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Francois - Who?



Ancestral Home of Francois

Francois Bellenger

This is a copy of Francois' signature.

FRANCOIS BELLENGER 1612 - 1687

The First Plow In New France - 1627

In 1605, Louis Hebert had sown the first wheat at Port Royale. The next year, Richelieu, organized a company of 100 merchants. This company was named the Company of the Hundred Associates. Madame Robert Giffard (Marie Regnouard) is given credit as having named this company. The "Company" obtained, from the King, all the land in the new territory from the new country (Terre Neuve) to Lake Huron and all the land called Ungava in Florida, with a monopoly on all trading. As you may recall from previous chapters, the Company was to transport and establish 4,000 colonists on these new lands, now populated by 55 inhabitants, over the next fifteen years. The first plow arrived in New France in 1627. In that year, settler Louis Hebert lay dying on his 5 acre farm which is now the site of the Basilica of Quebec. At the end of May 1633, the first contingent, made up of 230 colonists, arrived with Champlain.

The Ocean Voyage - 1634

Robert Giffard, a Navy Surgeon, had been granted a large land grant (Fief) and had been named the Seigneur de Beauport. He was looking for settlers to leave France with him, and develop the Fief on the shores of the St. Lawrence, that the Company of the Hundred Associates had granted him. At Mortagne in Perche, he met Jean Guyon at his home on the Rue Neuve and hired him as censitaire along with his wife Mathurine Robin and their children. He also convinced Zacharie Cloutier, his wife Xaincte Dupont, and their children to come with them to the New World. The contract of departure was signed the 14th of March 1634 at a M. Roussel's, the notary of the region.

The word of promise and adventure quickly spread throughout Mortagne. Others wanted to follow Giffard, Guyon and Cloutier to New France. In all, 35 people from Mortagne decided to rendezvous at Dieppe in the Diocese of Rouen, the port of embarkation. Among these was our ancestor, Francois Bellenger, a bachelor of 22 years who was a mason by trade. Because it took two months to cross the ocean, when the winds were favorable, the departure of ships for New France was always in the spring. Travelers had to leave Mortagne at the beginning of April in order to arrive in time to have enough warm weather to clear land, construct homes and grow a crop to carry them through the winter. Should they arrive too late, they were hard pressed to survive the harsh winter weather. That day, in the church of Notre Dame de Mortagne, the band of future farmers knelt to pray to the Virgin to protect them on the ocean. Good byes were exchanged at the front door of the church while the bells rang out loudly. Powerful Percheron horses pulled the caravan of carts filled with furniture, provisions and tools. Soon the place d'Armes, the Clarisse monastery, the church of St. Jean, parents and friends from Mortagne were all far behind. The caravan traveled to the diocese of

Rouen, in the direction of Dieppe, about 40 leagues (1 league = 3 miles) from there, through the roads of Perche and Normandy. At Rouen, Robert Giffard went to visit Jean Bourdon, future Attorney General on the Sovereign Council of New France. Jean later followed this group to New France on Captain Deville's ship. Robert Giffard also hired Francois Bougy, Jean Juchereau of Beauce, a 52 year old M. Maure with his wife Marie Langlois and their children, Jean, Nicolas, Noel and Genevieve, as well as Noel Langlois, a 31 year old pilot from Saint Leonard des Parcs (Orne). This newly formed colony of emigrants, now numbering 43 members, continued on the road to Dieppe.

In the port, at Dieppe, there were 4 ships which made up the flotilla commanded by M. Duplessis-Bochard. M. Bochard was the general of the fleet with the other three ships commanded by Captains Nesle, Bontemps and Lormel. The group wasted no time in loading provisions, furniture and passengers to begin the long and uneventful crossing. The ships were at Tadoussac by the end of May and on 4 June 1634, Robert Giffard and his colony regrouped on Captain Nesle's ship. They arrived at "Kébec" where they were greeted by a welcoming party like they had never imagined. Canoes filled with Hurons and Algonquins had come to trade their furs with the newly arrived French. The Indians were loud and defiant in their diverse attire. The reddish skin on their heads was accentuated by various arrangements of feathers in their long hair. The new colonists had never seen anything like this colorful and jubilant display. Lord and Master (seigneur) of the expedition, Robert Giffard, hurried with his men to go to Beauport and choose a site for his manor. With primitive hand tools, he and his censitaires fervently attacked the forest to build log cabins for their families. They then tilled the soil with plows pulled by oxen. This new crop of wheat would feed 20 people over the next 2 years and provide seed for the future.

