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THE ECONOMIC EVOLUTION OF  
THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL

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## CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis will attempt to show that the seigneurie of Sorel was a potentially rich agricultural and industrial settlement, but that Pierre de Saurel, its first seigneur, was unable to bring his fief to satisfactory fruition. The research will include an investigation into the reasons for the non-fulfillment. The later success of Claude de Ramezay in the same seigneurie is proof of the potential wealth of the fief of Sorel.

This paper will show the slow agricultural development during the first era, approximately from the beginning of the seigneurie of Sorel in 1666 to the census taken in 1681.

A contributing factor to this retardation was the constant state of flux of the habitants which in turn led to a slow cultivation and development of the land. Censitaires bought a piece of land, a roture, only to leave it in a year's time or even in a few months. This instability was not conducive to a thriving seigneurie, since it did not procure the revenues which the seigneur, Pierre de Saurel, had a right to expect from the laws of the seignorial tenure.

Pierre de Saurel came to New France as the Captain of a Company in the Carignan-Salières Regiment in the summer of 1666. The authorities in France expected the troops to

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destroy the Iroquois menace and to remain to colonize this new land. No sooner had Pierre de Saurel received orders to rebuild the old Fort Richelieu than he began to clear this land and to spend time and money cultivating it. He seemed to realize even at this early date its rich potential. The soldiers were encouraged to remain in the colony and many chose to do so. As was customary, they decided to settle on the land of their Captain. According to the census of 1681, of the thirty-three who did so, only ten persevered.

Seeing that the seigneurie was not prospering as quickly nor as well as he thought it should, Pierre de Saurel turned to other means of revenue such as the timber business and the fur trade. The seigneurie of Sorel was situated at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Richelieu Rivers. The ambitious Pierre de Saurel, appreciating this strategic position both from a military and commercial point of view, could see many possibilities for a thriving seigneurie. The St. Lawrence could serve as a highway for the conveying of timber down to Quebec; the Richelieu, for fur expeditions to Lake Champlain and beyond, or up the St. Lawrence to the Ottawa Valley into Hudson Bay country. Access to the St. Lawrence and Richelieu was, therefore, a boon upon which Pierre de Saurel hoped to capitalize. Jean Talon's departure

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for France in 1672 led eventually to the end of the timber trade; Saurel's sudden death in 1682 terminated his career as a fur trader.

Information about Pierre de Saurel's fur trading adventures is rather scarce. Frontenac mentioned in 1678 that the latter had sponsored an expedition which he equipped with canoes and other necessities. In 1682, Pierre de Saurel formed a Company with Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye and other fur traders for expeditions into the Hudson Bay area. After Pierre de Saurel's premature death, Madame de Saurel continued the partnership in the fur trading Company. As an officer's widow she also received fur trading permits. A few censitaires also succumbed to the lure of the fur trade.

There is still less reported about Pierre de Saurel's venture into the timber trade. A business deal was transacted with Jean Talon requiring oak and pine for His Majesty's ships. These planks of oak and pine were to be delivered at Quebec. The transport of the planks of wood necessitated vessels which Pierre de Saurel owned or rented for that purpose.

This thesis contrasts the first era of the seigneurie 1666-1681, with that of the second era, 1681-1713, that is, from the census of 1681 to the auctioning off of the seigneurie

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in 1713. The census showed considerable increase in population and in the amount of land under cultivation. Stable tenants were expected to cultivate the land and assure the subsequent revenue for the seigneur.

After Pierre de Saurel's death, his timber trade died out but other business activities continued. The census of 1681 did note a number of censitaires who had some trade and who did odd jobs for their neighbors, either to increase their own revenue or, at times, even to supplant their farming.

This thesis will refer especially to documents obtained from the Judicial Archives of Montreal and Quebec, and to pertinent information from the Public Archives of Canada. These are mostly primary sources. It is from these that conclusions shall be drawn as to the historical development of the seigneurie of Sorel.

The first type of document is that dealing with land concessions. Pierre de Saurel ceded officially fourteen of these during his short life as seigneur of Sorel. A whole social study could be made from these legal documents.

A few documents in which obligations are contracted to repay loans imply that fur trading permits had been issued in the seigneurie.

Other documents deal with business transactions among the censitaires. Some are contracts of transfer of land.

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These prove that a censitaire could own more than one roture either in his own or in another seigneurie. A few documents reveal that Pierre de Saurel had been involved in the timber business as well as the fur trade.

A document in which Madame de Saurel mortgaged her own personal effects demonstrates to what straits she was reduced financially. Other documents show the sales of concessions ordered by the Lieutenant-General of the jurisdiction of Trois-Rivières. These forced sales disclose to what extent Madame de Saurel was unable to cope with her debts. The census of 1681 indicated the presence among the population of a surgeon and censitaires with a trade. There were shoemakers, carpenters, a ropemaker, a tanner, a miller, an edge-tool maker, and a cooper. Of interest also are documents which deal with the hiring of children.

These documents lead to the conclusion that the agricultural development of the land improved from the 1680's on. The population of 110 inhabitants assured the regular cultivation of land, the use of the gristmill and other means of revenue for the seigneur.

Had Pierre de Saurel lived, he might have made a success of his seigneurie. His widow, Madame Catherine Le Gardeur, was not a successful administrator. The debts

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incurred by her late husband, added to her own, were beyond redemption. She was unable to cope with her creditors. The debts, therefore, counteracted the agricultural success. An attempt to sell the seigneurie was made by Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye in 1702. The seigneurie was finally auctioned off in 1713. That Madame de Saurel was able to hold her fief until this time, in spite of her debts, and financial difficulties, may indicate the importance of her family connections.

The second seigneur of Sorel, Claude de Ramezay, was the beneficiary. The Aveu et Dénombrement of 1724 revealed a prosperous seigneurie pulsating with an ever increasing population providing an ever increasing wealth.

## CHAPTER I

### THE SLOW AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL

The Indian menace in New France had gained such momentum by mid-seventeenth century that the Royal Council of France decided to send the Carignan-Salières Regiment to reassure and protect the colonists.<sup>1</sup> This Regiment succeeded in ending the threat which had so long prevented the development of the country. It gave the colony a respite of at least twenty years.

Pierre de Saurel was a Captain of a Company of soldiers from the Carignan-Salières Regiment. Before leaving La Rochelle, May 13, 1665, Jean Talon, the newly-named Intendant for New France, passed in review the eight Companies. He had nothing but praise for Pierre de Saurel's men who were: ". . . en bien meilleur estat que les autres par l'armement et les habits, . . ." <sup>2</sup> Talon commented in a letter to the Intendant of La Rochelle, Colbert de Terron:

. . . je crois que si Sa Majesté ordonnait présentement quinze ou vingt pistoles a M. Sorelle, la compagnie duquel a paru la meilleure aux yeux de tous, cette dépense, quoyque légère ne serait pas sans fruit.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Germain Lesage, o.m.i., "L'arrivée du régiment de Carignan", in Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, January-March 1965, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

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Sieur Alexandre de Prouville, marquis de Tracy had been named head of the whole expedition against the Iroquois. On his arrival in New France, he ordered Pierre de Saurel to employ his company of soldiers to rebuild Fort Richelieu. The Iroquois used the Richelieu River as a highway for invasion of the colony, so this fort which stood at the junction of the St. Lawrence and Richelieu rivers was a deterrent to their harassment of the settlers.

At the end of the Iroquois war, the soldiers from the Carignan-Salières Regiment were invited to remain in New France and to settle as colonists. Even before leaving for their new expedition, in fact, the king had asked Talon: "d'inviter les soldats qui vont en Nouvelle-France 'a demeurer dans le pays'; il permet d'accorder aux futurs colons 'une légère gratification au nom de Sa Majesté'."<sup>4</sup> The king was thus encouraging the soldiers to become colonists by monetary persuasion. Each soldier received one hundred francs, or fifty francs with rations for one year; each sergeant, one hundred and fifty francs, or one hundred francs plus one year's rations. 12,000 in all were distributed to the soldiers who consented to remain

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<sup>4</sup>"Mémoire du Roy pour servir d'instruction au Sieur Talon. . ." Paris, 27 mars 1665. (A.P.C., Archives des Colonies, 1663-1669, p. 70) as quoted in Germain Lesage, Op. Cit., p. 15.

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in the colony and marry there.<sup>5</sup>

Marquis de Tracy, after the war, also saw the necessity of increasing the number of settlers. He wrote to the king begging him to allow four Companies to stay in the colony. Speaking of Pierre de Saurel, he added:

. . . le sieur de Saurel a mis beaucoup de son bien et celui de ses amis a défricher les terres auprès du fort. Il doit être considéré pour rester dans le fort Richelieu qu'il a mis en l'état où il est et qui a fait défricher plusieurs terres près de son fort sur une concession qu'il demande pour se faire canadien perpétuel . . .<sup>6</sup>

Thirty-three soldiers from Pierre de Saurel's Company were thus encouraged to settle as colonists in New France.<sup>7</sup> They were expected to clear the land and cultivate it. Their main function, therefore, was to be farmers. Pierre de Saurel, nevertheless, seems to have ceded few rotures. There was a constant flux of the first censitaires. As soldiers, they were not necessarily trained farmers. They seemed willing to help the seigneur on his domain, under his immediate

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<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Sulte, Le Régiment de Carignan, Mélanges Historiques, Montréal, G. Ducharme, 1922, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> A. Couillard-Després, Histoire de Sorel, Montréal, Imprimerie des Sourds-Muets, 1926, p. 41, quoted from the document in the Public Archives of Canada.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

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direction, but were loth to undertake any independent development of a roture. Some did begin to farm after some years of experience working with the seigneur, Pierre de Saurel. Others, however, soon left the land and became coureurs de bois. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that we can no longer trace them in any census of the country. Some even returned to France.<sup>8</sup>

The agricultural development of the seigneurie of Sorel was necessarily slowed up by this process of constant moving. This does not mean, however, that this land lacked potential. It took in three large islands in the St. Lawrence facing the mainland, île St. Ignace, île Ronde and île de Grâce. The ambitious Pierre de Saurel had hoped to build for himself a brilliant future,<sup>9</sup> so he felt rather deprived when he did not receive at least fifty thousand arpents.<sup>10</sup> Yet this seigneurie did have a few advantages over others. It was located at the strategic point of the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Richelieu Rivers with the seigneuries of Yamaska in the North

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<sup>8</sup>Benjamin Sulte, Histoire des Canadiens-Français, 1608-1880, Montreal, Wilson & Cie, 1882, Tome V, p. 91.

<sup>9</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 41.

<sup>10</sup>Richard C. Harris, The Seigneurial System in Early Canada, A Geographical Study, Quebec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1966, p. 26.

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East, St. Ours in the South West, Bourgmarie and Bonsecours to the South and South East respectively. The Richelieu River cut the seigneurie into two uneven parts.<sup>11</sup> The seigneurie of Sorel was indeed at a strategic point. Fort Richelieu, which was the domain of the seigneurie, still served its original purpose - a bulwark against any Iroquois invasion down the Richelieu River. Both the St. Lawrence and Richelieu Rivers were used as highways for travelling, conveying goods to market and for fur trading.

Within the domain, Fort Richelieu, Messire Pierre de Saurel, constructed a manor of square timber fifty feet by thirty-four feet. Near this manor were a banal windmill made of field stone; a stable big enough to lodge six horses; two barns of forty feet each; and a sheepfold of thirty feet all made of timber.<sup>12</sup> Saurel went to considerable expense to make his seigneurie as attractive as possible to prospective censitaires. Richard C. Harris assures us that the best soils were on the Montreal plain and this seigneurie had similar soil.<sup>13</sup> It had its quota of woods but was not forest land.

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<sup>11</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 42.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 43 (Translation)

<sup>13</sup>R. C. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 16.

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These factors lead us to expect that a productive farming settlement should have evolved.

Like other seigneurs, Pierre de Saurel was not altogether altruistic in his endeavors.<sup>14</sup> He was greedy to build up a successful agricultural enterprise and to benefit from the revenues which would normally accrue to him. Jean Talon, the Intendant for New France, in a despatch to the Minister of Marine, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, expressed concern over this impatience and avid ambition:

Il travaille avec application; il est fort agissant, mais il est fort inquiet, et ayant de grands buts et de grands desseins qui me font appréhender en luy, piedmontois, un trop grand établissement en un pays si esloigné de l'autorité originaire.<sup>15</sup>

Pierre de Saurel, a native of the town of Grenoble, in the province of Dauphiné, was the son of a lawyer.<sup>16</sup> Himself a soldier, without any training as a farmer, he was not qualified to draw this productivity from the land. His

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>15</sup>William Bennett Munro, Documents Relating to the Seigniorial Tenure in Canada 1598-1854, Toronto, Publication of the Champlain Society, No. III, 1908, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup>Olivier Maurault, "Sorel", in Le Sorelois, 24 septembre 1942.

