



THE FRIGONS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIGON FAMILIES

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LIGHT ON THE PAST - III

Robert Frigon (#2*)

In the last two issues, we described the first evidence of the presence in Nouvelle-France of our ancestor **François Frigon dit l'Espagnol**, the only pioneer of European** origin bearing this name to have emigrated to North America. The story continues.

François Frigon's origin is not known. He came to New France possibly as a recruit, a few years before 1666, since it is in that year that his name is mentioned for the first time in colonial records. That same year, as well as the year after, it is known that he was in the employ of his "*maître*", Michel Peltier de la Prade.

Being employed was not an unusual situation, as many of our ancestors came to Canada as *engagés*, men hired for a three year period at an annual salary of some sixty *livres* or pounds. Under the terms of his contract, the servant could return to his country. François Frigon chose not to do so and stayed. One might ask why. Was it that he had lost his parents?

Likely a strong young man, he learned to *désert*, to clear the land with pick and axe, to paddle the waters of the Sainte-Anne and Batiscan rivers, and his contacts with the natives will get him to know their customs and will serve him later when he undertook his fur-trading travels to the Illinois.

His adolescence over as well as his employment contract, he is induced to settle down, as his apprenticeship is now over.

On May 24, 1667, **Jacques de La Tousche**, notary royal in the *seigneurie* and *prévôté*, provostship of Cap-de-la-Madeleine, officiating at Champlain, records a donation of land, located in the *seigneurie de Batiscan*, by **Jean Cusson**, of Cap-de-la-Madeleine, to **François Frigon dit l'Espagnol**. He did not keep this piece of land, being in the employ of Michel Peltier and not in a position to develop it.

Cusson, the notary to be, had obtained it from the *seigneurs* of Batiscan, the Jesuits, with whom he was on excellent terms since he became two years later, the notary accredited to the *Compagnie de Jésus*. The land was adjacent to another belonging to Michel Peltier. But neither of them lived there. They resided at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. The village of Batiscan was just emerging.

The donation agreement specifies that François Frigon must provide Cusson "in perpetuity, beginning with Christmas 1668, year to year, six *minots* of good French wheat at the sole expense of the said Frigon". On this day of May, in thus unloading the property on our ancestor, the astute lawyer had made himself a good deal. In requiring annual contributions of wheat equivalent to two hundred litres of wheat, a portion of the family's bread was assured. François was only 20 years old. This transaction shows that he had no knowledge of farming, or he would have known it was impossible to produce such an amount of wheat. ⇒

* Membership number

** General assumption is he was French, but his nickname suggests a possible Spanish origin. Editor.

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What is more, how could he go about supplying Jean Cusson with so much wheat? The land's condition was not known. Could he at the same time work for his master Peltier and on his own account? Clearing a stretch of land requires constant work and is not a hobby.

Six months later, on January 8, 1668, our two friends are again at notary La Tousche's home to sign an

agreement to transfer the land to **Pierre Guillet dit Lajeunesse**, carpenter and farmer. Our ancestor thus rids himself of a heavy burden. He was not yet ready to settle down and set-up a home. But strangely enough, he acts as witness to several deals negotiated by Michel Peltier with fellow citizens.

Sources: see last issue's article

□

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

Léontine Frigon Gravel celebrated in July, at Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade her 101th birthday. She was born in Saint-Prosper on July 16, 1894, the 17th of a family of 21 childre. As an active woman, she was a member of various religious organizations, fwomen farmers' groups,... ● **Pierre Frigon**, patent-holder on a ship rudder, and merchant in Sainte-Geneviève-de-Batiscan in 1876, was a builder of boats and churches and that this house in Saint-Prosper is still to be seen, nest to the **Frigon** hardware store. ● **Josephte Frigon** was *seigneuresse* of Fief Sainte-Marie in 1785. ● A cleaning product made in Mexico and on sale in Canada, is called **fregón**. According to an interpretation from the Mrxican Embassy, the word has a double meaning derived from *fragona* - scrub woman and *fregón*, a Mexican slang word meaning *macho* or "the best". ● **Elaine Claire Bessette** Smith (#68*) in Fort Pierce, Florida, through her grand-parents is twice Frigon-related. Her maternal grandmother **Rosina Frigon**'s parents were **Noé Frigon** and **Léocadie Ayotte**, and the parents of paternal grandmother, **Marie Jessie Vanasse**, were **David Janasse**

and **Marie Octavie Frigon**, sister to **Noé**.

☞ Do these tid-bits whet your appetite for more details? Did You Know? items are like tips of icebergs which provide glimpses of the Frigon story. We plan to enlarge on selected items, and members will greatly help in the selection, if they will let us know their preferences. Please write in.

