a fulfillment of the dreams of the statesmen and the curiosity of the intelligent class. These people who came, the self-sacrificing priests, the representatives of the king, the soldiers, the statesmen and colonists, formed the background of the French population of today.

These people represent much that is picturesque and unique in origin; the life grapple with the Indian, the influence of the work and personal qualities of the Jesuits who modified the extremes, the struggle between the French and English, the problem they found later of self-government, the protection of the seigneurs and the embedment in them of the Catholic faith, all was part of their environment. And as these people fought for Quebec in the seventeenth century to retain this wilderness and Christianize the savages, and in the eighteenth century fought against both civilized and savage foes to hold and expand their empire, and in the nineteenth century to form new relationships in government, religion and politics, so are they today stubbornly retaining a French Canada.

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