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character also was such that he was eager for a rich return and lacked the patience necessary for agricultural cultivation. The seigneurie of Sorel did not prosper financially during his life time. He failed to receive from his vascillating censitaires the revenue which would have helped balance his expenses, although according to Marcel Trudel: "The seigneur had a considerable interest in certain lucrative rights which were included in the contracts with his censitaires."<sup>17</sup> Among the burdensome rights discussed by this author were the rentes, lods et ventes, corvées, the right to fish and to cut wood for building or for fuel. Mr. Trudel stated that a seigneur could expect an annual payment of about \$65.30 for these rights. He needed this money to care for his land.

There is proof that Pierre de Saurel ceded few rotures and the censitaires were unstable. He unofficially received his grant of land in 1666,<sup>18</sup> and began to work it with his soldiers who had thrown in their lot with his. About 1672 land deeds began to be recorded in the seigneurie of Sorel. The

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<sup>17</sup> Marcel Trudel, The Seigneurial Regime, Ottawa, The Canadian Historical Association, 1963, p. 12 (Booklet No. 6)

<sup>18</sup> A.P.Q., Inventaire des Concessions en fief et seigneurie, fois et hommages, et aveux et dénombremments conservés aux Archives de la Province de Québec, by Pierre-Georges Roy, Beauceville, L'Éclairer, 1927, Vol. II, p. 167.

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first document extant on concessions of land was that by which Pierre de Saurel gave a piece of land, four arpents by forty, to a soldier, André Poutré dit Lavigne.<sup>19</sup> This was a fertile area situated between the St. Lawrence and Richelieu Rivers. According to the census of 1681,<sup>20</sup> Poutré was found plying the trade of shoemaker at Ville Marie. We can conclude that he had not been a success as a farmer. He had left the seigneurie by 1681, and in 1683, Madame Catherine Le Gardeur, widow of Pierre de Saurel, foreclosed his concession reclaiming the land in payment for his debt. She did that at the demand of the Lieutenant-General of Trois-Rivières, Gilles Boyvinet. This délaissement also implied that Pierre de Saurel had been deprived, on a regular basis, of the revenue stipulated in the contract of 1673. The document stated:

. . . sous la rente annuelle et perpétuelle non-rachetable de huit livres pour les dits quarantes arpents de profondeur . . . avec douze livres de cens et un bon chapon vif pour chaque arpent de devanture d'icelle ou trente sols en argent pour la valeur de chaque

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<sup>19</sup>Archives Judiciaires de Montréal, Registry of Antoine Adhémair, "Concession par M. de Saurel à André Poutré dit Lavigne," le 15 mars, 1673. (Henceforth such document references will be quoted as A.J.M., Registry of A.A.)

<sup>20</sup>Benjamin Sulte, Op. Cit., pp. 53-88.

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chapon que le dit Poutré ses hoirs et ses  
successeurs seront tenus paiés au dit  
seigneur de Saurel et aux siens à l'avenir  
tous les ans a perpétuité au jour et fête  
de la St. Martin d'hiver . . .<sup>21</sup>

Land sales of a later date attest that rotures had  
been ceded between 1666 and 1672, before written deeds had  
been issued. In this chapter only the recorded land deeds  
during the first seigneur's life time shall be considered.

The next recorded land deeds were made in 1676. Two  
contracts were drawn up in the same document, one to Nicolas  
Pion dit Lafontaine, the other to Jean Casavan dit Ladébauche.  
Both received tracts of land two arpents by forty with  
frontage on the Richelieu River.<sup>22</sup> The contracts stipulated:

. . . de plus sera tenu le dit Pion  
(Casavan) ses hoirs et ayant cause de  
tenir feu et lieu sur la dite concession  
de travailler ou faire travailler sur  
icelle et de découvrir ses voisins sui-  
vant la Coutume de Paris . . .<sup>23</sup>  
(underlining mine)

This requirement to clear the land had been inserted  
by most seigneurs in the title-deeds of concessions of land

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<sup>21</sup> A.J.M., Registry of A.A., Op. Cit.

<sup>22</sup> A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Deux contrats de  
concessions donnés par M. de Saurel, l'un à Nicolas Pion et  
l'autre à Jean Casavan dit Ladébauche," 28 septembre 1676.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

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to their censitaires. The seigneurs themselves feared losing their fiefs, since the edict of 1672 demanded the return to the royal domain of one-half of the land allotted to those seigneurs who had not yet sufficiently cleared and cultivated it. Now, in turn, the seigneurs were stipulating the same requirements of their censitaires. Should the censitaires not clear their allotted roture, the land would revert to the seigneur.<sup>24</sup>

According to the census of 1681, neither Pion nor Casavan were living on the seigneurie of Sorel. Casavan was living in the seigneurie of Contrecoeur, whereas there was no mention of the whereabouts of Pion. Benjamin Sulte claimed that when an inhabitant was unable to be located, one could surmise that he had turned coureur de bois.<sup>25</sup> There could be several reasons why Pion and Casavan did not remain on their pieces of land: they might have been seeking greener pastures; they might not have honored the regulation stipulated in their contracts requiring the clearing of land; or they might have indulged in a little speculation. Richard C.

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<sup>24</sup>William Bennett Munro, The Seigniorial System in Canada, A Study in French Colonial Policy, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1907, p. 37.

<sup>25</sup>Benjamin Sulte, Op. Cit., p. 91.

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Harris explains this last point thus:

As land was available almost anywhere, he [the censitaire] had ample choice. Often an inhabitant cleared a little land on his first roture and then sold it to a newcomer for perhaps a hundred livres . . . Through several such transactions in two or three years he earned enough to keep body and soul together, and perhaps a little more which could go towards some improvements on a permanent farm.<sup>26</sup> (insertion mine)

And so such land speculation could be surmised among another group who received their land together, September 28, 1676. Gilles Danjou and Jean Tourmente both received concessions two arpents by forty, and Jean Piet dit Trempe la Crouste, a soldier, received one, four by forty. Each of these concessions of land faced the Richelieu River and stretched to the St. Lawrence River.<sup>27</sup> These were good farm lands with access to two water highways. Of the three censitaires only Gilles Danjou remained on the seigneurie. There was no record of Jean Tourmente either before or after this business transaction. He probably joined the coureurs de bois. As for Jean Piet dit Trempe la Crouste, the census

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<sup>26</sup>Richard C. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 144 (cf., William Bennett Munro, The Seigneurial System in Canada, p. 43)

<sup>27</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Trois contrats de concession donnés l'un à Gilles Danjou, l'autre à Jean Tourmente, l'autre à Jean Piet par M. de Saurel," le 28 septembre, 1676.

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of 1681 listed him at Villemur, now Berthier.<sup>28</sup>

Pierre Letendre dit Laliberté, received a piece of land three arpents by forty, from the seigneur, Pierre de Saurel. Letendre sold one section of it in 1674 to Antoine Adhémard, royal notary of the jurisdiction of Trois Rivières and a former soldier of Saurel's Company. On one arpent by forty, Letendre felled the trees and built a cabin. He was therefore able to sell it to Adhémard for £135, which seems a considerable profit. This appears to be a case of speculation.<sup>29</sup>

Another instance is that of Charles Le Sieur, sieur de La Pierre, the royal notary of Batiscan residing at St. Charles River near Cap de la Madeleine. In 1678, he leased a concession of land, which he had at Sorel, to Louis Badaillac dit Laplante, a soldier from Pierre Salvaye's Company.<sup>30</sup> It was a good roture, three arpents by forty, bordering on the St. Lawrence and Richelieu Rivers, and contiguous with

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<sup>28</sup> Benjamin Sulte, Op. Cit., p. 64.

<sup>29</sup> A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par Letendre et Maurin sa femme à Adhémard," le 10 mai, 1674.

<sup>30</sup> A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Bail à rente fait à Louis Badaillac par Charles Le Sieur, sieur de La Pierre," le 2 octobre, 1678.

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Badaillac's own concession. Le Sieur had cleared the land, felled the trees and built a house on this tract of land which he had first received from Pierre de Saurel in 1673.<sup>31</sup> Besides paying the seigneur of Sorel, Pierre de Saurel, the annual rente of £6 in money, three live capons, or thirty sols for each capon, and nine deniers of cens, Badaillac had an added annual rente to pay: fifteen minots of French Wheat. This last requirement was often stipulated in documents when part of a roture was leased to another censitaire. The total rente could be redeemed by paying the sum of £800, including the arrears should there be any, in installments of £200 annually either in money, furs, or French wheat at the current price, as to be decided by Badaillac.

These land speculations were harmful to the progress of the seigneurie, since the censitaire simply cleared the necessary part of the roture, and built some type of cabin, in order to sell it as quickly as possible to the highest bidder. There was, therefore, little thought given to that daily grind of cultivating the land so necessary for progress.

Jacques Joubert received a piece of land, two arpents by forty, from the seigneur, Pierre de Saurel, March 11, 1673.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

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Three years later, he in turn sold it to Pierre Lozoult.<sup>32</sup> Joubert, being a miller and not a farmer, probably did just enough work on the roture to be able to sell it at a profit. No less than six months later, Lozoult wrote to his seigneur asking him to sell the roture for him as he was on his way to Acadia. Saurel sold the piece of land to a soldier, Jean Guillet, dit St. Mars, for £250. Jean Guillet was still in Sorel at the census of 1681. It is to be noted, however, that within three years, this roture had changed hands three times.

Jean-Baptiste Pâtissier dit St. Amans sold his roture back to Pierre de Saurel for £120.<sup>33</sup> It had originally belonged to Nicolas Pion dit Lafontaine who was mentioned above as having bought another roture and had left it sometime before 1681. Pâtissier needed the money from the sale of this roture to go fur trading. Needless to say that fur trading held a greater attraction for him than farming and this occupied some of his time. He was still on the seigneurie of Sorel according to the census of 1681 with ten arpents under

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<sup>32</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par M. de Saurel faisant pour Pierre Lozoult à Jean Guillet pour £250," le 29 septembre, 1676.

<sup>33</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par Jean Helnard dit l'Ardoise a M. de Saurel faisant pour St. Amans," le 29 septembre 1676.

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cultivation. Yet his full time and attention were not given to farming.

Richard C. Harris observed:

Throughout the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, the habitant's way of life was in a state of flux. Land changed hands rapidly: farming held little more attraction than fishing, and often a good deal less than the fur trade. A man was a farmer one year, a trader the next, and often a fisherman on the side.<sup>34</sup>

Of the thirty-three soldiers who were encouraged to remain in Canada only ten still held rotures in the seigneurie of Sorel by 1681, a fact that substantiates the observation that the turnover of land was quite frequent in the 1670's.<sup>35</sup>

This constant change of hands prevented the full development of agriculture on the seigneurie and caused the failure in productivity.

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<sup>34</sup>R.C. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 167.

<sup>35</sup>R.C. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 141.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL BY THE CENSITAIRES

While the unstable condition of rotures impeded a proper cultivation of the land, the fief, nevertheless, had developed into an active and dynamic industrial enterprise. This industry was carried on by the censitaires.

The type of censitaires drawn to the seigneurie of Sorel in the 1670's seemed to have been influenced not only by the agricultural possibilities which lay therein. They were encouraged also by the industrial opportunities made available by the strategic position in which it was situated at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Richelieu Rivers. It must be remembered that the seigneurie of Sorel was in its inception a military settlement which meant that most of the settlers, and that included the first seigneur, had most likely little knowledge of farming although, by their acceptance of a roture, they committed themselves to agricultural cultivation. It could be surmised, therefore, that if farming was not a success, they could turn to fur trading or fishing made feasible by the two waterways. There was indeed a great fluidity of occupations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard C. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 45.

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The first of these commercial enterprises was that of the gristmill, also called banal windmill. The mill rights were one of the seigneur's special financial sources. Yet it was an expense, since he was obliged to maintain it.

