

Acadian Family Names

The following list consists of the names of all families, including those of couples who left no surviving descendants, who resided in continental Acadia between 1700 and 1755. These are all the families known to us who were (or, who might have been) among the approximately 13,000 Acadians involved in the Dispersion, whether deported or displaced in that tragic occurrence. Such a list cannot but be incomplete, due to the loss during Dispersion or subsequently of a substantial number of the documentary sources that would normally identify the individuals who made up the Acadian population throughout the half century.

Particularly significant is the absence of census records for Acadia after 1714. Researchers have been able to reconstruct parts of the population of the colony through consultation of surviving parish records, but recourse to a wide variety of other sources has been, and as research goes on, continues to be necessary, to fill-in gaps in our knowledge. Such families, especially those who only settled in Acadia in the last quarter century before the disaster of 1755, are only identified as Acadians by documents concerning the exiles in Québec, France, the British American colonies, the West Indies, French Guyana or Louisiana. Many of these documents are just now coming to light, due to the assiduous searching of certain descendants determined to trace their Acadian connections. In some cases it is nonetheless still quite difficult to determine whether the family name actually would have been known in Acadia, or whether it only was added to the roster of Acadians during the long years of wandering in exile.

It must be noted that this list (found in the section "Those Who Disappeared" below), includes the names of only those families who were part of the civilian population of Acadia, those of the families of the military who left long before the Deportation in 1710 having been intentionally.

The origin of our Acadian families, especially the oldest and largest among them, are but little known. For the entire period for which Acadia was colonized, only two passenger lists dating from 1636 and 1641, and one church register covering the years 1679 to 1686, are available to us. Our censuses, beginning in 1671, permit us to reconstruct the first three or four generations of each of our principal families, but they provide no information, contrary to the censuses of Plaisance and some later enumeration, for example, regarding origins, except in very exceptional instances. For genealogical purposes the absence for the early period of the records of marriages, or marriage contracts which normally form the most reliable sources of such information, is the chief difficulty one encounters. The marriages recorded at Port-Royal from 1702, at Grand-Pré from 1707, and Beaubassin from 1712, provide us with some samples of what we would find if all the registers had survived. Unfortunately, none of these three parishes just named, had all of its records and no registers survived at all for Cobeguit, the two churches at Pisiquit, the Rivière-aux-Canards, Chipoudy, the Pointe-de-Beauséjour,

Tintamarre, Chebogue, or any of the lesser missions of old Acadia. Of course most Acadian families are of French origin. Even in the case of those for no precise origin is known, proof of this is given in many instances, by the Déclarations of the Acadians settled on Belle-Ile-en-Mer, wherein a substantial number of the first ancestors to live in Acadia, are uniformly described as "**having come from France**" (for example, **Babin, Blanchard, Daigre, Dupuis, Terriot**). Nevertheless, the exceptions to this rule are perhaps more interesting than those conforming to the norm. Among these exceptional families of **Basque origin (Arosteguy, Bastarache, Ozelet)** as well as one that is **Spanish (Gousman)** and two that are **Portuguese (Mirande, Rodrigue)**. There are also several **Irish families (Caissy/Casey, Guénard/Gainer, Long, Onel/O'Neale)**, three **English (Druce, Granger, Hensaule/Henshaw)**, one **Scottish (Jeanson/Johnson)**, one **Flemish (Pitre)**, one from the **Channel Islands (Semer)**, and even one from **Croatia (Mathieu)**. It is also interesting to note that at least two families that may not seem to be **French (Egan, Melanson)** are nonetheless, of proven French origin!