☞ **Lucie Frigon** Caron (#56*) in Hull, Québec, and **Odette Frigon** (#52*) in Saint -Prosper, responded to our call for help in our last issue for material such as recollections, stories, etc.. We are most grateful to them for their support, as well as to **Elaine Bessette Smith**(#68*) in Fort Pierce, Florida, who had previously responded to a similar plea in *Nexus*, a publication of the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston.

* Membership number



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members are invited to attend the Second Annual General Meeting of the Association

The meeting will take place on Saturday, September 23 at 1.30 PM

at the PennMass Hotel, 303, boulevard Ste-Madeleine, Cap-de-la-Madeleine

To reach the PennMass in Cap-de-la-Madeleine, a Trois-Rivières suburb, take highway 40 East to exit 205, following the PennMass signs. Take rue St.Maurice to boulevard Ste.Madeleine, turn right and past the next 2 traffic lights find the PennMass on same side of street. **A detailed map is on the back of the formal notice of the meeting which is being sent to all members, as a separate sheet with proxy form, either with this issue or by separate mail.**

FRANÇOIS FRIGON DIT L'ESPAGNOL

HIS LIFE & TIMES

A brief chronology of François Frigon's life in the context of the events of his time

François Frigon dit l'Espagnol is born about 1649, likely in France, or possibly, on account of his nickname, in Spain or the Spanish Netherlands, a territory adjacent to the north of France, which later returned to French rule under Louis XIV.	1649	Deaths of Father Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalement at the hands of the Iroquois. Start of the war of the Fronde in France.
François Frigon arrives in New-France about 1665 with a contingent of settlers and enters the employment of Michel Peltier de la Prade	1665	Isaac Newton invents differential calculus.. The first literary periodical, <i>Le Journal des savants</i> is established in Paris. First issue of the <i>London Gazette</i> in London
In 1670, François Frigon marries Marie-Claude Chamois, a Fille du Roi. She is the daughter of Honoré Chamois and Jacqueline Girard. Honoré is Secretary to the Comte d'Harcourt and is Secrétaire du Roi	1670	The Hudson's Bay Company I is founded. Molière presents <i>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i> Pascal's <i>Pensées</i> are published posthumously.
Birth about 1674 of Jean-François, first-born of François Frigon. In 1700 he married Madeleine Moreau. After her death, he married Marie-Gertrude Perrot in 1773.	1674	Dissolution of <i>Compagnie des Indes occidentales</i> to which Louis XIV and Colbert in 1664 had given monopoly in New France of administration of all "seigneurie, propriété et justice"
Marie-Claude Chamois, François Frigon's wife, leaves for Paris in 1686 to claim an inheritance. After a long absence, she returns home, stays for a while and then goes back to Paris, and as far as is known, never to return,	1686	The first French settle along the Mississippi in Arkansas. In Québec City, the sisters of Congrégation Notre-Dame open the <i>Maison de la Providence</i> , a school for teaching home economics
Since 1683 François has undertaken many business trips to the <i>pays d'en haut</i> , the upper country. In the spring of 1701 he joins an expedition headed by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, a significant event in our ancestor's life, according to Douville*.	1701	Foundation of Yale University and the University of Venice. Cadillac sets-up an establishment in Detroit to control trade with the Illinois.
	1715	Death of Louis XIV, King of France (1643-1715), known as the <i>Roi Soleil</i> . François Frigon lived under his reign.
François Frigon dies at age 75, May 13, 1724. He likely lived with his son Jean-François to whom he had turned over all his possessions 14 years earlier, in 1710.	1724	Card money is currency in New France. The Paris <i>Bourse</i> opens

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

This fourth issue of our quarterly newsletter highlights the Association's first "operating" year. Though incorporation dates back to May 1994, it was not until last fall that we felt operations had really begun. In the initial stages, the board was busy developing a membership - holding meetings - getting the newsletter on its feet.

During the year, the Board looked into several projects having priority:

- specialized genealogical software, able to work in French and English and to process genealogical as well as historical information, with a view to publishing a Frigon family book. We will be deciding on appropriate software shortly.
- Re-publishing Raymond Douville's classic *François Frigon...coureur des bois*, with appendices up-dating the work and providing an English summary. We are having discussions with the publishers.

We hope to take the opportunity of next year's Annual Meeting to hold a family reunion. Meanwhile we will be trying to encourage regional meetings.

We will be taking up the matter at the Annual General Meeting being held Saturday, September 23 in Cap-de-la-Madeleine, as announced elsewhere in this issue. Looking to see you there!

Raymond Frigon

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LES FRIGON, Quarterly newsletter of the Association

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Members are listed according to membership number. At this listing there are 80 members, which is about 8% of the number* of Frigon households in North America. The objective for 1995-1996 is to reach at least 10%, that is 100 members.

* According to a CD-ROM phone directory, there are about 850 Frigon families Frigon in Canada and the United States, or say, a rounded-out 1,000..