1636

On 27 July 1636, we find mention of our ancestor, Francois Bellanger, for the first time in New France. He was a witness at the signing of the marriage contract between Robert Drouyn and ten year old Anne Cloutier. Because of Anne's young age, Robert went out West to trap furs⁶ (engagé ouest), as was the custom, between the time of the contract's signing and the wedding date. Francois' bold signature showed that he could write and was more educated than the average settler.

FIRST DOUBLE MARRIAGE IN CANADA - 1637

On 12 July 1637, Francois married Marie Guyon, the daughter of Jean Guyon. That same morning, at the same place, Robert Drouyn, master brick maker, married Anne Cloutier in a church wedding, which had been delayed because of her age. Anne Cloutier was a close friend to Marie Guyon, from their days in Mortagne, and the two must have planned this double wedding. This was to be the first double marriage ceremony celebrated in Canada and also the first signed contract of marriage. Others had not been signed by the participants as most could not write. Francois Bellanger countersigned this contract as witness and friend of Robert Drouyn. Jean Guyon was employed by Robert Giffard and had married Mathurine Robin in 1616 at Saint Jean de Mortagne. Jean's daughter, Marie, born 18 March 1624, was 10 years old at her arrival in New France. The records indicate that Francois Bellanger was baptized on 7 October 1612, the son of Francois Bellanger and Francoise Horlays in the diocese of Lisieux, County of Touque in Normandy. Marie Guyon, who was also from the County of Touque in Normandy, married Francois on 12 July 1637 in Quebec. Francois and Marie were married 3 years after their arrival, in the chapel of Notre Dame de Recouvrance (which burned in 1640). His union with the thirteen year old Marie Guyon, was blessed by Father Charles Lallemand, acting as the curate of Notre-Dame-des-Anges.

1639

In 1639, a small group of seven inspired women wanted to serve the needs of the colonies and went to Quebec. There were three sisters of the Ursuline Order, accompanied by a Madame de la Peltrie (she had offered to found a school for Indian girls) and three nuns sent to establish the first hospital. The arrival of this group, especially women not accompanied by men, did not go without notice in this small colony. Villagers ran down to meet their ship as it approached the shore. Their arrival was announced by firing the

guns of the fortress which was followed by a great celebration. These seven women did not know it but they were to battle an outbreak of small pox and to endure more sickness and hardship than they ever could have guessed. One of the nuns, Marie de l'Incarnation, was the Superior of the Ursuline Order, in Quebec, for thirty years. This put her in the record book of Canadian history. She was often found appealing to France for help and she advised the King on the customs, dangers and problems of life in 17th century Quebec. Many of her letters have been preserved and printed.

FIRST BORN ? - 1640

The 19th of August 1640, Marie Guyon was 16 (or 22) years old. She gave Francois his first son, Charles, (unless you believe there already was a Nicolas). When Charles was born, it was thought that he might not live so he was immediately baptized at the house of his grandfather, Jean Guyon. This fact indicates that Francois and Marie were living with the Guyons at the time. Francois is said to have come to New France under a signed contract witnessed by one of the brothers Juchereau. His commitment to serve, under this contract, appears to have ended in the summer of 1637. We find that he immediately set out on his own and he, along with his new bride Marie Guyon, appear to have spent the next few years in Quebec as this is where their first children are baptized. Around 1641 (from information on a card from Jean Bourdon) the Bellengers are owners of a farm of six arpents (1152 feet) in length and one and a half leagues (3.6 miles) in depth on the Beupre side of the river next to that of Zacharie Cloutier's son.

