

André Poutré dit Lavigne (1639-1724) Soldier, Settler, and Village Shoemaker

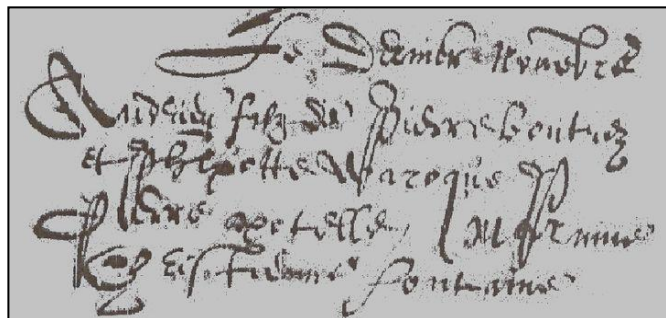
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(Variations of the surname include: Poutré, Poudré, Poutrez, Poutret, Poutray, Poudrette, Boutrez)

On May 13, 1665, André Poutré dit Lavigne sailed from La Rochelle, France on board the *Paix*. He was a soldier in the Carignan-Salières Regiment, sent to New France, to assist in the defense of the French colonists against continuing Iroquois attacks. André and the other soldiers in the company commanded by Captain Pierre de Saurel arrived in Québec on the nineteenth of August. Stormy weather had plagued the sailing ship. It had been an uncomfortable, three-month crossing.¹

The Carignan-Salières Regiment was the first of the regular French troops to come to New France and the only complete regiment to be sent to the colony during French rule. Altogether, there were twenty companies in the regiment and each company had about fifty soldiers. Four other companies augmented the regiment, making a total of some twelve hundred soldiers who arrived in the colony in the summer of 1665. They were under the command of Lieutenant-



Baptism record for André Poutré, dated November 30, 1639,
Church of St-Géry, Valenciennes, France;
Source: Fichier Origine, Record #380070.

General Alexandre de Prouville, Marquis de Tracy. Given that there were only 3,200 French-Canadian inhabitants in the whole of New France at that time, the arrival of the troops made a significant impact on the colony's ability to defend itself against the Iroquois warriors. The soldiers were greeted with great joy by the citizens of Québec, who looked upon them as their saviors.²

The men in Captain Pierre de Saurel's company didn't have much time to enjoy the warm welcome or to recover from their months at sea. One week later, on August 25, M. de Saurel and his men were dispatched to construct a fort at the mouth of the Richelieu river, located just east of Montréal, to bolster the colony's defenses. Their task was to build on the site of the ruins of an earlier fort constructed by Governor Huault de Montmagny in 1642 and destroyed by the Iroquois in 1647. No doubt André Poutré was among the soldiers who set to work clearing the land and building the fort. Lots of hands made quick work of the assignment! Fort Richelieu, as it was known, was completed by

¹ "List of the Ships that Arrived in New France in 1665 – Ships of the Regiment." *La Société des filles du roi et soldats du Carignan, Inc.* Web. 9 Mar 2015; Pelletier, Jean-Guy. "Saurel, Pierre de." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Vol. 1. University of Toronto/ Université Laval, 2003. Web. 9 Mar 2015.

² "The King's Soldiers." *Canadian Military Heritage*. Vol. 1 (1000-1764). Canadian Military History Gateway. Web. 15 Mar 2015.

October 15, when the governor came to visit. The captain and his men spent the winter of 1665-1666 at the fort.³

No military record for André Poutré exists, other than the fact that he was a member of the company of M. de Saurel. However, something is known of the military campaigns led by André's commanding officer in New France. Presumably, André participated in these operations. In the summer of 1666, the French leaders of the colony met with representatives of the five Iroquois nations. Negotiations for peace failed and the Iroquois continued to attack, capture, and kill Frenchmen. In July of that year, Captain de Saurel led an expedition of 200 soldiers and volunteers, along with some 80 Amerindian allies, into Iroquois territory. Two months later, in late September, an expedition of thirteen hundred men, under the command of the Marquis de Tracy, marched south of the St. Lawrence River into Mohawk country. The Mohawks were one of the five tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy. Captain de Saurel, along with Captain Berthier, was in charge of the rearguard. No actual battles were fought in either expedition, although native settlements were destroyed. The size and the strength of the French army convinced the Iroquois warriors that they would not stand a chance against the French army. The Iroquois, who for twenty-five years had menaced French settlers, traders, and missionaries, were sufficiently chastised. There would follow some eighteen years of relative peace for the French colonists. It should be noted that the French settlers were generally not the main target of native warfare. The Iroquois were fighting to control the fur trade and their most savage and cruel attacks were directed against the Huron and Algonquin tribes who supplied the French with furs.⁴