As early as 1668, the seigneur of Sorel, Pierre de Saurel, had a banal windmill built near the manor. There followed millers in rather quick succession. Probably there was not enough to keep a miller busy the full year. Jacques Joubert's signature appeared on a document as witness to a business transaction between Barthélemy Le Maistre of the seigneurie of Mount Royal,<sup>2</sup> and Antoine Chaudillon, master surgeon of Sorel.<sup>3</sup> In 1671, Jacques Gibaud was a participant in a sale of a concession. By this contract, Gibaud received a piece of land at Autray four arpents with a cabin on it for £15.<sup>4</sup> It is to be noted that within two years there had been two millers on the seigneurie of Sorel.

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<sup>2</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Marché entre Barthélemy Le Maistre et Antoine Chaudillon, chirurgien," le 13 mars 1669.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par Elie Grimard et Anne Perrin mariés à Jacques Gibaud meusnier du moulin de M. de Saurel pour £15," le 1er novembre 1671.

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The constant flux of personnel continued at this time. There was a sale of a concession at Sorel, two arpents by forty, by Pierre de Saurel to Jacques Joubert in 1673.<sup>5</sup> Had he left in 1671 to return in 1673? This could have been the case, since, as it has been noted above, there was a great deal of going and coming during the first years of the development of the seigneurie. According to the documents in the Registry of the Notary Antoine Adhémar, Pierre de Saurel had been involved in at least ten contracts dealing with cessions of land to his censitaires. This number does not include the many cessions of land made either verbally or under private seal - such cessions of land were often implied in the documents under study. The roture which Jacques Joubert received in 1673 was sold in 1676 to Pierre Lozoult.<sup>6</sup> Joubert eventually settled in the seigneurie of Repentigny, as is shown by the census of 1681. There was no record of the miller, Jacques Gibaud, after he had left for Autray.

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<sup>5</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par M. de Saurel faisant pour Pierre Lozoult à Jean Guillet pour £250," le 29 septembre 1676.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

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According to abbé Couillard-Després, Michel Brouillet dit Laviolette was a new arrival from Chambly in 1675.<sup>7</sup> He had received a concession from the seigneur Jacques de Chambly in 1673.<sup>8</sup> Brouillet was mentioned for the first time, as a miller at Sorel, in a contract in which Pierre de Saurel bought back a roture from one of his censitaires, Jean-Baptiste Pâtissier dit St. Amans.<sup>9</sup> Brouillet was directed according to this particular document to give the wheat milled from Pâtissier's roture to the buyer of the piece of land, the seigneur of Sorel, Pierre de Saurel.

The year 1676-1677 was a particularly busy one. Michel Brouillet hired a helper, Pierre L'Homme.<sup>10</sup> As already shown in Chapter One, the year 1676 was indeed a busy one compared to the ones previous to that date, since the seigneur of Sorel, Pierre de Saurel, ceded at least six pieces of land - a

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<sup>7</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 53.

<sup>8</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Concession par M. de Chambly à Michel Brouillet dit Laviolette," le 15 octobre, 1673.

<sup>9</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par Jean Helnard dit Lardoise à M. de Saurel faisant pour Jean-Baptiste Pâtissier dit St. Amans," le 29 septembre 1676.

<sup>10</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Engaget'po un an fait par Pierre L'Homme à Brouillet," le 27 juillet 1677.

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much larger number than had been ceded by him in previous years. Although most of these censitaires did not remain more than one year or two, they still had wheat to be ground at the seigneur's mill. L'Homme was already under obligation to François Pelletier, sieur Dantaya. In order to have L'Homme released, Brouillet promised to pay Pelletier the sum of £100.<sup>11</sup> Pierre L'Homme was then free to be hired by Brouillet for one year, or even longer, if necessary, until the debt had been paid.

At this time the seigneurie also possessed a carpenter. Michel Brouillet must have had more than one roture since Gilles Dufau, a wooden-bridge carpenter, bought and sold back within three months a piece of land, two arpents, at the cost of £300. These two business deals took place between Brouillet and Dufau during the summer of 1677.<sup>12</sup> According to the second contract, Brouillet, on receiving back the concession from Dufau, was to pay a debt owed by Dufau to Pierre Salvaye, and to recover for his own use £13 from one of Dufau's debtors, St. Amour. Gilles Dufau was also mentioned in Couillard-Després Histoire de Sorel

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<sup>11</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Ob de £100 concédée à François Pelletier par Michel Brouillet, meusnier," le 26 juillet 1677.

<sup>12</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par Gilles Dufau à Michel Brouillet," le 8 septembre 1677.

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as having married Françoise Simon, July, 1678. She was the widow of Claude Coignac dit Lajeunesse who had been a soldier in Pierre de Saurel's Company. Coignac had first settled on the seigneurie of Sorel, but his death occurred at Quebec in May, 1678.<sup>13</sup> This signifies the connection of one more of the Carignan-Salières Regiment.

A father and son-in-law were listed as carpenters in the census of 1681. Jean Le Magnan dit La Grange was mentioned in a sale contract of land at Sorel ceded by Pierre Letendre dit Laliberté to the royal notary, Antoine Adhémar.<sup>14</sup> This contract revealed that Adhémar paid Letendre £31 for the fourteen days of carpentry work done on the roture by Jean Le Magnan, master carpenter on the seigneurie of Sorel. Le Magnan was killed by the Iroquois, August 19, 1691.<sup>15</sup> His daughter Catherine married Charles Vanet dit le Parisien, a soldier from Pierre Salvaye de Tremont's Company.<sup>16</sup> In the

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<sup>13</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 53.

<sup>14</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par Letendre et Maurin sa femme à Adhémar," 10 mai 1674.

<sup>15</sup>Mgr. Tanguay, Op. Cit., Vol. 1.

<sup>16</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 48.

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census of 1681, he was registered as a carpenter and had twelve arpents under cultivation. Chapter Four will show Charles Vanet in charge of the building of the first church on the seigneurie of Sorel. According to Monseigneur Tanguay, Vanet went eventually to Berthier formerly called Villemur.

Zacarie Digard, a baker, arrived in the seigneurie around 1676. Although not one of Pierre de Saurel's soldiers, he was listed as a baker at Sorel in the census of 1681. He was first mentioned as a witness in several contracts in 1676 and 1683.<sup>17</sup> He could not have been in charge of a banal bake-oven, since to this date there had been only a few unsuccessful attempts to introduce them in New France. The bake-oven was one of two banal charges which came over from France to Canada, the other being the gristmill. The bake-oven was too incongruous to be of any real use, so it was soon abandoned.<sup>18</sup> Digard had his own type of bakery shop to service

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<sup>17</sup> A.J.M., Registry of A.A., Nos 198, 199, 200, 201 and 810.

<sup>18</sup> R.C. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 72 (cf., W.B. Munro, The Seigneurial System in Canada, A Study in French Colonial Policy, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1907, p. 121)

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those neighbors who depended on his baking. He did not marry, and had three arpents of land under cultivation.<sup>19</sup>

According to the census of 1681, Jean-Baptiste (dit St. Amans) was listed as a pastry-maker: pâtissier. Was pastry-cooking compatible with a frontier way of life? All documents which mentioned him, gave "Pâtissier" as his surname. It often occurred that the name of the trade became the surname of the one plying that particular trade. St. Amans had been engaged intermittently in fur trading. He had ten arpents under cultivation. Although a number of censitaires in the colony did have several occupations, pastry-making did not seem to have been one of them. So, therefore, this remains questionable.

Two metal workers were on this seigneurie in 1674. Martin Masse, a master locksmith, and Etienne Cureau dit Langevin, an edge-tool worker were witnesses to the contract drawn up between Adhémar and Letendre. Since no more is heard of either from this date, it could be surmised that they were travelling craftsmen. This conclusion is suggested by Douville and Casanova: "Le Canada a ses artisans, parfois nomades, qui de village en village vont offrir des ustensils de ménage de leur

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<sup>19</sup>B. Sulte, Op. Cit., census of 1681.

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fabrication."<sup>20</sup> Martin Masse was living in Montreal by the census of 1681. One of his children had been born in Sorel. Etienne Cureau was also living in Montreal. He had married the year after the date of this document.<sup>21</sup>

There were two other edge-tool makers who had resided on the seigneurie of Sorel at two different intervals. Christophe Laurent dit Champagne had been a soldier in Pierre de Saurel's Company and so he settled on the seigneurie in the early years of its inception; whereas Jean Carron was first mentioned in the census of 1681. Laurent married and had one child at Sorel. There was no mention of him in the census of 1681, although Monseigneur Tanguay reported that another child died at Boucherville.<sup>22</sup> Carron did not marry. He had eight arpents under cultivation. Since nothing more was heard of either one, they might have become travelling smithies, as axes, hammers, spades and other agricultural tools were in constant demand everywhere in the colony.

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<sup>20</sup> Raymond Douville and Jacques-Donat Casanova, La vie quotidienne en Nouvelle-France, le Canada, de Champlain à Montcalm, [Paris,] Hachette, 1964, p. 196.

<sup>21</sup> Mgr. C. Tanguay, Op. Cit., Vol. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

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Two shoemakers, André Poutré dit Lavigne and Gilles Couturier dit Labonté, resided in the seigneurie of Sorel.<sup>23</sup> Both were soldiers from Pierre de Saurel's Company who had decided to settle on his seigneurie. In the census of 1681, Poutré was registered in two places: the seigneurie of Sorel and Montreal. A document dated 1683 concerned the abandonment of his roture in Sorel. The mortgaged roture and its subsequent abandonment have already been discussed in Chapter One. Poutré could have been living in Montreal some time before 1681, but since he was still a registered censitaires of the seigneurie of Sorel, he was listed as such in the census. Accordingly, Gilles Couturier was the master shoemaker of this seigneurie. The revenue could not have been sufficient, however, since he was found among a fur-trading party in 1683.

Three other censitaires had trades which added to the industrial effort of the seigneurie. They were: Nicolas Moyé (Meyer) de Grancé, a cooper; Joseph Lamy, a tanner; and François Marcé (Marcel) a rope-maker.<sup>24</sup> Of these three habitants, only Moyé had been a soldier in Pierre de Saurel's

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<sup>23</sup>Benjamin Sulte, Op. Cit.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

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Company. He had not married and had four arpents under cultivation. Both Lamy and Marcé were first mentioned in the census of 1681. Both were married; the former had ten arpents under cultivation, the latter, twelve.

There were a few professional men on the seigneurie of Sorel: Antoine Chaudillon, a surgeon;<sup>25</sup> Antoine Adhémar, sieur de St. Martin, a royal notary; and François Labernarde dit Laprairie, a royal bailiff.<sup>26</sup> Chaudillon and Adhémar were soldiers in Pierre de Saurel's Company. Chaudillon was still on the seigneurie in 1681; Antoine Adhémar, at this date, was on the seigneurie of Champlain. Subsequently, he took up residence in Montreal. Labernarde appeared on the seigneurie about 1676-77 when he signed several contracts drawn up by the notary Adhémar. The census of 1681 listed him on the seigneurie of Champlain.

The presence of a judge is something of a surprise at this early date.<sup>27</sup> Pierre Lozoult, who was already mentioned

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>A.J.M., Registry of Antoine Adhémar.

<sup>27</sup>E.Z. Massicotte, "Le tribunal Seigneurial de Sorel et autres," in Le Bulletin des Recherches Historiques, Vol. L, janvier 1944, no. 1, pp. 13-14.

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in connection with a sale of land, had been a soldier in Captain de Laubia's Company. There is only one document extant in which Pierre Lozoult is given the title of Judge of Sorel. This contract of a lease of a farm was made in 1675 by Joseph Bourdon, seigneur d'Autray, to Tourmante and Chavio.<sup>28</sup>

Judicial power, whenever given, was usually granted to the seigneur to be administered within the jurisdiction of his own seigneurie. The seigneur could appoint a seigneurial justice to replace him.<sup>29</sup> Pierre Lozoult might have been acting in this capacity. It follows, then, that a seigneurial, judicial tribunal existed in Sorel in 1675. Whether Lozoult ever exercised this judicial power is doubtful. He left the seigneurie in 1676. There was no more mention of him or of any other judge in Adhémar's Registry of documents under study.

As early as 1671, Jean Lavanois dit Laviolette, a gunpowder maker, was hired for two and a half months by Thomas Lefebvre, a master cooper in Quebec. Lavanois was to do whatever type of work was required of him. He had been a

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<sup>28</sup> A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Bail de ferme par Sr. Dautray à Tourmante et Chavio," le 25 août 1675.

<sup>29</sup> W.B. Munro, Op. Cit., p. 151.