A number of names on the list would be immediately recognized as Acadian names everywhere Acadians have settled. These included the names of the families with the most numerous descendants such as **the LeBlanc's, the Landry's, the Hebert's, the Boudrot's and the Richard's**. These families are of course quite important on a statistical basis. There also appear on the list, the names of a number of families whose members played extraordinary roles in Acadian history. Besides the families of the hereditary nobility, or the **seigneurial class (d'Abbadie de Saint-Castin, D'Amours, Denys, Le Borgne de Bélisle, LeNeuf de La Vallière, Mius d'Entremont and Turgis de Saint-Étienne de la Tour)**, who bring a certain amount of blue, even royal blood into the veins of some Acadians, there are families of the **corsairs (Guyon, Maisonnat, Morpain)**, those of the **heroes of the resistance against the British (Broussard, Maillet)**, as well as those of **several victims of the French Revolution (Granger, Le Prince)**.

Nicknames ("Dit" Names)

Even the casual observer will notice that a substantial number of these Acadian families bore one or more nicknames. Some among these **suggest that probable origins of the families**, such as **Amirault dit Tourangeau, Cellier dit Normand, Deveau dit Dauphiné, Duon dit Lyonnais, Guillot dit Langevin, Le Jeune dit Briard, Levron dit Nantois, Orillon dit Champagne, Préjean dit Le Breton** and so on.

These nicknames provide only clues to the origins of some families where such origins cannot otherwise be documented, but conversely, narrow-down the field of possible origins of the original seventeenth century recruits, since such nicknames would make little sense unless referring to something distinctive about these families.

Other nicknames betray the military past of the family's founder. For a substantial period during which no official efforts were made to attract new colonists, most of the new settlers in Acadia were **former soldiers** whose years of service were sufficient to permit their retirement and marriage to local girls. In the case of **Berrier dit Machefer**,

Bonnevie dit Beaumont, Creysac dit Toulouse, Garceau dit Tranchemontagne, La Lande dit Bonappetit, Léger dit La Rozette, Marchand dit Poitiers and a few others, documentary evidence of military service exists. In the case of several others, including **LeBert dit Jolycoeur, Lord dit La Montagne, Mazerolle dit Saint-Louis** and **Richard dit Sansoucy**, the sort of nickname borne by the family bespeaks a military background, even in the absence of proof.

A relatively uncommon Christian name might also be perpetuated as a replacement for the original family name. Thus the Brasseurs were called Mathieu; the Caissys, Roger; the Henrys, Robert; and the Vigreaus, Maurice, from the given name of the first ancestor of each line. In other cases, a branch of a large family might adopt the first name of the founder of the branch in place of the family name, to distinguish itself from other branches of the same clan (Hébert dit Manuel, Pitre dit Marc, Vincent dit Clément), or the descendants of one family might employ their ancestor's given name in the same way, to set themselves apart from another family with the same last name (Martin dit Barnabé).

Some nicknames reflect the ancestor's occupation. Thus the descendants of the blacksmith Thomas Sauvage, came to be known as the Forgeron family, while those of the butcher André Simon, called themselves Bouchers. In other cases, the nickname was most likely suggested by the ancestor's occupation, but documentary evidence of the latter is lacking (Calvé and Guérin, both dit Laforge).

Over all, the list includes the names of families whose members occupied a wide spectrum of social and economic levels, from the upholders of justice (Boudrot, Desgoutins) down to those who appear to have come here to evade its execution (Denis, Mangeant dit Saint-Germain, Sauvage dit Forgeron, Serreau de Saint-Aubin).

Those Who Disappeared

Nearly three-fourths of the families whose names comprise this list did not reappear in Acadia after the Dispersion (1755). Of these, a certain number disappeared naturally either because the couple in question had no surviving children at all (Gisé, Lambourt, Poupart, Racois for example), or at least no surviving sons (Belou, Bézier, Flan, Forton, Gadrau, Gentil, Gouzille, LeJuge and so forth). Others perished as a direct result of their deportation (Apart, Froiquingont, Oudy, Tillard), especially in group disasters such as shipwrecks and epidemics. Other families saw their numbers drastically reduced in these tragedies, but were not entirely extinguished (Arcement, La Vache, Le Prieur).