A MORTGAGE - 1647/1655

From 1644 to 1647 Francois Bellanger and Masse Gravel worked a concession (land given by the Governor) together on the Beupre coast. In 1647 Masse Gravel leaves the farm. On 24 May 1655 the two settled up and Francois bought Masse's half for the sum of one hundred livres per arpent, 10 payable in three installments of 116 livres 6 sols 8 deniers (for a total of 350 livres), each due on Saint-Jean's day. Francois secured this debt by pledging all of his property as well as the present and future inheritance of his children. On 23 March 1660, Gravel declared that his former partner had paid up and owed him nothing more. In this same year, both of them became church wardens in the parish of Chateau-Richer, as indicated in a document mentioning the gift of a small building made to the fabrique¹¹ by Julien Fortin. The first notarized act found which includes Francois was drawn up on 8 September 1647 by Claude Lecoustre. Francois was required to pay Pierre Legardeur of Repentigny the sum of one hundred livres for the purchase of some wheat. To guarantee the loan, he put up all of his property as security. With this, and the fact that Francois purchased some farm land, we know that he has given up the mason trade and started farming. We then find Francois purchasing a concession of land containing 6 arpents and 8 rods with a mile and a half of frontage at Chateau Richer. On 2 June 1650, he buys this land from Olivier LeTardif¹² who was the agent for The Company at Beupre.¹³ The title of this land purchase has not been found but we find the fact mentioned in a land inventory done in 1680 at the request of Monseigneur de Laval, Seigneur of Beupre as recorded by the Notary Becquet. It is also mentioned in the inventory of Charles Bellanger on 6 April 1746. On 24 October 1671, Francois adds one rod and five feet in width to the farm.

L'ANGE GUARDIEN - 1650

No documentation has been found which would indicate exactly when Francois Bellanger established himself at L'Ange Gardien. The custom of the time was for the censitaires to receive their land grants after they had cleared their land and built houses and outbuildings on it. As stated earlier, we do know that on 2 June 1650, Francois Bellanger purchased, in the Seigneurie of Beupre from the elder Olivier LeTardif (lord of the region) a farm of 6 arpents and 8 rods wide and one league and a half deep. This was 16 years after he landed and 13 years after his marriage.

MAYOR AND CHURCH WARDEN - 1653

From the time of his arrival in New France, Francois Bellanger must have worked for Robert Giffard. Robert Giffard was one of original seigneurs appointed by the Company of One Hundred Associates and he was responsible for bringing many settlers to New France. On 9 August 1653, the Journal of the Jesuits

reported that Francois was chosen for the important office of mayor of the citizens of the Quebec region who lived at the Longue Pointe, which would become the future parish of St-Anne-de-Beaupre. Also elected to the town council at the same time were: Thomas Hayot, Charles Legardeur de Tilly, Christophe Crevier, Guillaume Peltier, Pierre Picard and Francois Bissot. Francois Bellanger must have been well thought of at Chateau Richer as he became the captain of the local militia. This was not a position given out to any but the most respectable and deserving. He appeared to have had, as well as demanded, great respect for the law. This did not stop him from running up against the system several times in various dealings with his friends and relatives. He was known to be stubborn and determined but a very honest man. Many sought him out for advice mainly due to these well known traits.

1654

Four years later, on the 18th of Feb. 1654, Jean Guyon, Sieur du Buisson, granted a wedding gift to his only daughter, Marie. This wedding gift was a little late, coming 17 years after her marriage to Francois. He gave her a piece of land with 20 rods frontage on the St. Lawrence and one league and a half deep, including all buildings and animals, at L'Ange Gardien. It consisted of a portion of 5 arpents frontage, bordered on one side by the farms of Guillaume Couillard and on the other by Louis Couillard. We find that the lord of Lauzon, as attorney of Messieurs de Beaupre, had deeded this land to Jean Guyon, through a notary, only three days earlier. This land appears to have been a part of Marie's dowry. We have already learned that, in 1640, Charles had been baptized at the home of his grandfather, Jean Guyon. Everything leads us to believe that, at this date, Marie still lived with her parents and 5 brothers and that Francois Bellanger, her husband, lived under the same roof and helped his father-in-law to till the land, part of which he had been promised in dowry as soon as the grant would be reconciled. This appears to be the land which Francois and Marie now received, 17 years later. So Marie and Francois received 2 arpents of land from Jean Guyon. In 1654, Francois' son, Charles, was 14 years old. He accompanied his father to the fields and helped him with the work of the farm. Like the 30 or so settlers established by this date in the region, they had to work the land, always watching for the prowling Iroquois who burned the homes and destroyed the animals and crops. They worked, armed with a plow, axes and guns, in a constant state of alertness. Life was not very joyful, and the work was not easy. As the family grew, the harvest had to increase. This meant they had to clear the forest by hand, pull stumps, hoe, dig and beat the wheat. They lived in log cabins or in houses of rock with narrow windows with panes of oiled paper. Francois built his own furniture; tables and benches, and he must have added a bed at every birth.

