

ANDRE" AND JEAN DEMERS

Demers ancestry is difficult to trace. Those who would try are often left with a headache because there is a goodly mixture of surnames: Demets, Dumet, Dumay, Dumer, Demer and Demers. Adding the Dumas and Dumais families is the final straw. He who has never learned how to limit himself never knows how to make himself understood. Two ancestors, two brother: Andre' and Jean Demers are brought to our attention.

They were the sons of Jean and of Barbe Mauger, from the parish of Saint Jacques, city and arrondissement of Dieppe, dept. of la Seine-Maritime, in Normandy. Etienne Demers, son of Jean and Miotte Lacombe, was also originally from Dieppe and half-brother of Andre' and Jean. He was classified as a carpenter in 1646. At Quebec, on Jan.28,1648, he married Francoise Morin, widow of Antoine Pelletier, dau. of Jean/Jeanne Desnouets. Etienne, a pioneer of Sainte-Foy, father of 8 children, has descendants still living among us. He died at the Hotel Dieu of Quebec on Jan. 5, 1697.

In the sixteenth century, Dieppe was known as the biggest seaport in the kingdom of France. A resident of Dieppe, Thomas Aubert, came to the codfishing banks of Newfoundland and brought native people back to France in 1508. It was our Canadian soldiers who raided Dieppe in 1944.

During his patient research, Father Archange Godbout found the baptismal acts for Catherine and Laurent Demers at Dieppe, which were recorded in the registry on Aug.5,1629 and the first of Oct. 1635; they were children of Jean and of Barbe Mauger. The latter, who died on July 11, 1669, was buried the following day at about the age of 70.

THE NEWCOMERS

Did Andre' and Jean Demers cross the Atlantic together to come to Canada? Authorities think that Etienne, Andre' and Jean arrived the same year and on the same ship. Well, half-brother Etienne was in Canada in 1646. As for Andre' we are only certain that he was here in 1647, since on the first of Jan. 1648 he was a witness at the marriage contract of Etienne Demers and Francoise Morin, in the presence of notary Lecoustre at Quebec. Having been baptized on Feb.3,1628, Andre' was soon going to be 20 years old.

His brother Jean was mentioned for the first time in our history only on Oct.4,1654, at the time of his marriage contract signed before the notary Lambert Closse at Montreal. Conclusion: it is not certain that the two brothers came to New France together.

AT MONTREAL

Gathered at Montreal were Andre', Jean and Etienne Demers who on Mar.31,1649, had his first child baptized. It is difficult however, to specify their time table.

On Jan.7,1654, Andre' Demers, in the presence of Paul de Chomey, Lambert Closse and Pierre Gadois, was married at Ville-Marie, to Marie Chefdeville, dau. of Jean/Marguerite Jovicum. Andre' and Marie had agreed to a marriage contract on the preceding Dec.11. The Jesuit priest Claude Pijart drew up their marriage contract in Latin. On the same day, Jan.7, Jean Milot, master edgetool maker, and Jean Beauvais dit Saint-Genne, also took wives.

After his marriage contract, also signed by Lambert Closse on Oct.3,1654, the youngest, Jean Demers, gave his heart to a sixteen year old Jeanne Voidy, born to Michel/and Catherine Dorbelle, at Saint-Germain-duVal, near LaFleche in Anjoy.

The two brothers spent their days at Montreal in an area called Point-St.Charles. On Aug.20,1655, they each obtained 15 square arpents of land on the St.Pierre River, near the properties of Barbe de Boulogne. Price: 100 livres each. Jean resold his lot to his brother Andre', his neighbor, on Nov.9,1661 for 500 livres.

On Mar.7,1658, Andre' acquired one arpent of land property of Richomme, located at Ville-Marie. On Aug.10,1658, Jean, in his turn, acquired a lot with the same dimensions and bordering his brother. On Nov.3,1662, Francois Piron dit Lavallee by paying 170 livres, became the owner of Jean Demers' land. The masonry house was in ruins at that time. Andre' copied his brother. On Apr.8,1663, he gave up his city property. Bertrand Derennes and Etienne Trudeau paid him 200 livres.

One day there was a friendly and fraternal parting of the brothers. Jean dreamed of going to the region of Quebec. On Nov.9,1661, he sold his small farm to his brother.

ANDRE' DEMERS

Andre' continued to live at Montreal where, in 1666, he was listed in the census as a resident; the following year, the censustakers reported that Andre' and Marie Chefdeville, parents of 6 children, had 2 servants in their service: Simon Magnan and Thecle-Cornelius Aubry. Nothing was said about their livestock nor their arpents of land under cultivation. in 1681 Andre' Demers was indeed living at Montreal between neighbors Jean Senecal and Jacques Milot; he owned two guns and had 20 arpents of land under cultivation.

Between Oct.22,1654 and Sept.24,1675, the exact number of little people in the Chefdeville-Demers home was established as 12; Catherine, Marie, Nicolas, Andre', Jean Baptiste, Michel, Barbe, Charles, Marie, Robert, Paul and Martine. Only the first born Catherine had left the nest since she had died a month after her birth. Paul died at the age of 17.