The Carignan-Salières military expedition had a two-fold mission in the New World. In addition to providing protection for the colonists, it was hoped that the men would stay, marry, and establish families. Commanding officers were offered seigneuries; ordinary soldiers were also offered a number of financial incentives to settle in New France. In addition to the opportunity to own land, they were offered livestock and food rations to make it easier to establish a homestead. Many of the soldiers took advantage of these financial inducements offered by the King. About one third of the Carignan-Salières regiment, some four hundred officers and regular soldiers, remained in the colony. Other reasons that might have influenced a soldier's decision to stay were a desire for adventure, economic opportunity not available in the mother country, and deteriorating social conditions at home. The remaining members of the regiment returned to France in 1667 and 1668.⁵

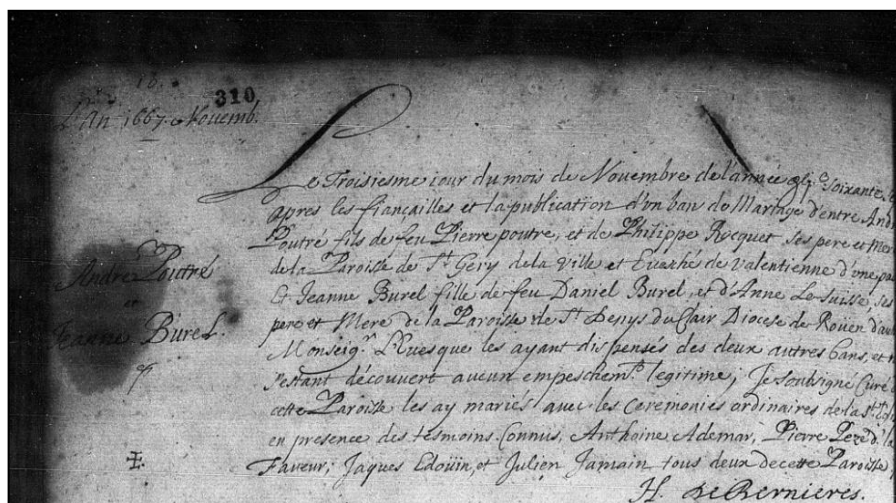
Captain Pierre de Saurel, along with a number of men under his command, was persuaded to remain in the colony. For his efforts in defense of the colony, Captain de Saurel was awarded a seignury which included Fort Richelieu, the fortification he and his men had constructed. M. de Saurel unofficially received his land grant in 1666; he was officially granted the seignury by King Louis XIV in 1672. The seigneur married Catherine Legardeur on October 10 of 1668.

³ Pelletier, Jean-Guy. "Saurel, Pierre de." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Vol. 1. University of Toronto/ Université Laval, 2003. Web. 9 Mar 2015.

⁴ Pelletier, Jean-Guy. "Saurel, Pierre de." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Vol. 1. University of Toronto/ Université Laval, 2003. Web. 9 Mar 2015; McNelley, Susan. *Hélène's World: Hélène Desportes of Seventeenth-Century Quebec*. Etta Heritage Press, 2013, p.226.

⁵ "The King's Soldiers." *Canadian Military Heritage*. Vol. 1 (1000-1764). Canadian Military History Gateway. Web. 15 Mar 2015; Enos, Kathleen. "The Economic Evolution of the Seignury of Sorel." Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts, Ottawa, for Master of Arts, Montreal, 1968, p. 8. ProQuest Dissertations. Web. 9 Mar 2015.

Inside the grounds of the fort, M. de Saurel built a large home, a stable to house six horses, a mill to grind grain, and various other out-buildings. A chapel was built there in 1670. In one of her letters, Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, the Superior of the Ursuline nuns in Québec, wrote admiringly of M. de Saurel's seigneurie. She noted that there were beautiful lakes and an abundance of game for hunting. According to the census of 1681, there was a large herd of cows, sheep, and goats on the manor. Thirty-three soldiers decided to settle on the seigneurie. Before long there were some thirty homes in the settlement which came to be known as Sorel.⁶



Marriage of André Poutré and Jeanne Burel on November 3, 1667 in the Church of Notre-Dame in Québec. Source: Québec, Catholic Parish Records, FamilySearch.org

André Poutré was one of those who decided to stay and make a life for himself in Canada rather than return to France. André married Jeanne Burel on November 3, 1667 in the Church of Notre-Dame in Québec. André must have been anxious to marry. On October 25, 1667, he and a woman named Marguerite Loy entered into a marriage contract.