1662

In 1662, Francois Bellanger was named trustee of the affairs and guardian of the children of the late Olivier Le Tardif, co-seigneur and Justice of the Peace at Beaupre. That same year, Francois sold two oxen to Romain de Trepagny, for the sum of 300 livres, payable in silver, in beaver pelts, or in valid currency. In 1663, the year of the founding of the Sovereign Council, this Quebecois pioneer became, according to Msgr. David Gosselin, "one of the principal inhabitants of the region and he had the confidence of the authorities and the colonists." That same year also marked the departure from the household of two of the children, Marguerite and Charles, in order to marry. It also marked the beginning of the end for Jean Guyon, Marie's father. His death led to a family quarrel over the settling of his estate, which lasted five years. The Sovereign Council finally had to step in to decide this affair and to resolve the details. The river was the only practical way to get to Quebec, or from one village to another. Travel was by canoe in summer (sometimes even in winter) or a sled pulled by oxen through the forest. In 1661, the Agniers (an Indian tribe more feared than the Iroquois) killed 8 people on the Cote de Beaupre and 7 at L'Isle d'Orleans (an island within the St. Lawrence sea way). The family of our forefather, Francois Bellanger, was spared but death from other causes continued to take its toll. In the space of 13 months, Marie Guyon lost her mother, saw her son marry Barbe Cloutier and lost her father, Jean Guyon. Jean Guyon died on the 13th of May 1663 in the middle of a series of earth quakes that shook the Cote de Beaupre all the way to Quebec. Jean had been in New France 26 years and the experience of these earth shakings, while he was on his death bed, must have served to hasten his final hour. Francois Bellanger became, according to the census of 1667, one of the

most prosperous farmers of the Cote de Beaupre with 50 arpents of land and 13 cattle in his stable.

THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT

In 1663 King Louis XIV was dissatisfied with the progress being made by The Company in colonizing New France. King Louis was the most ambitious in a long line of French kings and was just beginning his rule which lasted over fifty years. He took away The Company's monopoly rights and sent an administrator (Intendant) to establish a Royal Government. The first and most notable of these administrators was Jean Talon. At his own cost, to encourage trade and ship building, he had a ship of one hundred and twenty tons built and, with it, he had horses and sheep brought from France. Before this, only one horse had been brought to the colony. Talon started the first census in 1666 which showed soldiers and 3215 inhabitants including three notaries, five surgeons, thirty tailors and three locksmiths. Talon started a model farm, began the growing of hemp, encouraged cod fishing in the St. Lawrence, sent men to hunt minerals, began the making of potash from wood ashes, started a tannery and distributed looms for the encouragement of weaving.¹⁵ He accelerated the pace of seigneurial grants. Seigneuries granted from 1627 to 1663 were granted by The Company while those granted between 1663 and 1763 were granted by the King's agents.

On 24 June 1665, Francois Belanger gave up his domestic servant, Jean Hue, to Jean Maheu for the remainder of his obligated time. Jean Maheu was to give Francois Bellanger, within two months, the sum of 30 livres for wages and other things which Francois had advanced his servant. Jean Maheu wed Mathurine Belanger, daughter of Francois and Marie Guyon, on 18 September 1673. He was, therefore, a citizen of Quebec but did not live long. His widow disclaimed any inheritance on 21 August 1674. On 24 August 1665, Charlotte Francoise Belanger, daughter of Francois and Marie Guyon, finalized her marriage contract (pre-nuptial agreement)¹⁶ with Jean Langlois, son of Noel and Francoise Garnier of Beauport, whom she wed at Chateau Richer on 19 October 1665. On 19 March 1669, Francois Bellanger and his neighbor, Simon Guyon (farm 59), finalized their accounts which had to do with a mutual undertaking they had taken with respect to developing a farm. Since they owed 363 livres, 8 sols, 3 deniers to Jacques de La Mothe, merchant, they contracted to each pay half, that is 181 livres, 14 sols, 1 denier. In September of 1669 Francois and his wife again indebted themselves for 1000 livres they borrowed from Charles Aubert de La Chenaye. They were to pay him an annual rente of 55 livres 11 sols 2 deniers. In 1677 Francois gives up the sub seigneurie of Bonsecours and on 18 April 1678 Intendant Duchesneau proclaims that Francois Bellanger never was a seigneur of any part of Beaupre because he had never paid for his land. The reason for this statement hasn't been found since, seigneuries were granted and not sold, unless Duchesneau meant that Francois had not fulfilled the obligation of settling the land with other farmers.