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soldier in Pierre de Saurel's Company and was still living in the seigneurie of Sorel at the census of 1681, even though he had leased a roture at Villemur, (now, Berthier) in 1678. Probably the privileges offered in the contract were an enticement to lease a piece of land on the northern shore of the St. Lawrence, almost opposite the seigneurie of Sorel. Lavanois enjoyed the rights of hunting and fishing, besides the right of grazing his cattle on the islands adjacent to Villemur.<sup>30</sup>

This flexibility of movement, as demonstrated by the censitaires studied above, was a definite sign of the dynamic life on the seigneurie.<sup>31</sup>

The censitaires also displayed their ability to transact business among themselves. Jean Darbois dit Lafleur was a former sergeant in Pierre de Saurel's Company. It was perhaps because he had not been a farmer in France that he and his wife Marie Arboude decided to donate their roture to

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<sup>30</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Concession donnée par M. de Berthier à Lavanois," le 24 juillet, 1678.

<sup>31</sup>Alfred R. Vanasse, A Social History of the Seigniorial Regime in Canada, 1712-1739, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Montreal, Quebec, 1958, Vol. I, p. 182.

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the surgeon, Antoine Chaudillon. This transfer included their personal property as well as their weapons and their debts. In return, Chaudillon promised to take care of them in time of sickness as in health, and to see that they were properly lodged and nourished.<sup>32</sup> Six years later, Darbois and his wife Arboude decided that they wanted to return to the status quo which existed prior to this business transaction of 1670. The contracts of the transfer and the acknowledgment drawn up during Chaudillon's tenure of the land were declared null and void.<sup>33</sup> Pierre de Saurel issued new grants of land to each one, Darbois and Chaudillon. They each received anew their two arpents of land which were contiguous. Darbois arranged to help Chaudillon build a house and a stable. The contract stipulated that Chaudillon was to pay Darbois a wage of £18.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, Chaudillon would now benefit from the produce of Louis Badaillac's cow which had been farmed out to Darbois

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<sup>32</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Transaction passée par Jean Darbois et Marie Arboude sa femme et Chaudillon," le 1er octobre 1676.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Deux Concessions de M. de Saurel, l'une à Jean Darbois et l'autre à Antoine Chaudillon," le 1er octobre, 1676.

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and his wife Arboude. With the new division of concessions, Chaudillon was the beneficiary.<sup>35</sup>

Another couple, Jean-Baptiste Lavanois dit Laviolette and his wife Charlotte La Rue drew up a contract by which they made a mutual gift to each other of all their estate and personal property. Their purpose was to secure the well-being of the surviving one. This reciprocal gift would only be valid provided that there be no children. This was 1677.<sup>36</sup> The census of 1681 listed this couple as still being in Sorel and childless.

Louis Badaillac dit Laplante arranged by contract for an annuity of £14, 15 sols to be paid to Charles Le Sieur, sieur de La Pierre, until the whole debt of £295 had been paid. Badaillac's own roture would be mortgaged as long as it took to pay the debt in full.<sup>37</sup>

There was also question in this contract of two farmers Jacques Girard and Jean de Lavallée. Although Le Sieur had

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Don mutuel fait par Lavanois et de La Rue sa femme," le 13 juillet 1677.

<sup>37</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Constitution de £14, 15 sols faites a Charles Le Sieur par Louis Badaillac," le 2 octobre, 1678.

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a roture on the seigneurie of Sorel from 1673 to 1678, he had lived near Cap de la Madeleine. These two farmers, Girard and Lavallée, had been hired by him probably to fulfill one of the requirements in a sale of a roture, i.e., to live on the land. Le Sieur had also rented to them a pair of oxen which he was now taking back after leasing the roture to Louis Badaillac.<sup>38</sup> Badaillac and Paul Hus had also been temporary farmers on this same roture at Sorel.<sup>39</sup>

According to Couillard-Després, Gilles Danjou was Pierre de Saurel's confidential adviser.<sup>40</sup> He seems to have acted as a sort of bailiff or manager. Although he was not a soldier, he did come to the seigneurie of Sorel as early as 1673. A document dated 1677 cancelling a lease of land made in 1673 verified this fact. For some reasons not recorded, Danjou incurred rather heavy debts to his seigneur, Pierre de Saurel. One such debt he paid in 1675. He still owed fl64, 10 sols. He did carpentry work about the seigneurie at the

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<sup>38</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Bail à rente fait à Louis Badaillac par Charles Le Sieur, sieur de la Pierre," le 2 octobre 1678.

<sup>39</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., Op. Cit., (see footnote 37)

<sup>40</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 54.

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request of Pierre de Saurel as part payment. One such place was Jean Robin dit Lapointe's roture. Despite all he did, Danjou still owed his seigneur a considerable amount of money. For this reason he ended his days as a servant on his seigneur's domain. There seems to be a discrepancy in Danjou's age, between Benjamin Sulte's census of 1681 which gave him fifty years of age, and A. Couillard-Després who said he died at eighty-one in 1690.<sup>41</sup>

This research has brought to light some facts of interest to the writer of social history which prove the vitality of life on the seigneurie. There was somewhat of a scandal involved in the court case brought against a certain Jean Hubou de Longchamps Tourville by Jean-Baptiste Pâtissier dit St. Amans. Both had spent a considerable part of this particular day and night imbibing in a cabaret. They quarrelled and Hubou struck St. Amans with his lance for which St. Amans brought Hubou to court. St. Amans won the case and with the money newly acquired paid a debt he owed Jean Mailhot.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 58.

<sup>42</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Transport d'intéret civil fait par J.-Bte Pâtissier dit St. Amans et Marie Giguère sa femme au sieur Jean Mailhot po'raison du coup d'espée que Jean Hubou à donné aud. St. Amand," le 13 septembre 1687.

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M. Pierre Volland, acting pastor at St. Ours but at one time a missionary priest at Sorel, maintained that Pierre Huynan dit Laforge bought a concession at Sorel from him through a third party, Louis Badailiac dit Laplante. Badailiac claimed he had received a letter from Huynan asking him to transact this business. Huynan denied that he had ever written such a letter. Finally, both the priest and Huynan decided to settle this matter out of court by arbitration. They would accept the decision of the two arbitrators. The one guilty would be required to give £15 to the poor of the hospital.<sup>43</sup>

Also pertinent to the social history of this seigneurie was the hiring of children. There were two known cases. Mathurin Petiot (Piot) residing at Beauport and his wife Marie Charon hired out their ten-year-old child, Jacques to Pierre de Saurel for three years. Jacques Piot was expected to do work compatible with his age.<sup>44</sup>

Charlotte Chaudillon, the fourteen-year-old daughter of the surgeon Antoine Chaudillon, was hired as a servant for

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<sup>43</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Compromis a arbitre entre Mrs Volland et Huynan Laforge," le 17 mars 1691.

<sup>44</sup>Archives Judiciaires de Québec (Henceforth A.J.Q.), Registry of Pierre Duquet, "Engagement de Jacques Petiot (Piot) à Pierre de Saurel," le 27 juillet 1681.

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two years by an innkeeper of Ville Marie, Abraham Bouat. Her annual wage of £45 would be distributed throughout the year on a regular basis.<sup>45</sup>

Certain men worked as servants on the seigneurie. The census of 1681 recorded two on the seigneur's domain, Gilles Danjou and Pierre Courtois dit Bonhumeur. A. Couillard-Després, however, included four others as domestics: Nicolas Legaré, Jean de Lisle, Pierre Cansel (Cassel?), and Jacques Piot. Legaré had fourteen arpents of land under cultivation. He eventually went to live at Château-Richer.<sup>46</sup> Pierre Cansel was also a carpenter and was later used as such by Madame de Saurel. De Lisle was a simple domestic at the manor house. The census also recorded the name of François Boutrou in this group; yet there was no mention of him before or after 1681, nor did Couillard-Després have anything to say about him.

Pierre de Saurel built a fort on his seigneurie which he could have manned with his soldier-colonists. The seigneurie of Sorel had received soldiers from Captain Pierre de Saurel's Company, as well as from the Company of two other captains of

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<sup>45</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Engagement de la fille du Sr. Chaudillon au Sr. Bouat," le 18 octobre 1690.

<sup>46</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 58.

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the Carignan-Salières Regiment, M. de Laubia and M. Pierre Salvaye de Trémont.<sup>47</sup> Fourteen soldiers from these three Companies out of the thirty-three who had first settled on the seigneurie remained there as colonists. The following are those who persevered: Jean-Baptiste Pâtissier dit St. Amans, Charles Vanet dit Le Parisien, Nicolas Meyer de Grancé, André Poutré dit Lavigne, Jean Lavanois dit Laviolette, Gilles Couturier dit Labonté, Louis Badaillac dit Laplante, Jean Ollivier, Marin Moreau dit Laporte, Jean Darbois dit Lafleur, Antoine Chaudillon, Pierre Salvaye de Trémont, Jean Guillet dit St Mars and Pierre Vallet dit La France. The last two were not married. Most of the other colonists listed in the census of 1681 have been mentioned in the documents under study. Yet there are at least four who have left no trace of information in the registry of Antoine Adhémar, the main source of our investigation. They are: François Marcé and Jean Carron already mentioned because of their trade, edge-tool makers; Claude Pugen (Pigeon?) and Jean Cassenavre who don't seem to have had any special trade.

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<sup>47</sup> A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 47-48.

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The diversified trades and professions of the censitaires together with their native dynamism helped develop a fine industrial potential of the fief of Sorel. According to Emile Salone, the seigneurie of Sorel was the most prosperous of those on the Richelieu. The population of the seigneurie in 1681 was 118.<sup>48</sup> This was broken down by Benjamin Sulte as follows:<sup>49</sup>

Married couples	20
Men	61
Women	57
No. widow (er)	--
Children	41
Not married	77

The seigneurie of Sorel had the largest population of those on the Richelieu River. This fact also reinforces Emile Salone's statement, since there is "a direct relationship between the prosperity of the colony and a large population".<sup>50</sup> The same may be said about a seigneurie.

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<sup>48</sup>Emile Salone, La colonisation de la Nouvelle-France, Etude sur les origines de la nation Canadienne-Française, Paris, Librairie Orientale et Américaine, p. 244.

<sup>49</sup>Benjamin Sulte, Op. Cit., p. 89.

<sup>50</sup>Alfred R. Vanasse, Op. Cit., p. 170.

### CHAPTER III

#### LUMBER AND FUR TRADE ON THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL

The constant flux of the censitaires in the early years of the seigneurie led to a slow agricultural growth. Pierre de Saurel, therefore, sought other outlets for revenue in the commercial development of the seigneurie.

A seigneur who could not make enough revenue to subsist from agriculture had limited means of livelihood.<sup>1</sup> Such was the case with Pierre de Saurel. He had received money<sup>2</sup> to settle on the seigneurie and to develop and cultivate it. He used most of this to so equip his fief as to attract the censitaires necessary for this cultivation. Yet the seigneurie was not able to make an appreciable return from agriculture alone. He was obliged to turn to trade to make the necessary money. This was limited to lumber and fur.

The seigneur de Saurel's first project was the lumber business. By 1671, he was transacting a business deal with the Intendant, Jean Talon. Pierre de Saurel was committed to

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<sup>1</sup>Léon Gérin, Aux Sources de Notre Histoire, Les conditions économiques et sociales en Nouvelle-France, Fides Montréal, 1946, p. 212-213.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

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deliver planks of oak and pine for His Majesty's Ships which were being built at Quebec on the shores of Pointe au Lièvre.<sup>3</sup> Very minute details were given as to the thickness and length of each plank. It is possible that Pierre de Saurel owned a sawmill. Delivery of the lumber was to begin in the spring of 1672 and to continue until completed.

Royal contracts were given for lumber at this time through Jean Talon for the King's shipbuilding.<sup>4</sup> Yet this trade did not thrive. Talon's commercial activities helped bring about a rapid economic expansion in New France,<sup>5</sup> but it was short-lived. He left the colony in 1672.

Saurel's lumber trade was therefore limited. No transaction in the lumber business appears in the registry of the royal notary, Antoine Adhémar. Two documents mentioned lumber on the seigneurie of Sorel. These were drawn up by the Quebec royal notary, Romain Becquet. Pierre de Saurel's lumber industry had petered out.

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<sup>3</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Romain Becquet, "Marché entre Jean Talon et Pierre de Saurel," le 2 novembre 1671.

<sup>4</sup>Gustave Lanctot, A History of Canada, Volume 2: From the Royal Regime to the Treaty of Utrecht, 1663-1713, Toronto, Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited, 1964, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup>Gustave Lanctot, Op. Cit., p. 57.