1-5. Nicolas, Andre', Michel, Robert and Martine Demers went to find their wives or their husbands in the family of Urbain Jette' and Catherine Charles: Marie-Marthe, Anne, Elisabeth, Madeleine and Paul Jette'.

6. Marie Demers, the first with this given name, took, as her life's companion, Nicolas Nervaux dit Poitou, the Jean Roy.

7. Cunegonde Masta win the heart of Jean-Baptiste Demers, master edge-tool maker, on Feb.25,1686. She gave him 3 children. Jean

Baptiste died at the Hotel Dieu de Montreal on Oct.25,1690.

8. On Nov.4,1680, at Ville-Marie, Jacques Coiteux took Barbe Demers as his wife. On Sept.7,1699, she died at Pointe-aux-Trembles de Montreal.

9. Master baker, Charles Demers, surnamed Dessermans, married three times: first to Elis. Papin, then to Catherine Jette' and finally to Marie Madeleine Cauchon. He left a progeny of 12 children.

10. Jean Bourhis dit LeBreton, master cabinet maker, courted Marie Demers, the second with this name; they were married on at the Church of Notre Dame. After Jean's death, Marie was re-married on Nov.1.1712 at Longueuil, to Charles Vary dit Vigneron, an Angevin immigrant who added two children to the nine Bourhis whom she had already had.

The descendents of Andre' and Marie Chefdeville counted 85 members in the third generation.

JEAN DEMERS

Did Jean Demers, his wife and his 3 children go to settle in the Quebec region in 1662? The baptism of their son Pierre, on Oct.8,1663, at Sillery, is a definite fact. On Nov.4,1660-half-brother Etienne Demers, had obtained a piece of land from Jean de Lauzon in the present territory of St.Romuald, across from Sillery. Did he begin to clear or to build a cabin? A little later, Jean acquired a concession bordering Etienne's in the seigneurie of Lauzon, more precisely near the Etchemin River. The nearest place of worship at that time was Sillery.

The land which Jean Demers must have occupied had been the property of Jean Mignault in 1663. Demers received his land from Jean de Lauzon on Oct.11,1666, by means of a certificate offered in a private agreement. Rene' Leduc and Jean Demers would officially obtain their concession of 2 arpents of frontage by 40 deep, on June 1st.,1671. In the census of 1667, the family of Jean Demers worked in the seigneurie of Lauzon where they owned one head of cattle and had 8 arpents of land under cultivation. Generally, 8 arpents meant clearing land for at least four years.

Then on July 29,1668, Jean acquired another arpent of land from Jean Adam,near his original grant, which also comprised 2 arpents in frontage.

This was hard work. In 1681, the Demers were owners of a gun, 8 head of cattle and 30 arpents of cleared land. According to a contract made by notary Louis Chambalon, on Nov.19,1693 Jean Demers sold his 2 pieces of land on the Lauzon coast to Rene' Leduc. Did Jeanne and Jean decide to take an anticipated retirement in town? The answer is difficult to verify.

Between the month of Feb.1658 and Aug.30,1681, Francois, Marguerite and Jean Demers, children of Jean and of Jeanne Voidy, were born at Montreal; Pierre, Anne, Rene',Marie Madeleine, Andre', Eustache, Catherine, Nicolas and Michel were born in Quebec region; 12 all told.

THE CROSSROADS

A crossroad is a place where paths cross, a choice, a new

stage. On July 24, 1699, Andre' Demers and Marie Chefdeville from Montreal, made a donation to their sons Andre', Charles and Robert. They gave up their farm and two oxen, one of which had a red hide. The ancestress was buried at Montreal on Nov. 23, 1708; Andre' was buried on July 17, 1711. They had just committed themselves to take the path of perfect happiness.

Three Demers men, all originally from the region of Levis, left their mark in our religious history. Louis Demers (1732-1813), son of Louis and Therese Gagnon, grandson of Jean and Jeanne, priest and pastor of several parishes, builder of churches, head of the Recollets at Ville-Marie, chaplain to the staff of the militia of the city of Montreal, was the last Recollet to die in Canada, after the Conquest.

Jerome Demers (1774-1853), son of Jean-Bte. and Genevieve Loignon, priest, deserves the titles of educator, lecturer, author of scholastic works, architect, administrator and head of the Seminary, in addition to being general vicar of the diocese of Quebec li 1825. In short, a man with flamboyant qualities of heart and mind.

Finally, Modeste Demers (1809-1871), another child from St. Nicholas, son of Michel and Rosalie Faucher, was named bishop of Vancouver by Pius IX, on Nov. 30, 1847. He established his residence in Victoria. His life reads almost like an epic.

VARIATIONS:

There are many known variations of the name of Demers: Chedeville, Demair, Demar, Demarce, Demars, Demarse, DeMayer, Demer, Demers, Desmars, Duguay, Dumais, Dumars, Dumas, Dumay, Dumer, Dumet, Dumets, Mars and Mers.

NOTE: This is a partial excerpt from French-Canadian Research books by John P DuLong.PH.D and printed by Lisi Press of Oldsmar, Fla, 34677-2312 and translations from French to English by Tom Laforest.