CAPTAIN OF THE MILITIA - 1665

In 1665, Talon had established a position of 'Captain of Militia' in each parish to direct the military organization. Francois Bellanger was chosen for this position in the domain of Beaupre. Charles, who shared the house with his mother, his wife and their sons Francois and Charles, continued to cultivate the farm while his father dedicated himself to his military functions. A document of the time has been preserved by Georges Bélanger. It shows that, on 24 October 1674, the farm was increased by one yard and five feet. The document indicates that this land was granted, freely, to Francois Bellanger by Msgr. Lucien, first bishop of Quebec whose title was 'Monseigneur de Laval', in return for 5 sols de rentes pension.

1677

In 1667 the general census of the inhabitants of New France notes that Francois Bellanger had fifty arpents under cultivation and thirteen animals, which made him one of the richest property owners of that time. In 1669, the year the militia was established in the colony, Francois was named captain of the militia for the Beaupre coast. According to J. Edmond Roy, the captains "were, so to speak, the heads of the municipal organization in each village. They had to carry out the governor's ordinances, as well as supervise the construction and maintenance of the roads." Francois was active and resourceful. The notaries of the time, in their contracts, show us that he was a businessman; informed, upright and honest. He is also shown as a

man much sought after as an expert appraiser. In order to be fair, it is necessary to add that Francois Bellenger was authoritative, forceful, and tenacious in his demands. He wanted, above all, that his ideas become those of others, which made him a few enemies. He learned that he was not infallible however, as shown by some appeals to the Bishop and to the Governor of New France. He did not always prevail in his legal ordeals.

A HARD, BUT HONEST, BUSINESSMAN

Francois Bellenger earned a reputation as an honest but a hard man with whom to do business. He had an argument with his brother-in-law, Simon Guyon, and had to resort to the Sovereign Council for recourse. This litigation lasted until 21 April 1670, at which time Francois was forced to loosen his purse strings. A little earlier he had lost another lawsuit to his former partner Masse & Gravel. The councilors, undoubtedly exasperated by his tendency to file suits, begged him to make his apologies to the Intendant. "As we have seen," writes Leonidas Bélanger, "our man did not have any luck with his suit and it was certainly not willingly that he must have made his apology. This also proves to us that he was stubbornly set in his own ideas a little too much. Better educated perhaps than the majority of his fellow citizens, he sought to impose his will on them in a thousand and one ways."

Francois was also controversial within his own family. He did not get along with his son-in-law, Bertrand Chesnay de la Garenne, (husband of Marie Madeleine) on the subject of their accounts. He interfered in the affairs of his daughter Mathurine, widow of Jean Maheu, concerning a house situated in the Lower Town of Quebec, and bordering the one belonging to defendants Etienne Blanchon and his wife Anne Convent. In 1674, Francois again had trouble with his neighbor Masse & Gravel concerning a boundary between their properties established by the surveyor Jean Guyon du Buisson. Quite simply put, Masse wanted Francois to stop bothering him about the exact placement of the line and Francois wanted the line exactly established. Again, the matter ended up on the agenda of the Sovereign Council and he lost this lawsuit, his last on record.

SEIGNEUR OF BONSECOURS

In 1677 Marie and Francois had 12 children. Ten of them were either on their own or in the process of leaving the home. Marie and Francois accepted a concession of land and a position as seigneur of Bonsecours which would later become known as L'Islet. Taking such a step is often expected of a young man but for a man of over 60 years, it shows his determination and a strong desire to provide for the stable establishment of his sons. Francois had been involved in protests and the demands of an active lifestyle. One would have expected him to be looking for a more tranquil life, not starting new careers. To reward the former officers of the military, Talon had granted them large land tracts which they established as lordships. Talon's successors followed the same practice and Francois asked for and obtained a new grant. With this new grant, Francois and Marie gave up their farm and buildings at L'Ange Gardien to their son Charles. His new grant was located on the south side of the River St. Lawrence, where it seemed there was a better future. This grant included title to the domain and a Seigneurie, was granted to him by Louis de Buade, Count of Frontenac (the Governor) and his aide Duchesneau, on the 1st of July 1677. This grant, called Bonsecours, consisted of a league (3 miles) in frontage by two leagues (6 miles) in depth on the south bank of the river which, today, is part of the parish of L'Islet. Francois became the Lord of the Domain of Bonsecours. Two of his sons, who had come with him to the south shore, left soon after to set up their own farms nearby. After forty years of struggle and constant work, Francois had suddenly become the Seigneur of Bonsecours (L'Islet). This concession was placed on record by the Sovereign Council on 24 October 1680. In 1709, Gedeon de Catalogne (an engineer), after reading the description on the plans of seigneuries and lands of the governments of Quebec, Trois Rivieres & Montreal, spoke of it as follows: "The land there is rather level, sprinkled with plowed up stones, and marginally produces all sorts of grains, vegetables and pasturage. The fruit trees produce abundantly, and the natural woods are a mixture of all species."