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Pierre de Saurel made valiant efforts but they failed economically. The agricultural progress had been slow, and now, the lumber industry had miscarried. Pierre de Saurel seems to have fared worse than his censitaires.

Relevant to the lumber trade was the need for ships, since shipping lumber required vessels. Pierre de Saurel himself owned at least one such vessel which he sold to a group of merchants in 1669. One of these merchants was a colonist, Jean Guitton, the other two were from La Rochelle, France: Daniel Biaille de St. Meur and the Sieur Alexandre Petit.<sup>6</sup> Pierre de Saurel received £3000 for the sale. His need for money is apparent. The vessel used for the transport of the lumber sold in 1672 for the King's ships at Quebec was owned by Pierre de Saurel or rented by him especially for this business transaction.

It was not sufficient for seigneur and censitaire merely to subsist. They sought wealth and the colonial prestige that went with it.<sup>7</sup> Undaunted by past setbacks, Pierre de Saurel and some of his censitaires now undertook the fur trade.

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<sup>6</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Romain Becquet, "Vente d'un navire de Pierre de Saurel au Sieur Gitton," le 8 juin 1669.

<sup>7</sup>Alfred R. Vanasse, Op. Cit., p. 105.

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The first time Pierre de Saurel was mentioned in connection with the fur trade was the occasion on which Frontenac consulted him, among other settlers, concerning the sale of spirits to the Indians.<sup>8</sup> The governor's request for advice from Mr. de Saurel evidenced his involvement in the fur trade and the respect the governor had for his business sense. Pierre de Saurel examined this much disputed question from the business point of view, not from the moral point of view. He approved of the sale of spirits because he claimed, as many other traffickers in the fur trade did, that, should the French stop the sale, the Dutch would benefit, since the Indians would turn to them, and the colony of New France would suffer the consequences.<sup>9</sup>

Saurel's engagement in the fur trade developed into a business. Frontenac noted that he had five canoes and ten men in his service carrying on the fur trade. Saurel was accused by the Sovereign Council of illicit fur trading, of

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<sup>8</sup>P.-G. Roy, Ed., Bulletins des Recherches Historiques, Organe du Bureau des Archives, 1895-1925, Beauceville, L'Eclaireur Limitee, 1928, Volume 1, p. 89.

<sup>9</sup>George W. Brown, Ed., Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1966, Vol. I, p. 602. (Saurel, Pierre de, by Jean-Guy Pelletier)

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having allowed "many things in (his) home (. . .) in mockery of the king's orders and in defiance of the law",<sup>10</sup> in this regard.

As early as 1668, the coureurs de bois were causing some anxiety in the colony. Both the Sovereign Council and Governor Frontenac complained of the yearly loss of young men so sorely needed for the cultivation of the land. Yet Talon was the first to realize the evils and to attempt to put an end to such indiscriminate trafficking in furs.<sup>11</sup> Despite edicts which threatened the whip, the galleys and even death itself, fur trading parties and coureurs de bois were on the increase. Between 1676 and 1685, very few were apprehended, since too many colonists were involved.<sup>12</sup> Congés, that is, permits were issued as a means of control, but they only made supervision by the authorities more difficult. Some businessmen preferred to traffick in furs without the required permits because of the tithes attached to the acquired cargo of furs and other merchandise. Pierre de Saurel was apparently one such.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Emile Salone, Op. Cit., p. 256.

<sup>12</sup> Emile Salone, Op. Cit., p. 259.

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After 1674, that is, after the dissolution of the West Indies Company, the king's fermier was allowed to collect revenue which issued from "the fur trade at Tadoussac, a quarter of all beaver skins brought to New France by her traders, and a duty which was charged on all goods entering the country."<sup>13</sup> In order to avoid paying such dues to the king's fermier, Charles Aubert De la Chenaye and his companions, Pierre de Saurel, Guillaume Chanjon, Jean Gitton and Joseph Petit Bruno formed the Compagnie du Nord dite de la Baie d'Hudson. They all agreed that after the expedition, the two vessels would not return to Quebec but to Percé Rock where Radisson and des Groseilliers would arrange the transfer of furs to the vessel, Black Eagle. These furs would then be marketed in Holland or Spain in order to avoid any reprisals from the colonial government.

Knowledge of such an expedition was confirmed by a document which later involved Dame Catherine Le Gardeur, widow of Pierre de Saurel. This particular contract stated that

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<sup>13</sup> Grace Lee Nute, Caesars of the Wilderness, Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, and Pierre Esprit Radisson, 1618-1710, D. Appleton - Century Company, Limited, New York, 1943, p. 186.

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Madame Pierre de Saurel had made a business deal with her late husband's partners of the Compagnie du Nord. All the revenue which might come to her from the fur expedition in which she had an interest would go to these men to pay the debt owed to them by her late husband.<sup>14</sup>

The fur trade was the recognized source of revenue of the colony.<sup>15</sup> All inhabitants were involved in it in one manner or other. Pierre de Saurel's censitaires were no exception.

Pierre Huynan dit Laforge was the most intriguing of these personalities. This coureur de bois was a native of France and a gunsmith by trade. Pierre de Saurel ceded him a roture which reverted to the Saurel estate in 1683, most probably because it had not been cleared nor cultivated. In September 1673, Huynan and Jean-Baptiste Pâtissier dit St. Amans, a censitaire and former soldier in de Saurel's Company, bought a gun and food from a Quebec merchant, Antoine Caddé, for £50. They promised to pay their debt in the spring, but

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<sup>14</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Gilles Rageot, "Abandon par Catherine Le Gardeur, veuve de Pierre de Saurel à Guillaume Chanjon, Jean Gitton, Guillaume Bouthier et Joseph Petit Bruno," le 3 novembre 1685.

<sup>15</sup>Raymond Douville and J.-D. Casanova, Op. Cit., p. 202.

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it was paid only in October, 1675 when they had returned from the expedition.<sup>16</sup> Such journeys "aux Outaouais" could last from two to three years. The strategic position of the seigneurie of Sorel, flanked, as it was, by the St. Lawrence and Richelieu waterways, was a natural highway to the Ottawa valley. Fur trading on the other hand, posed a problem for the young colony, drawing young, able-bodied men from the seigneurie and its agriculture and colonization to the woods and a nomadic life. The monetary gains were a strong incentive despite the hardships involved. La Hontan claimed that a successful voyage could procure seven hundred percent profit.<sup>17</sup> The slow agricultural progress of a seigneurie could not compete with the quick results of the fur trade. The attractions of the fur trade were made even more clear during this seventeenth century. Agricultural markets outside the colony were practically non-existent.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Gilles Rageot, "Obligation de J.-Bte Pâtissier dit St. Amans et Pierre Huynan dit Laforge à Antoine Caddé," le 29 septembre 1673.

<sup>17</sup>La Hontan, Voyage dans l'Amérique Septentrionale, t. I, lettre IX, p. 85-86, footnote in Emile Salone, Op. Cit., p. 261.

<sup>18</sup>R.C. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 164.

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Illicit fur trading went on apace. The coureurs de bois had a field day in the early 1670's until first Talon, then Governor Frontenac and finally the Sovereign Council issued warnings, requirements, edicts and ordinances which even went so far as to threaten death to those who remained more than twenty-four hours in the woods.<sup>19</sup>

In 1676, Pâtissier was once more engaged in a fur trade expedition. Jean Helnard dit l'Ardoise resold Pâtissier's roture to his seigneur, Pierre de Saurel, for £120. The seigneur promised to give this sum to Pâtissier on his return from the Ottawa valley.<sup>20</sup> This is proof of the expedition.

It seems that Pierre Huynan's fur adventures were mostly illicit. Documents relating to him and his expeditions were few and far between. Ten years after their first venture, Huynan and Pâtissier joined forces once more together with a third party, Gilles Couturier dit Labonté. Couturier had been a soldier, was a censitaire and a shoemaker by trade on the seigneurie of Sorel. It had been agreed that all three would share the expense of a permit, usually £1000, and all would

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<sup>19</sup>Emile Salone, Op. Cit., p. 257.

<sup>20</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente faite par Jean Helnard dit Lardoise à Mr. de Saurel faisant pour Jean Bte. Pâtissier dit St. Amans," le 29 septembre 1676.

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help furnish provisions, food and canoe required for such a trip. They would even make use of their respective trades if necessary to raise the money. On their return, after all debts had been paid, all three would share equally in the profits.<sup>21</sup>

The year 1690 found Huynan once more in the Ottawa valley. Two companions, Louis Badaillac dit Laplante and Pierre Lamy, hoping to join this expedition bought provisions for themselves and for Huynan. Badaillac and Lamy intended to spend one year on this fur expedition.<sup>22</sup> Badaillac was a censitaire on the seigneurie of Sorel, Pierre Lamy was from Ils aux Oyes. According to Monseigneur Tanguay, Lamy was married in 1680 at Cap St. Ignace now called Montmeny. Both Badaillac and Lamy owed François Hazeur's representative in Montreal, Jean Soumande, the sum of £76 $\frac{1}{4}$ , 19 sols for this expedition. Besides, Badaillac already had a current debt of £365, 4 sols, 8 deniers, and Lamy, £49, 9 sols. Both promised to acquit these debts in a year's time. In the meantime, all they owned was mortgaged until payment should be paid in full.

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<sup>21</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Obligation fait par Pierre Huynan dit Laforge de fournir £1000 pour un congé," le 15 fevrier 1683.

<sup>22</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Obligaon consentie à Mons. Hazeur par Badaillac et Lamy pour Huynan Laforge et pour eux," le 15 mai 1690.

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Pierre Huynan's final recorded engagement in the fur trade was made with François de Laforest, commander for the King of the fort and of all the Louisiana and Illinois country. Huynan was one of twelve men whom Laforest had engaged to go on this distant voyage.<sup>23</sup> Among the twelve voyagers, Huynan seemed to have been singled out for special treatment. He had been engaged for two years; most of the others, for one year. He was to receive as wages £600 annually, the highest amount paid to any of the others. Furthermore, he had the right to bring with him £200 worth of merchandise with which to do some personal trading. This privilege was also accorded only to a brother team the Rivard Lorangers.<sup>24</sup>

To equip himself for this distant trip, Huynan bought provisions from the Montreal-based representative of Monsieur Hazeur, Jean Soumande. The debt of £918, 19 sols, 11 deniers was to be paid in beaver pelts on his return, August 1692.<sup>25</sup> It must be implied here that Huynan had no

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<sup>23</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Engagement de plusieurs à M. François de Laforest, Ecr., Cap., de Pierre Huynan dit Laforge" du 16 au 31 août 1691.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Obligation consentie à François Hazeur par P. Huynan," le 1er septembre 1691.

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intention of remaining the two years in Laforest's service. Huynan chose the home of his friends, Martin Moreau dit Laporte and his wife Catherine Lucas, as the place of payment of his debts. Moreau and his wife, now residing in Montreal, were former censitaires on the seigneurie of Sorel. Earlier in 1691, Huynan had made his last will and testament in favor of these two friends.<sup>26</sup>

As has already been noted the fur trade was the real and stable source of revenue of New France. Almost everyone was involved in one way or another. Duchesneau, the successor to Jean Talon, complained of the fact that most of the members of the Sovereign Council took part in fur expeditions. Even Frontenac felt he had to react to the increasing volume of illicit trade, especially on the Chambly and Richelieu rivers, by establishing a station as a means of supervision to check the movements of travellers.<sup>27</sup> It was at this time that Pierre Salvaye de Tremont a Captain of a Company of the

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<sup>26</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Testament du Sieur Pierre Huynan dit Laforge," le 5 février 1691.

<sup>27</sup>Gustave Lanctot, Op. Cit., p. 74.

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Carignan-Salières Regiment was apprehended on the Chambly River.<sup>28</sup> The king's fermier, Josias Boisseau, accused Salvaye of having wanted to trade with the English in New England. In protest, Salvaye handed in his resignation as a member of the Sovereign Council, despite the fact that Boisseau had returned his confiscated goods. Although he had been a Captain of a Company, Salvaye took a roture in the seigneurie of Sorel where he married Catherine Le Roy, and had ten arpents of land under cultivation.

Shortly after his fur trading venture with the Compagnie du Nord Pierre de Saurel died suddenly, November 26, 1682, and was buried there with due solemnity in Notre Dame Church.<sup>29</sup>

Pierre de Saurel left a prosperous seigneurie according to the census taken the year before his death. Such success required the collaboration of the seigneur with his censitaires.<sup>30</sup> The first years had been lean years. Saurel's ambition to make a success of the seigneurie led him to incur

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<sup>28</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Romain Becquet, "Désistement de Pierre Salvaye du Conseil Souverain," le 14 novembre 1681.