That contract was annulled two days later on October 27, a week before André wed Jeanne Burel. Jeanne, too, had signed a contract to marry another man just prior to her marriage to André. There is a record of a marriage contract between Jeanne Burel and Pierre Lavoie, a widower, dated October 21, 1667.⁷

On the marriage contract between André “Poutray Lavigne” and Marguerite Loy, André is listed as a resident of “Richelieu Sur Le Bout de la Riviere St-Laurent.” This suggests that he had already built a cabin of some sort on the seigneurie awarded to his former commanding officer, M. Pierre de Saurel, the year before.

André Poutré came from Valenciennes, in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France. He was born and baptized there in the parish church of Saint-Géry on November 30, 1639. His parents were Pierre Boutrez, a shoemaker, and Philipotte Waroqué.⁸ Nord-Pas-de-Calais was bordered on the north by Belgium. Its location made it a center of conflict in the wars between Spain and France in the seventeenth century. The Spanish had conquered Valenciennes on July 16, 1656. It

⁶ “History of Sorel.” *SorelTracyRegion.Net, Tourisme-Culture*. WEB 28 Feb 2015; Enos, Kathleen. “The Economic Evolution of the Seigneurie of Sorel.” Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts, Ottawa, for Master of Arts, Montreal, 1968, p. 2. ProQuest Dissertations. Web. 9 Mar 2015.

⁷ Marriage record for André Poutré & Jeanne Burel #66754; Marriage contract #188426 between Jeanne Burel & Pierre Lavoie; Marriage contract #94314 between Andre Poutray Lavigne & Marguerite Loy. *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH)*, Genealogical database, University of Montreal, Canada. Web. 20 Feb 2015; “Quebec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1979. Notre-Dame-de-Quebec. Baptêmes, mariages, sépultures, 1621-1679.” Image 434. *FamilySearch.org*. Web 15 Mar 2015.

⁸ “Poutré/Boutrez, André Lavigne” Record #380070. *Fichier Origine*. Web. 2 Feb. 2015.

remained under Spanish rule until 1678, when the city was regained by the French, which means that it was under Spanish control when André sailed to New France. André's father was deceased at the time of André's marriage.

Jeanne Burel was born about 1648 and baptized in the parish church of Saint-Denis of the Diocese of Rouen. The church is located in Duclair, Normandie, Seine-Maritime, France. Jeanne was the daughter of Daniel Burel and Anne LeSuisse.⁹ Little is known about Jeanne. Her father was deceased at the time of her marriage and she is listed as one of the King's Daughters, sent to New France to marry, have children and help to populate the new colony.¹⁰

It isn't known where the couple spent the first few months after their marriage. November marked the start of the winter season; travel to Montréal would soon be difficult, if not impossible. By the following spring, André Poutré and Jeanne Burel were living in the vicinity of Fort Saint-Louis at Chambly on the Richelieu River near Montréal. Jeanne Burel is listed in the church records of Chambly as receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation there on May 20, 1668. It is also not known where their first child was born. No baptism record for this child has been found. Marie-Madeleine is listed as born "about 1668, in an undetermined area of Québec."¹¹

By 1670, if not earlier, the couple was living on the seigneurie in Sorel. Their second child was born there in December of 1670. André Poutré dit Lavigne received a land grant on the seigneurie on March 15, 1673¹²; he was the first to officially receive a grant of land from M. de Saurel. The property consisted of four arpents of river frontage and was 40 arpents deep. (One arpent is .85 acres.) His land was situated between the St. Lawrence and Richelieu Rivers. For this parcel, André agreed to pay M. de Saurel 8 *livres* annually in rent, and 12 deniers and a live capon for each arpent that fronted the river (in this case, 4 capon). This was a customary payment in the concession of land on the seventeenth-century seigneuries. The seigneur, as the owner of the land, was legally entitled to collect annual revenues from his tenants in the form of rents and cens. The rent was a major source of revenue for the seigneur. A portion of the rents and cens was generally converted to fowl (in this case capon), or to wheat or another grain; this was deemed necessary if the seigneur wanted to see any revenue from his land.¹³

The seigneuries along the St. Lawrence River were initially made up of virgin forest. They were valuable only after they were developed. It was incumbent upon the seigneur to attract "habitants" who would clear and develop this land. Pierre de Saurel, a native of Grenoble, France

⁹ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH)*, Genealogical database, University of Montreal, Canada. Web. 20 Feb 2015; "Quebec, Catholic Parish Registers, 1621-1979. Notre-Dame-de-Quebec. Baptêmes, mariages, sépultures, 1621-1679." Image 434. *FamilySearch.org*. Web. 15 Mar 2015.