Certain families survived and even flourished in the new Acadia into which they were eventually transplanted, but their names came to be found only in those areas, and may consequently appear to be somewhat alien to Acadians from other regions. Among the names that persist only among the Cajuns in Louisiana, are Arcement, Gravois, Heusé/Usé, Hugon, Mouton and Naquin. Only in Québec does one find Fontaine, Garceau, Gourdeau, Grandmaison, Héon, Long, Lord, Lucas, Messaguay, Poitevin, Rousse and Saindon. The Cloistre, Orillon dit Champagne and Part families, carry on in both Louisiana and Québec, but not in Acadia. Marcadet and Pugnant dit Destouches

persisted in Saint-Pierre and Miquelon until the Napoleonic Wars. Even in Acadia itself, certain families re-established themselves only in certain areas. The Bugeauds were thus only to be found on Chaleurs Bay. The Bastarache dit Basque family survived only in New Brunswick and northern Nova Scotia. The Bruns were almost exclusively in southern New Brunswick and northern Nova Scotia. The Caissys and the Guéguens became distinctly New Brunswick Acadians too, although a few spread from there into other provinces. Many Acadians from New Brunswick think of Boutin, Forgeron, Marchand, Martel and Samson, as French-Canadian names and the Acadians of the first, fourth and fifth families just named, can indeed trace their ancestry back to Québec, but these are also the names of important Acadian families in southern Cape Breton. Amirault (Mius) d'Entremont and Moulaison, are concentrated in western Nova Scotia. Corporon, DeCoste (formerly Coste), Poitier (or Pothier) and Trahan, are also names that could only be found in Nova Scotia after the Dispersion. Similarly, mention of Bernard, Buote, or Longuépée families in a genealogy, necessarily means that the Acadians of Prince Edward Island, must be involved in the lineage. A few families dropped out of sight because they apparently chose to remain in exile. The Bodard, Boisseau and Célestin dit Bellemère families, come to mind in this regard. Branches of some well-known widespread Acadian families, stayed in certain British American colonies, but they changed or modified their names.

There were Acadians named Doiron, Dupuis and LeBlanc in Maryland, but they became Gold, Wells and White.

In Pennsylvania, some Trahans became Strahans. Further south in the Carolinas, Lanoue became Lanneau, while Deschamps was transformed into Dishongh.

Turcots, who were refugees in Québec, crossed over into New York where they they changed to Tarkets.

A Michel family in Connecticut, began using the name Mitchell and across the state line in Massachusetts, Dugas changed to Dugar and Robichaud to Robertshaw.

Three generations later, innumerable name changes resulted from Acadian emigration to New England. In this second dispersion, Benoit became Bennett; Bourg, Burke; Doiron, Durant; Fougère, Frazier; Hébert, Hubert; Langlois, Langley; LeJeune, Young; Petitpas, Pitts; Pitre, Peters; Poirier, Perry; Roy, King; and Vigneau, Veno.

The list of Acadian family names, provide the careful reader with some interesting and valuable insights into Acadian history. The small tragedies of normal human existence and the over-overwhelming tragedies of the Acadian Diaspora, have left their marks on this list, to the extent that any present-day Acadian, from any area, will find but few familiar names here; the others were scattered to far-off destinations, or destroyed altogether, through the dangers and hardships of the great trauma inflicted on our people. In a way, the following list stands as a tribute and a monument to them. For after two centuries, we still strive to preserve the memory of those who suffered the loss of their property, their country and even their lives... because of their loyalty to their ideals and faith.

The above-noted was written by Stephen White for Parks Canada and permission to reproduce provided by Stephen, as well as Portage Technologies Inc., producers of "The Acadia CD-ROM".

<i>The following list was drawn-up for the Grand Pré National Historic Site by historian Brenda Dunn of Canadian Parks Service:</i> Abbadie de Saint-Castin	Jeanson
Allain	Joseph
Amirault dit Tourangeau	Kimine
Angou dit Choisy	La Barre
Apart	Labat dit Le Marquis