<sup>29</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 56.

<sup>30</sup>Alfred R. Vanasse, Op. Cit., p. 238.

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rather large debts which he had hoped to liquidate by his ventures in the lumber and fur trades. His premature death, therefore, left a mortgaged seigneurie. Had he lived he would, it appears likely, have made a success of his fur trading ventures, and thus would have settled his debts. His death put an end to his ambitious plans for his fief. He left his widow with a heavily mortgaged seigneurie.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL FINALLY LOST

On the death of her husband, Madame de Saurel received a mortgaged seigneurie. Since she had no son,<sup>1</sup> she assumed the position of administrator of the seigneurie of Sorel.

Gilles de Boyvinet, the Lieutenant-General of the jurisdiction of Trois-Rivières, advised Madame de Saurel to make cessions of land. In February 1683, she ceded Ile de Grâce, one of the islands adjacent to and belonging to the seigneurie of Sorel, to fourteen inhabitants for use as a common on which their animals could pasture.<sup>2</sup> The contract gave these inhabitants the right to clear some of the land, to build thereon a cabin and a cattle pen. The contract further stipulated that, should the St. Lawrence flood the island in the spring, they would have the right to make use of Ile St. Ignace, which Madame de Saurel otherwise reserved for herself. The annual rent for the use of the common was £6 which was to remain the required rent for these habitants or for anyone to whom they ceded their right.

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<sup>1</sup> P.-G. Roy, Op. Cit., Volume XXVII, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Concession de l'île de Grâce faite par Madame de Saurel à partye des habitans dudit lieu," le 14 février 1683.

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The same year, Madame de Saurel hired Pierre Cansel (Calssel) for one year to work about the manor at whatsoever tasks would be allotted him.<sup>3</sup> According to A. Couillard-Després, Cansel was a carpenter by trade.<sup>4</sup> Madame de Saurel was to pay Cansel £100 in wages some of which she had already paid him: £46, 7 sols, 6 deniers: the rest would be paid concurrently as he worked. Cansel also received a concession of land, three arpents by forty for £50 to be paid in three equal instalments, the first one, at Christmas 1684. Should Cansel owe Madame de Saurel any money at the end of his year of service, he was to pay it, and if he could not, then he was to continue working for the lady until the debt had been paid in full.

The seigneurie of Sorel could boast of possessing a windmill from its very beginning - an uncommon thing since there were very few mills in the colony at this period.<sup>5</sup> The seigneur, Pierre de Saurel, built the gristmill at the same time as other necessary buildings on his domain. Much of the milling was done at harvest time. The rest could be done well in advance.

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<sup>3</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Engagement de Pierre Cassel à Madame de Saurel," le 10 août 1685.

<sup>4</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 59.

<sup>5</sup>William B. Munro, Op. Cit., p. 105.

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While drawing up the inventory of the estate of her late husband, Gilles Boyvinet, the Lieutenant-General of the jurisdiction of Trois-Rivières, advised Madame de Saurel to see to the repairing of the mill.<sup>6</sup> Boyvinet underscored the necessity for immediate action, since the whole seigneurie depended on the mill for the wheat necessary for the basic food, bread. He claimed, furthermore, that should the mill become unworkable, the habitants would be deprived of a vital necessity. The farmers would most likely, leave their concessions for another seigneurie where they would be sure their grain could be ground.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the contracts of concessions given by Pierre de Saurel stipulated that the censitaires must have their grain ground at the seigneurial mill and pay him one-fourteenth of the grain which the miller ground.<sup>8</sup> It was up to Madame de Saurel now to see that this banal right was honored. Each concession stipulated:

. . . comme aussi sera tenu ledit Poutré ses hoirs et successeurs de faire moudre au moulin dudit seigneur tous les grains qu'il lui seront nécessaire tant pour son entretenement de sa

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<sup>6</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Engagement de Pierre Mercerot par Madame de Saurel," le 15 août 1683.

<sup>7</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>William B. Munro, Op. Cit., p. 105.

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famille ou ménage et que autre grain qu'il fera moudre sans qu'il lui soit permis de les transportés pour faire moudre ailleurs qu'il n'est au préalable payé le droit de mouture au meunier dudit lieu . . .<sup>9</sup>

According to W.B. Munro, the seigneur's right of the mill banality had to be stipulated in the contract, otherwise the habitants or censitaires could go elsewhere to have grain ground.<sup>10</sup> In this seigneurie, the censitaires had no other choice, unless they wanted to pay the miller of Sorel for having their grain ground elsewhere.

On the advice, therefore, of Gilles Boyvinet, Madame de Saurel sought to repair the mill. She engaged Pierre Mercerot, a master carpenter of the seigneurie of Champlain.<sup>11</sup> Mercerot with two helpers was to rebuild using only the good parts of the old mill. He would receive £850. In another document, Mercerot acknowledged having received £1000 from Madame de Saurel. This amount was £150 more than was stipulated in the contract; the reason given was that the work of

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<sup>9</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Concession par M. de Saurel à André Poutré dit Lavigne," le 15 mars 1673.

<sup>10</sup>William B. Munro, Op. Cit., p. 102.

<sup>11</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Engagement de Pierre Mercerot par Madame de Saurel," le 15 août 1683.

## THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL FINALLY LOST

demolition of parts of the old mill had not been taken into consideration.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile as administrator, even before repairs had started, Madame de Saurel engaged Louis Rigaud as a miller for one year's service. She would pay him for grinding the wheat and for doing other chores about the domain, £160 and a pair of shoes from France.<sup>13</sup>

There are no instances of documents relating complaints against the miller or the malfunctioning of the old mill on the seigneurie of Sorel, although complaints were rampant throughout the colony.<sup>14</sup> Madame de Saurel tried to keep the mill in good repair. Ten years after the great overhauling it had received, the lady of the manor engaged Louis Paille dit Paillard, a mill carpenter, in order to "mettre un arbre au moulin", i.e., to put in the biggest and strongest piece of wood available, to serve as a prop for the mill wheel. This piece of wood could turn on a pivot or remain immobile. It was

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<sup>12</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Quittance par Madame de Saurel à Pierre Mercerot," le 26 novembre 1684.

<sup>13</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Pierre Duquet, "Engagement de Louis Rigaud à Catherine Le Gardeur, veuve de Pierre de Saurel," le 15 octobre 1683.

<sup>14</sup>William B. Munro, Op. Cit., p. 112.

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an essential, basic part of any mill,<sup>15</sup> and to make any other necessary repairs for a wage of £60. A year later, Catherine Le Gardeur borrowed £450 from the pastor of Repentigny for indispensable repairs to the mill and other buildings on the seigneurie. A note attached to this document testified to the fact that the debt was paid in full on March 10, 1700.<sup>16</sup>

Between 1683 and 1685, Madame de Saurel incurred a debt of £1205 for merchandise sold and delivered to her by a Quebec merchant, Sieur François Vianney de Pachot.<sup>17</sup> This debt covered the money borrowed for the upkeep of the seigneurie of Sorel, especially for repairs to the mill and stable. Madame de Saurel promised to pay this debt in beaver, moose, money and grain between May and October 1686. The debt to be so paid did not include a standing debt of £430 owed to the same Sieur Pachot.

Madame de Saurel's business affairs involved dealings with her own relatives: the Sieur Charles Juchereau, Lieutenant-

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<sup>15</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Marché pour le moulin de Saurel entre Catherine Le Gardeur et Léonard Paille dit Paillard," le 6 août 1693.

<sup>16</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Obligation de Dame Le Gardeur de Saurel à Mr. Volant, prêtre," le 18 septembre 1694.

<sup>17</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Gilles Rageot, "Obligation de Catherine Le Gardeur à François Pachot," le 3 novembre 1685.

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General of the jurisdiction of the Island of Montreal, a cousin; and Charlotte Françoise Juchereau Pachot, also a cousin and the wife of the above-mentioned merchant Pachot. Madame de Saurel ceded to Sieur Pachot the permit she hoped to receive.<sup>18</sup> This could be a congé, or even a half congé, whatever the Governor saw fit to give her. In August 1681, one of the three decrees issued concerning the fur trade dealt with permits or licenses which were to be granted "by the Governor to noblemen, retired officers, officers' widows, public servants or religious institutions."<sup>19</sup> Madame de Saurel expected one such permit in the near future and as was often the case, she was transferring this permit to her creditor, Sieur Pachot, for the merchandise delivered to her this very day. After ascertaining the cost of this merchandise: £760, 10 sols, 6 deniers, she further stipulated in another contract, that should the revenue accruing from the permit not cover the whole debt, she would make up the balance.<sup>20</sup> Ten years later, however, Madame de Saurel owed

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<sup>18</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Gilles Rageot, "Transport par Catherine Le Gardeur, veuve de Pierre de Saurel à François Pachot," le 3 novembre 1685.

<sup>19</sup>Gustave Lanctot, Op. Cit., p. 75.

<sup>20</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Gilles Rageot, "Déclaration de Catherine Le Gardeur, veuve de Pierre de Saurel à François Pachot," le 4 novembre 1685.

## THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL FINALLY LOST

Sieur Pachot £1696, 18 sols, 6 deniers.<sup>21</sup> Early in 1695, Sieur Pachot had her personal goods seized. A year later this seizure was declared null and void. Sieur Pachot accepted the decision of M<sup>e</sup> Charles Juchereau, Lieutenant-General of the jurisdiction of the Island of Montreal, to have Madame de Saurel's personal effects placed at the home of the Procurator, Claude Pothier, as a surety for the debt. The Sieur Pachot's wife, Charlotte Françoise Juchereau, Madame de Saurel's cousin, sought to take the two coffers and a small chest, containing Catherine Le Gardeur's personal goods, having been authorized to do so by her husband. Finally, in May 1697, Madame Pachot received from the Sieur Pothier as payment of debt to her husband the much debated coffers and chest.

Madame de Saurel had other creditors to assuage, namely, the business partners of the Compagnie du Nord in which her husband had a share, and to whom he was in debt. As a partner in an expedition then in progress, Madame de Saurel, stipulated in this contract that all the profit accruing to her should be transferred to the Sieurs Guillaume Chanjon, Jean Gitton, Guillaume Bouthier and Joseph Petit Bruno, to satisfy these

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<sup>21</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Inventaire des marchandises déposées es mains du Sr. Pothier par Made de Saurel p<sup>o</sup> seureté du dub de Mr. Pachot," le 13 février 1696.

## THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL FINALLY LOST

creditors.<sup>22</sup>

It was the earnest wish of the King that the colony be settled and that the land be cleared and cultivated.<sup>23</sup> Thus, ordinances were issued here in New France requiring that the land be settled, cleared and cultivated. By such an ordinance of the late Gilles de Boyvinet, Lieutenant-General of the jurisdiction of Trois-Rivières, Madame de Saurel ceded Ile St. Ignace "en fief lige" to Sieur Pierre de Quatre Barbes, Captain of a detachment of the Marine.<sup>24</sup> This island was situated opposite the domain, Fort Richelieu, in the St. Lawrence River. This was the first and only instance of granting a sub-seigneurie or concession en arriere-fief on the seigneurie of Sorel. All other cessions had been en censive. Munro explained why grants of this sort were not numerous:

. . . seigniors preferred to have settlers take their lands not en arriere-fief, but en censive, or en roture; for [ . . . ] the

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<sup>22</sup>A.J.Q., Registry of Gilles Rageot, "Abandon par Catherine Le Gardeur, veuve de Pierre de Saurel, à Guillaume Chanjon, Jean Gitton, Guillaume Bouthier, et Joseph Petit Bruno," le 3 novembre 1685.

<sup>23</sup>William B. Munro, Op. Cit., p. 59

<sup>24</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Concession en fief par Mad<sup>me</sup> de Saurel à Mr de Quatre Barbes," le 29 octobre 1695.

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seigniorial rights over such grants were much more extensive, and were likely to be more remunerative.<sup>25</sup>

The Lieutenant-General Boyvinet wished apparently to give a sub-seigneurie to Sieur Quatre Barbes. Boyvinet advised Madame de Saurel to cede Ile St. Ignace to Sieur Quatre Barbes en arrière-fief. Her creditors, who had a lien on her property, gave permission for this transaction. The amount paid by Sieur Quatre Barbes was not stipulated in this contract, but it was certainly sufficient to warrant this permission. The contract, however, did require that Sieur Quatre Barbes pay homage to the seigneur, Madame de Saurel, and pay the quint at each change of vassal: a silver medal with a picture of St. Peter on one side, and on the other, one of St. Catherine. The Sieur Quatre Barbes and his successors, as well as any censitaires to whom he would cede a roture, were to plead their cases before the Judge of the seigneurie of Sorel, and to have their wheat ground there; and of course, all were expected to live on the land, to clear and cultivate it.