This grant was described in the act signed by Frontenac himself. Francois received the farms along the gulf

of St. Lawrence on the south coast between that which belonged to Genevieve Couillard all the way up the gulf to those of the widow Amiot. This comprised, in all, one and a half leagues, more or less, of frontage with 2 leagues of depth and included all the hunting and fishing rights throughout the area. This grant relieved him from the customary dues and taxes that he and his heirs would have normally been required to pay to the Chateau St. Louis de Quebec. They had some stipulations to abide by, however. They had to farm the land and live there as well. They had to develop the land, conserve and see to the conservation of the oak trees, which were used for boat construction, in order to have full rights and possession of these grants. They also had to notify the higher authorities if they found mines. They had to keep and maintain all the necessary roads and trails according to the pleasure of his majesty. It was certainly not easy for Francois to change his domicile at his age. Although full of courage and great resolution, he depended on help from his sons for the labors of clearing ground which was very hard and tiring work. Francois did not immediately move onto his new land. He waited until the farms were better organized. This fact is shown in a document dated 8 Feb 1679 which shows him still living on the Cote of Beaupre. On 14 November 1679, Francois' daughter Louise, was married to Jean Cloutier at Chateau-Richer. A marriage contract was presented before Aubert 30 November 1679.

1680

The King, through his agent Colbert, published a decree the 29th of May 1680, confirming the grants made by the Governor his Steward from 12 October 1676 to 5 September 1679. In the census of the grants for this period, we find the grant of Francois Bellenger. In 1681, the census revealed that the Lord of Bonsecours had 4 servants and, by this, it is known that he must have been living comfortably. The same day, Louis XIV, King of France, passed a mandate mentioning the decree of the State Council and confirmed the grants made by his Steward in New France, the Sieur Duchesneau and his Lieutenant General in Canada, the Sieur de Frontenac. There again, the name of Francois Bellenger appears as the proprietor and lord of this land which was named Bonsecours. The King ended his decree by recommending to the Sovereign Council that it record the present decree and command the soldiers to take whatever actions were necessary to enforce these mandates. The recording of the grants by the Sovereign Council of New France was made in Quebec on 24 October 1680 under the signature of Peubret. When he received his grant, Francois still had two of his daughters with him; Louise and Genevieve and two of his sons; Louis and Jacques. Francois was around 68 years old. Louis soon left for his own farm on the land grant of Bonsecours. His brother Jean Francois owned a farm on one side of his while his brother Olivier Michel owned the one on the other side. Louis' farm is easy enough to locate today as he was the one who gave the land where the church of L'Islet is built and he is considered as one of the distinguished benefactors. Jacques occupied a farm situated more towards the west. In the parchments preserved by Georges Bélanger, and which Marcel Bélanger later received when he inherited the farm, the history of the inheritance continues in dowries, in legacies, in contestations by rights of lineage, in mortgages, and in debtors sales. The struggle for possession of the land by the fathers and the sons who had returned to it and upon which they had cleared ground with their sweat is told in old French writings.

CENSUS of 1681

The census of 1681 places the Bellanger Family in the Seigneurie of Bellechasse, of which the Fief of Bonsecours was a part. Four servants worked for the new seigneur; Jean de la Voye, Barthelemy Gobeil, Pierre Lafaye and Pierre Mataule. The move had only been recently made because Francois had only cleared five arpents. The census lists Francois Bellanger as follows: Francois Bellanger, 60 years, Marie Guyon his wife, 55 years; (this is certainly a mistake on the age of Francois and Marie who should have been 69 and 57 respectively) Genevieve his daughter 21 years; Jacques his son of 18 years; servants: Jean de la Voye, 17 years; Barthelemy Gobeil 14 years, Pierre Lafaye 56 years and Pierre Mataule 41 years. Francois had only 4 acres in value, 5 guns and 3 cattle. His son Louis married Marguerite LeFrancois at Chateau Richer on 3 November 1682 (contrat Vachon, 2 November 1682). Genevieve married Guillaume Ferte at Cap St. Ignace on 23 November 1682. In 1683 only one of their children, Jacques, was still living with the couple. It is with Jacques that Marie and Francois spent their last years.