¹⁰ *La Société des Filles du roi et soldats du Carignan, Inc.* Web. 2 Feb. 2015.

¹¹ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH)*, Genealogical database, University of Montreal, Canada. Web. 20 Feb 2015

¹² "Concession d'une terre située à Saurel, par Pierre de Saurel, seigneur de Sorel, à André Poutré dit Lavigne de Saurel." Adhémar dit St-Martin, notary. March 15, 1673. *Parchemin Notarial Database of Old Quebec*. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.

¹³ Enos, Kathleen. "The Economic Evolution of the Seigneurie of Sorel." Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts, Ottawa, for Master of Arts, Montreal, 1968, p. 14. ProQuest Dissertations. Web. 9 Mar 2015; Harris, Richard Cole. *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984. p. 63-64.

and the son of a lawyer, had no experience with farming and did not have the experience necessary to turn his seigneurie into a profitable enterprise. He failed to receive the annual revenue from his censitaires, as stipulated in their land concession contracts. M. de Saurel died in Montréal in November of 1682, leaving no descendants. His wife was left to managing the estate; the increasing financial difficulties eventually forced the sale of the seigneurie in 1713.¹⁴

There were lots of sales of land in the first years at Sorel. By 1681, only 10 of the original censitaires on the seigneurie of Sorel still held rotures there. Censitaires did not feel the need to stay in one place. Land was freely available throughout the colony. Often censitaires would clear a few acres, build a small cabin, improve the property enough to make a profit, and then sell and move on. Others abandoned their rotures to become *coureurs de bois*. The fur trade offered independence and adventure; one can understand the attraction for the soldiers.¹⁵

One of those original censitaires still on the seigneurie in 1681 was André. In the census taken in the colony that year, André Poutre, his wife, and six children are listed as *habitants* of Sorel. Their property consisted of one gun, one cow, and six arpents of land.¹⁶ The population of the seigneurie of Sorel was 118.¹⁷

It appears that sometime in 1681, André decided to follow the example of others and move on. In the same census of 1681, he was listed as living in Montréal with his wife and six children and working as a *cordonnier*, or shoemaker.¹⁸ This had been the occupation of his father in France as well; no doubt André had learned the trade from his father. André was very much like so many other Frenchmen who decided to stay in New France and settle on the land, in that he did not have an agricultural background. More than 50% of the immigrants to Canada were artisans. This reflects the urban roots of these settlers. According to one historian, “The high rate of land sale among settlers in Canada is almost certainly associated with their lack of agricultural experience; settlers who had never wielded an ax or worked the land settled down to farm only as a last resort.”¹⁹

In 1683, Madame Catherine Le Gardeur, the widow of M. de Saurel, foreclosed on André Poutre’s property in Sorel, reclaiming the land in payment for his debt. It would seem that André had not been making the payments of rents and cens, as stipulated in the contract when he was

¹⁴ Enos, Kathleen. “The Economic Evolution of the Seigneurie of Sorel.” Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts, Ottawa, for Master of Arts, Montreal, 1968.p. 12-14. ProQuest Dissertations. Web. 9 Mar 2015.

¹⁵ Harris, Richard Cole. *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1984. p. 167; Enos, Kathleen. “The Economic Evolution of the Seigneurie of Sorel.” Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts, Ottawa, for Master of Arts, Montreal, 1968. p.21. ProQuest Dissertations. Web. 9 Mar 2015.

¹⁶ Sulte, Benjamin. *Histoire des Canadiens-Français 1608-1880*. Vol. 5. Montreal: Wilson and Co. 1882. p. 74. *Internet Archive*. Web. 8 Feb 2015; Census record # 98869. Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH), Genealogical database, University of Montreal, Canada, Web. 20 Feb 2015.

¹⁷ Enos, Kathleen. “The Economic Evolution of the Seigneurie of Sorel.” Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts, Ottawa, for Master of Arts, Montreal, 1968. p. 42. ProQuest Dissertations. Web. 9 Mar 2015. p.69.

¹⁸ Sulte, Benjamin. *Histoire des Canadiens-Français 1608-1880*. Vol. 5. Montreal: Wilson and Co. 1882. p.66. *Internet Archive*. Web. 8 Feb 2015; *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH)*, Genealogical database, University of Montreal, Canada, Web. 20 Feb 2015.