Ile Ronde, which was also part of the seigneurie of Sorel, was ceded not en arrière-fief, but "a tiltre de cens

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<sup>25</sup>William B. Munro, Op. Cit., p. 78.

## THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL FINALLY LOST

et rentes fonsière Seigneuriale non Racheptable",<sup>26</sup> that is, it was granted en censive, to Michel Daigneaux, escuyer Sieur Douville, an officer in a detachment of the Marine. Sieur Douville could not subgrant his land as was the case with Sieur Quatre Barbes. Sieur Douville had to pay annually a cens of six deniers and a rentes of four pounds, plus two live capons, or thirty sols for the value of each capon. These payments were to be made on the feast of St. Martin, November 11, beginning the next year, 1696. Douville, also could pasture his cattle on Ile de Grâce for £6 a year.

Other transactions also show evidence of the financial, social and commercial difficulties in which Madame de Saurel found herself at this time. Mr. Charles Juchereau, Lieutenant-General of the Island of Montreal, bought from his cousin, Dame Catherine Le Gardeur, some cattle for £520.<sup>27</sup> Then immediately, he rented the very same cattle to Dame Catherine Le Gardeur for a year. It appears that Juchereau was trying to help his cousin by advancing her the sum of £520 which she could well make use of to pay her creditors. For rental of

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<sup>26</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Concession par Madame de Saurel à Mr. Daigneaux Douville," le 19 novembre 1695.

<sup>27</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Vente de bestiaux par Mad<sup>me</sup> de Saurel à Mr. Juchereau portant bail fait par led. Sr. à lad. Dame," le 21 novembre 1695.

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the two oxen, three cows and two bulls, Madame de Saurel paid £40 in money and eight pounds of butter for each of the three cows.

Another expense which further burdened Madame de Saurel was the completion and support of the church and the payment of accumulated tithes. There were no resident priests in any seigneurie during the episcopate of Bishop Laval.<sup>28</sup> All diocesan priests lived at the Seminary of Quebec and were sent out as missionaries to wherever they were needed. All revenue from the tithes collected on the seigneuries went directly to the Bishop who saw to the daily needs of the priests. Finally, in 1683, after much discussion on the part of the Governor, Intendant and chief notables, Bishop Laval consented to erect twenty-five parishes. These parishes each included several seigneuries which were often very far apart. There were, therefore, habitants who very seldom saw a priest. Salone explained the sad situation, "C'est ainsi que le prêtre qui réside à Sorel doit, non seulement traverser le fleuve, mais franchir six lieues pour atteindre à la Rivière du Loup."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Emile Salone, Op. Cit., p. 272.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 274.

THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL FINALLY LOST

Bishop de Saint-Vallier, succeeding Bishop Laval in 1685, then gave the Church of New France the structure which it kept throughout the rest of the French regime.

Pierre de Saurel had a chapel erected in 1670. The missionary priest boarded at one of the habitant homes while he carried on his ministry among the people of Sorel. The Rapport des Missions which reported the condition of the Church in the colony, stated the following about Sorel: "Il y a quinze familles et cent-treize âmes. Il y a une chapelle dédiée à Saint Pierre, que les habitants ont promis de réparer jusqu'à ce qu'on en fasse une autre."<sup>30</sup> This report was made to Rome in 1683. Yet a document drawn up in 1706 reveals that the promised church was not yet finished.<sup>31</sup> The Intendant Jacques Raudot issued an ordinance whereby Madame de Saurel had to see that the church was completed. For that purpose, each inhabitant had to contribute four pounds and Madame de Saurel twenty pounds, that is, eight pounds as her own contribution, and twelve pounds for the tithes she owed the parish priest, Father Chesneau. (Chaigneau). Charles Vanet dit Le Parisien, carpenter of the seigneurie of Sorel was placed in charge of

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<sup>30</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 66.

<sup>31</sup>A.J.M., Registry of A.A., "Ordonnance de Mr. l'intendant - Le Gardeur dame de Saurel," le 4 juillet 1706.

## THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL FINALLY LOST

finishing the building of both the church and the rectory. According to this document, Madame de Saurel offered to cede a piece of land, one and one-half arpents, near the fort, that is, near the domain, to the parish priest for the purpose of making a yard and a garden. She was unable to give him land inside the domain near his rectory. Madame Catherine Le Gardeur de Saurel also gave Father Chesneau a concession of land, three arpents by forty, for his own personal use and for that of his successors. Sieur Pierre Salvaye, "Capitaine de Côte" was named as executor of the ordinance.

All of these commitments towards the church and the pastor were part of the normal responsibility of a seigneur. This was a service which he was required to assure his censitaires. In the case of the seigneurie of Sorel, what began so propitiously in 1670 became an added burden to the indebted widow of Pierre de Saurel.

Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye, the richest merchant in the colony,<sup>32</sup> and Quebec's great financier,<sup>33</sup> purchased all of Madame de Saurel's mortgages and then foreclosed. Dame Catherine Le Gardeur, de Saurel's insolvent widow, had done her best to

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<sup>32</sup>Emile Salone, Op. Cit., p. 31.

<sup>33</sup>Gustave Lanctot, Op. Cit., p. 69.

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be a good administrator: she had obeyed the ordinances of the Lieutenant-General of Trois-Rivières issued for the good of the estate, such as the granting of concessions of land and the repairing of buildings, while at the same time trying to pay her own debts as well as those of her late husband. How was Dame Le Gardeur able to hold on to her fief for so long? Was it due to family influence? Her father was Charles Le Gardeur de Tilly who was among the first councillors to be appointed to the Sovereign Council<sup>34</sup> and one of the four families who were of the French nobility.<sup>35</sup> Her mother was Anne Juchereau. The Juchereaus were also prominent in the colony. Whatever the reason, Dame Catherine Le Gardeur held on to her fief despite its insolvency.

Aubert de La Chesnaye went, in 1702, to the seigneurie of Sorel where he arranged that Jean-Baptiste Pothier, bailiff of the jurisdiction of Trois-Rivières, be sent to Berthier and Sorel to announce that the seigneurie of Sorel would be sold at a public auction.<sup>36</sup> Legal notice was given to Madame de Saurel through the keeper of the manor, Nicolas Moyé-Grancé.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>35</sup>William Bennett Munro, Op. Cit., p. 171.

<sup>36</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., p. 74.

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Mr. Michel Daigneaux Sieur Douville opposed the auction because he did not want to lose Ile Ronde. Pierre Lamy Desfonds and Charles Vanet Le Parisien laid claim to Ile Madame and part of Ile de Grâce. Happily for Dame Catherine Le Gardeur, Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye died that very year,<sup>37</sup> and so the auction sale fell through.

The seigneurie of Sorel was coveted by many fine French Canadian families. According to the census of 1681, it had a population of 118 and 400 arpents under cultivation. But the second Iroquois War reduced considerably this population.<sup>38</sup> Fort Richelieu, the domain of the seigneurie, had originally been built as a bulwark against the Iroquois who used the Richelieu River as a highway to reach the colony. Sorel, therefore, felt the full fury of those savages. Yet, even with the loss of manpower, and the dangerous position of its location, many businessmen sought to buy it when it was finally auctioned off in 1712.

Claude de Ramezay, Governor of Montreal, was awarded the seigneurie, February 14, 1713, for the sum of £9,200.

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<sup>37</sup>Emile Salone, Op. Cit., p. 311.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 322.

## THE SEIGNEURIE OF SOREL FINALLY LOST

He had transacted this business through two members of the Sovereign Council, Nicolas Dupont de Neuville and René Hubert. Hubert, first bailiff in the Sovereign Council, accepted the seigneurie for Dupont, who, the next day, declared that the acquisition was made for Claude de Ramezay.<sup>39</sup> In March, Madame de Saurel was advised by the notary Le Pailleur to leave the seigneurie. The new seigneur paid the quint required at each mutation of seigneur to the "directeur des fermes du roi." The quint amounted to £1226 which de Ramezay paid, September 15, 1714.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Madame de Saurel witnessed the take-over of the beautiful seigneurie on which her husband had spent most of his fortune.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>A.P.Q., Cahier d'intendance No. 2, concessions en fief, folio 352.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., folio 355.

<sup>41</sup>A. Couillard-Després, Op. Cit., pp. 74-75.

## CONCLUSION

The seigneurie of Sorel was a potentially rich agricultural, industrial and commercial enterprise. Pierre de Saurel, the first seigneur, attempted in his short span of life, to make the seigneurie a successfully productive development.

The agricultural growth was slow, especially during the 1670's, because of the instability of the first censitaires, which led to a frequent turnover of land. Some censitaires could have been seeking "greener pastures" in another seigneurie; others could have been in need of ready cash; and again, others could have wanted to speculate. The lure of the fur trade, also, was too strong, so some left to become coureurs de bois.

Whatever the reason, Pierre de Saurel did not receive the revenue from his censitaires commensurate with his ambitious efforts and with the money he put into the enterprise. As was the custom, he received a grant from the royal treasury as an incentive for the colonization and cultivation of his seigneurie. Near his manor, he had built a chapel, and a windmill; his domain also included a stable, two sheds and a sheepfold, in other words, Pierre de Saurel had made his seigneurie as attractive as he could for his censitaires. In 1676, he had borrowed £6,000 from a rich

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Quebec merchant, Charles Bazire, at the cost of mortgaging the seigneurie which he was trying to keep in good repair.

Seeking other means of revenue, Pierre de Saurel turned to the lumber trade, and then to the fur trade. The lumber trade miscarried because there was little demand for it after Talon left the colony in 1672. Pierre de Saurel might have made a success of his venture into the fur trade. His partners in the fur trading company called Compagnie du Nord, included the financial wizard, Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye, and the intrepid coureurs de bois, Médard Chouart, Sieur Des Groseilliers and Pierre Esprit Radisson. But again fate seemed to be against him. While in the midst of a business trip in Montreal, he died suddenly leaving his widow, Catherine Le Gardeur, with a heavily mortgaged seigneurie.

The census of 1681 shows that in the situation existing at that time, the seigneurie of Sorel could be considered a thriving fief. It was the most advanced of those on the Richelieu River. Had he not died so early in his career, Pierre de Saurel could have made a success of his seigneurie as an agricultural enterprise, and as a strategic base from which to launch a prosperous fur trade.

Madame de Saurel, lacking a son to succeed her husband, took over the administration of the seigneurie and

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was determined to make a success of it. Over a period of thirty years, she sought to maintain the seigneurie in good repair and to appease her creditors. The Second Iroquois War, the subsequent famine and the War of the Spanish Succession reduced the seigneurie in manpower and hence made cultivation of the land difficult. To add to her troubles, the great financier, Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye, bought up the mortgages on the seigneurie and then foreclosed. This resulted in an attempt at a seizure of the seigneurie which was abortive because of the sudden death of the protagonist, Charles Aubert de La Chesnaye. The fact that, even then despite the proven financial failure of the seigneurie, Madame de Saurel still continued as administrator is most intriguing. The Juchereau and the Le Gardeur de Tilly families were influential in the colony. In spite of family influence, this situation could not last forever.