1685 - 1687

On 25 October 1685 Francois Bellenger must have felt old and knew his end was coming because he bequeathed, witnessed by the notary Duquet, all his possessions to his last son, Jacques, in return for good and loyal service and then Francois disappeared from the written records. Two years later, his widow ratified the bequeath of her husband of all his possessions including the seigneurie of Bonsecours. This account follows: This gift was accepted by Louis on behalf of his brother Jacques. It encompassed all the lands on the domain of Bonsecours with the house where he lived, the barn, the mill and other buildings situated on said lands, with one horse, 3 cattle (probably oxen), 3 cows and all the harness, carriages and other plowing equipment, all the furniture they owned and would own on the day of their death. These lands comprised 15 acres of frontage on two leagues (2 1/2 miles for each league) of depth, the benefit of the said furniture and real estate, animals and belongings reserved to each of them and the last to die among the two by the precarious farm constituted, these benefits would remain fully to the last survivor. Marie Guyon ratified this act on 25 April 1687, in a document which indicated that she had become a widow. Francois had probably died the preceding winter but Marie lived for about another ten years. The registry of Cap-Saint-Ignace mentions her burial act, on 1 September 1696. She was then 78 years old.

In an affidavit, on 25 April 1687 before the Notary Duquet, Marie states that she ratifies this bequest, made to her son Jacques, because he took care of all things for the last 8 or 9 years. She states that she is happy and satisfied with the care this marvelous model of a son has given her and her deceased husband. She says she hopes that he will keep her things for her and that he will not leave her to go establish himself elsewhere. She hopes that his brothers and sisters will not cause him any trouble in his inheritance, which is nothing more than the pure and simple reward of his labors and the good care that he - - - (here the document is torn). After the death of Francois, life continued its normal course at the Bellengers. Mathurine wed Francois Gregoire (her 3rd husband) on 26 April 1688, at Pointe Au Trembles, 18 Quebec (today Neuville). Marie hopes that her son Jacques will continue to treat her well until her death. She leaves him free, meanwhile, to do as he wishes, or else to share the inheritance with his brothers and sisters and take for himself the sum of 620 livres for each of the said 8 or 9 years and hopes that he will continue to help and serve her without the help of his brothers and sisters. The farm of Francois eventually gets divided into 9 pieces which are left to the children. Some of the poorer pieces of land were left with 60 livres with them while those who got better pieces had to pay the others 57 livres when they accepted the legacy.

LAST YEARS

We know very little about Francois B llenger and Marie Guyon's last years except that Francois had become Lord of the Domain B llenger at L'Islet, that he died between 1687 and 1691 and is probably buried in the cemetery at Cap St. Ignace, where his wife Marie Guyon was buried 1 September 1696. According to the Genealogy of the French Families of the Detroit Region, he died during the winter of 1690-1691 at approximately 78 years of age and after having been in New France about 56 years. His burial papers have remained lost to this day. Marie Guyon died at age 72 and had been in New France 62 years. Francois and Marie left no deed of inheritance so their estate was consequently divided between their relatives to the detriment of their own children.

1690 - 1691

Admiral Phipps and his 34 ships of war attacked Quebec in 1690, thousands of bullets left the city bloody and burning. Several leagues from there, at L'Ange Gardien, two generations of Bellangers struggled against their own sisters, brothers, sisters and brothers in law, uncles, aunts and cousins to reclaim the land they felt was theirs. Through unceasing pilgrimages to the notaries of Quebec and to the bailiffs of Chateau Richer, they fought to retake the portions of their inheritance which had already been subdivided among their other relatives. The law of the day permitted this (retrait lignager) if they could prove their rights of lineage, or that they had rights to it from the grandfather. On 1 December 1691, Charles of the second generation, reclaimed "a farm in L'Ange Gardien containing 5 arpents of land in width on the gulf and a