¹⁹ Harris, Cole. “The French Background of Immigrants to Canada before 1700.” *Cahiers de géographie du Québec*, vol. 16, n° 38, 1972. p. 323. *Érudit.org*. Web. 9 Mar 2015.

granted the land concession in 1673.²⁰ Apparently, André and Jeanne still had some business that brought them back to Sorel. While their eighth child was born in Montréal in 1682, their ninth child was born in Sorel on December 14, 1684. Their tenth and eleventh children were born in Montréal in 1687 and 1690.

By 1693, André and Jeanne were living in Pointe-aux-Trembles, which is located on the northeast side of the island of Montréal. Pierre, their last child, was born there in April of that year; Marie-Catherine, their fifth child, was married there a month later, in May of 1693.²¹ The fort at Pointe-aux-Trembles was built about 1670 to provide some protection against the Iroquois for the colonists of Montréal. The village was established a couple of years later, in 1674. It was a compact settlement: homes were built on small plots of land, laid out on a grid of streets. If the villagers had any fields, these lay outside the central core of the village. The church, established by the Sulpicians, was a dominant feature of the community. The village had been established as a “service center,” to provide necessary commodities and services to the farmers living in the surrounding area.²² Presumably, André continued to ply his trade as *cordonnier*. Certainly, a shoemaker would find a ready market for his goods in this settlement.

André and Jeanne would live in Pointe-aux-Trembles for the rest of their lives. Jeanne Burel died there on April 17, 1724. André’s death followed six weeks later, on June 1.²³ He was eighty-four years old and had spent almost sixty years in New France, the last thirty in Pointe-aux-Trembles. From all appearances, André did not amass great wealth. He did not distinguish himself as a leader in the colony.²⁴ However, one hopes that he was able to look back upon his life with some satisfaction. He had established a home and raised a large, healthy family on the frontiers of New France.

CHILDREN (As named in the baptism, marriage and death records of the parish churches of Québec, Sorel, Montréal, and Pointe-aux-Trembles)

André Poutré and Jeanne Burel's twelve children were: Marie (B. abt. 1668), Marie-Madeleine and Antoine, twins (B. December 23,1670), Marie (B. abt. 1672), Marie-Catherine (B. abt. 1776), Marie-Charlotte (B. February 4,1678), André Jean-Baptiste (B. February 2, 1680), Jean (B. August 25, 1682) , Marie-Jeanne (B. December 14, 1684), Pierre (B. August 1,1687), Jacques (B. September 30, 1690), and Pierre (B. April 18, 1693).²⁵

²⁰ Enos, Kathleen. “The Economic Evolution of the Seigneurie of Sorel.” Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts, Ottawa, for Master of Arts, Montreal, 1968. p. 14. ProQuest Dissertations. Web. 9 Mar 2015.

²¹ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH)*, Genealogical database, University of Montreal, Canada, Web. 20 Feb 2015.

²² Harris, Richard Cole. *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1984. p. 177.

²³ *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH)*. Genealogical database, University of Montreal, Canada, Web. 20 Feb 2015.

²⁴ The concession of land at Sorel in 1673 is the only record found for André Poutré in the *Parchemin Notarial Database of Old Quebec*. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. Accessed 4 Mar 2015.

²⁵ Family Record #2366. *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH)*. Genealogical database, University of Montreal, Canada, Web. 20 Feb 2015.

As was common among the French Catholic families, the same first name (Christian name) was often repeated within the immediate family. Marie was the most popular first name. In this family, every one of the daughters was given this name, generally, but not always, coupled with a second Christian name. A couple of the boys, as well, shared a common first name. It is quite probable that the children received these names upon their baptism but were distinguished from each other by the use of nicknames. Over the years, the family lived in several places in the Québec province: their children were born in Sorel, Montréal, Pointe-Aux-Trembles, and "Lieu indetermine (Au Québec)."

Ten of their children grew up and married, some being very young at the time of their marriage. The oldest was about thirteen when she married Louis Chapacou in 1681. The author of this article is a descendant of Marie-Madeleine, born in 1670. It appears that Antoine, her twin brother, did not survive childhood; only a baptism record exists for him. Marie-Madeleine was seventeen when she married Antoine Morand LaGrandeur in Sorel in 1687.



The "Fort de Pointe-aux-Trembles" by Charny, 2009; Used with permission, Wiki Creative Commons