Late in 1712, notice was given that the seigneurie of Sorel was to be auctioned off. Even though the seigneurie could not have been in as good a state as it had been in 1681, businessmen realized its potential and sought to outbid one another for it. It was finally awarded to Claude de Ramezay, Governor of Montreal, in February, 1713, for £9,200. About ten years later, the Aveu et Dénombrément presented to

### CONCLUSION

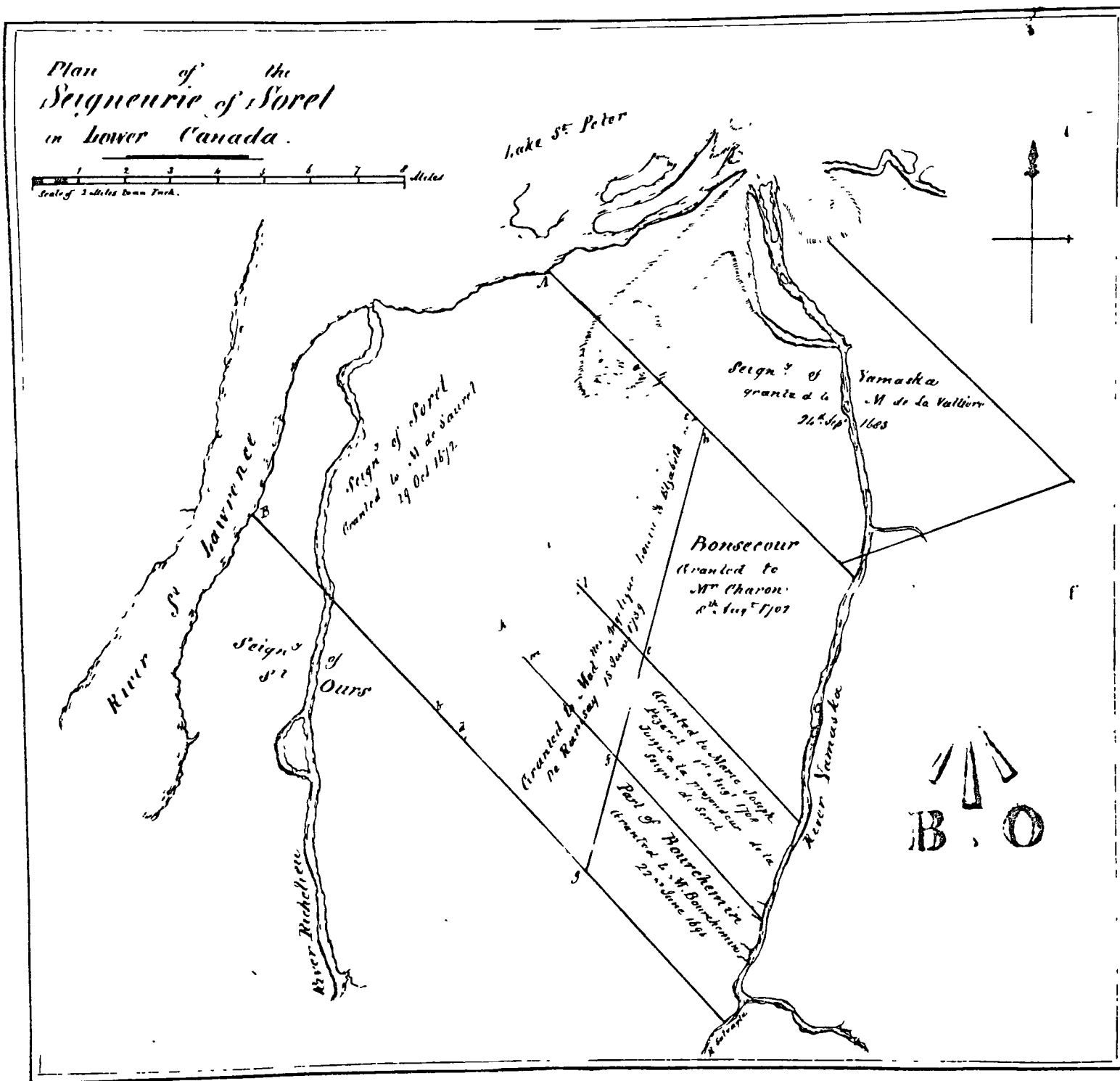
the Governor by his son, Claude de Ramezay, showed that the potential of the seigneurie of Sorel was finally realized.

## APPENDIX

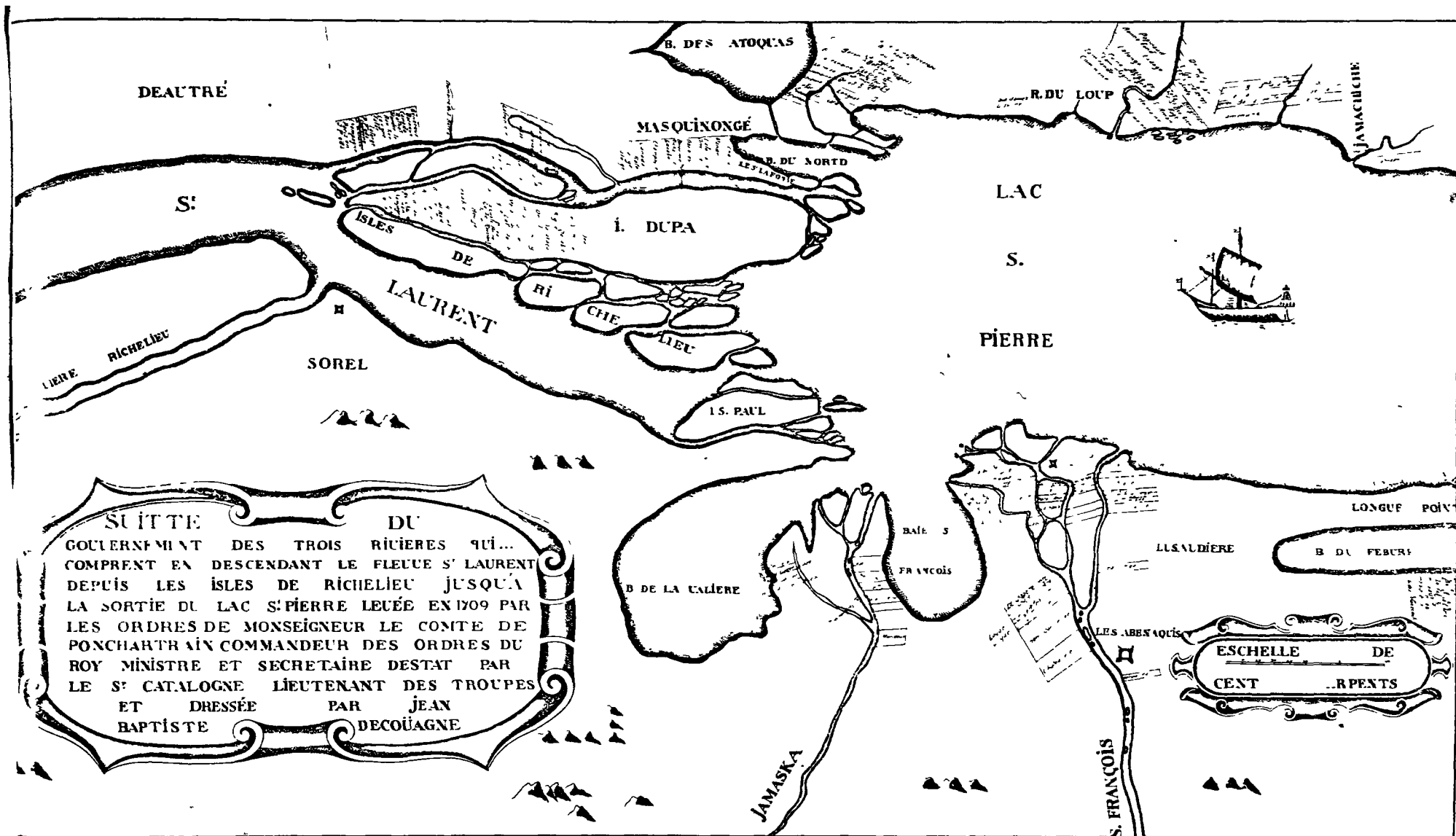


Plan of the  
Seigneurie of Sorel  
in lower Canada.

Scale of 2 Miles Down Track.



Plan of the Seigneurie of Sorel in Lower Canada.  
Public Archives of Canada - Map Division 12/325 - Sorel - 1818  
Showing Seigneurie of Sorel granted to H. de Saurel 29 October 1672.

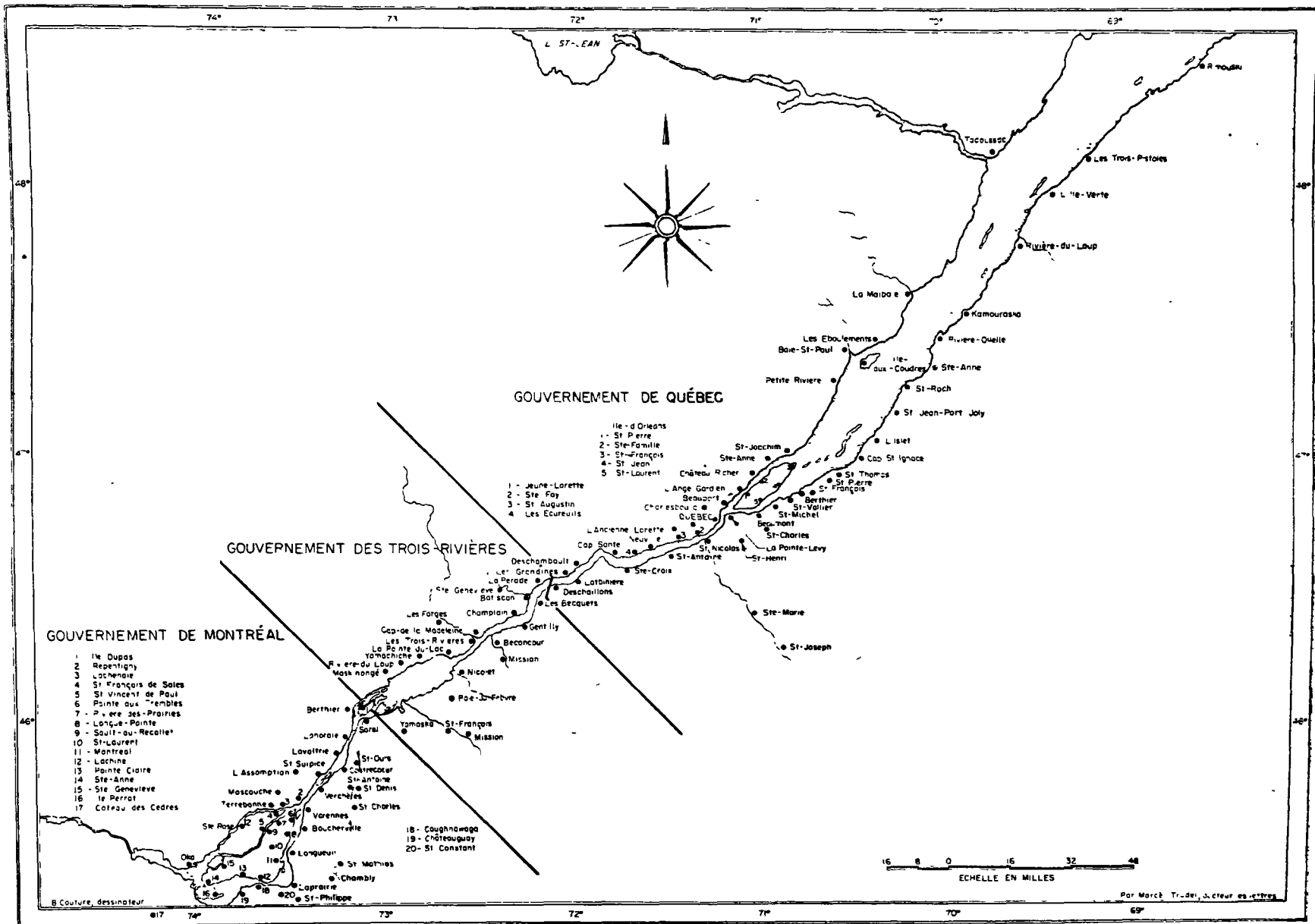


SUITE DU  
 GOUVERNEMENT DES TROIS RIVIÈRES QUI...  
 COMPRENT EN DESCENDANT LE FLEUVE S' LAURENT  
 DEPUIS LES ISLES DE RICHELIEU JUSQU'À  
 LA SORTIE DU LAC S' PIERRE LEUÉE EN 1709 PAR  
 LES ORDRES DE MONSIEUR LE COMTE DE  
 PONCHARTRAIN COMMANDEUR DES ORDRES DU  
 ROY MINISTRE ET SECRETAIRE D'ETAT PAR  
 LE S' CATALOGNE LIEUTENANT DES TROUPES  
 ET DRESSÉE PAR JEAN  
 BAPTISTE DECOUAGNE

ESCHELLE DE  
 CENT R. PENTS

Settlement in the Region of Lake St. Peter, 1709, by  
 Sieur Gédéon de Catalogne, in *Atlas historique du  
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 Marcel Trudel, p.71.  
 Showing Sorel and its Islands (isles Richelieu) at the  
 Head of Lake St. Peter.

71.- Le peuplement dans la région du lac Saint-Pierre en 1709.  
 (Section de la carte Catalogne plus haut citée).



77 - Carte des paroisses canadiennes, à la fin du régime français (établie par Marcel Trudel).

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