league and a half in depth adjoining, on one side, to Guillaume Hebert and on the other side to Nicolas Quentin with one house, one barn, plowable land near a forest of tall trees - - ". The document from which this quote was taken is unreadable beyond this. This land had been acquired by Nicolas Trudel, the cousin of Joseph Guyon du Buisson (his uncle on his mother's side) and it was finally returned to Charles Bellanger, who reimbursed the price of two thousand fifty five livres in "good money". It is thought that the term "good money" meant cash instead of work or goods in lieu of cash. On 2 June 1691, Charlotte, another of Francois' daughters, filed before the notary Genaple, a contract of marriage with Thomas Rousseau. The marriage must have followed sometime after but the document of this marriage has not been found. Finally Jacques, the model son and inheritor of the paternal goods, married Elisabeth Thibault on the 22nd of November 1691 at Cap Saint Ignace¹⁹. On 15 December 1692, Charles, the oldest of Francois' children²⁰, died at Chateau Richer.

1696 - 1721

Marie Guyon died on 31 August 1696. She was buried the next day (on 1 September 1696) at Cap Saint Ignace. The descendants of this couple are noted by the numbers of children they bore. It seems they loved the married life, as well, since many of them married more than once. The Seigneurie of Bonsecours was finally divided among the sons of Francois in 1721. At his death, our ancestor left his wife and 9 of his children to mourn his loss. Anne and Guillaume had died at a young age and Marie Madeleine had died in childbirth on 6 January 1670. This is supported by the fact that her husband, wed his second wife (Elisabeth Aubert) the following year. She was the daughter of Claude Aubert, royal notary.

OUR ROOTS ON THE COAST OF BEAUPRE

In the region that takes in the Cote de Beaupre, the Isle of Orleans, and the southern shore of the St. Lawrence between Levis and Montmagny, we find about 100 families who continue to cultivate ancestral lands. These lands have been used for 200 years, or more, and their acquisition dates back to the French Regime. The oldest grant belongs to Marcel Bélanger at number 6117 Avenue Royale in L'Ange Gardien. From Charles Bellanger (Francois' son) to Marcel, this farm was passed down from father to son.

OFFSPRING

Today the Belangers are spread throughout North America. This proliferation began with our ancestor himself. It matters little if you subscribe to the notion that Nicolas was the first born of Francois. Since the ancestry of the writers of this document is definitely from Nicolas, you can follow that line from this point regardless of whether Francois was his father or not. Knowing the history of the frequency of births in the early 1600s, one must note with wonder that there were no children from the union between Francois and Marie after their marriage in 1637 until the birth of Charles in 1640. It is the opinion of the writer, however, that Francois and Nicolas were not closely related. The reason for this opinion is that, in all the documents researched, the wedding information found, the census records and all other information gathered, no mention was ever made that either of these gentlemen, or their immediate family, being present at any function of the other. Living so close to each other as they did, if there had been any close relation at all, they would have gotten together for something at one time or another. Francois and Marie Guyon had 12 children.

Since it is doubtful that our ancestor, Nicolas, is related to Francois, the descendants of Francois are listed here starting with Charles. Nicolas is covered on another page.

Charles was born and baptized on 19 August 1640 at L'Ange Gardien, Montmorency, Quebec. On 19 December 1662 he received a concession of land from Charles Le Gardeur de Villiers. This land was a subdivision of the larger tract 'Le Gardeur' in the Seigneurie of Beaupre. On 21 November 1663 he married Barbe Delphine Cloutier, the daughter of Zacharie Cloutier, Jr. and Madeleine Emard, at Chateau Richer. In the census of 1666 and 1667 the couple was shown as residing at Beaupre but they later moved to Chateau Richer. In 1667 he owned 5 beasts and 6 arpents in value. Charles received another farm from Charles Le

Gardeur de Villiers on 15 June 1669. In 1681, Charles was doing rather well; he had a maid, 2 guns, 15 horned animals and 30 arpents in value. Unlike his brothers, who moved to the Seigneurie of Bonsecours at L'Islet, Charles lived on the north bank of the St Lawrence river. As the oldest son, he inherited half of the Seigneurie of Bonsecours at his father's death with the other half divided among his brothers and sisters. He died and was buried on 14 Dec 1692 in Chateau Richer. His goods were inventoried and disposed of on 22 June 1699. Charles and Barbe had 4 boys and 5 girls before his widow became engaged to wed Noel Gagnon on 12 January 1705 at Chateau Richer.

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