

CHAPTER 3

FRANÇOIS BARIBEAU

"When I shall be carried feet first into the church, I hope those friends who reverently carry my coffin will stay with me to the end and that my old neighbors will tend my grave when the earth which I have served all my life receives my mortal remains."(1)

MASTER COBBLER AND SAINTLY MAN



Early in the morning of 22 October 1721, the parishioners of Batiscan shuffled through the dead leaves, coming from the Pointe to the Citrouille along the farms high above the river. Thus they converged on the small stone church in order to pay their last respects to one of their senior citizens, the old master shoemaker, François Baribeau, the ancestor of all the families which bear this name in America. This humble pioneer who had come from France more than fifty years earlier, had been dead but a few hours. The service for him was barely finished, and while the bells were still tolling, the Curé Gervais Lefebvre(2) wrote in his register that the deceased, age 97 years, "lived as a true Christian and showed all the attributes of sainthood."(3)

While the funeral cortege slowly wend its way toward the cemetery, the officiating curate tried in vain to erase from his memory the severe reprimand he had given this venerable old man less than a year earlier: It concerned a gift made to François' daughter-in-law, Marguerite Cosset, the wife of his son Jean Baribeau.

Like many parish priests of his time, Gervais Lefebvre believed himself to be, not only the incontestable guardian of his flock, but the master of their well being as well. He was authoritative, irascible and brooked no opposition. The proud seigneurs of LaPérade would come to learn at their own peril that one could not impugn the reputation of a pastor of his caliber.

What had been the relationship between the Baribeau family and Curé Lefebvre? Surely it had to have been very close. During the fifteen years in which he exercised his ministry at Batiscan, the priest had ample time to insinuate himself into the homes and to probe the mind and soul of each of his parishioners. He squandered his counsel in abundance in domains which were beyond his jurisdiction, especially where such sagacious advice was by no means solicited.

THE CONTESTED DONATION

Lets examine the facts. On 22 January 1716, when he was almost eighty years old, our ancestor François Baribeau, who was living with his son Jean at the time, asked to see the notary François Trotain. "Maistre François," as the notary wrote, "being sick abed but nevertheless of sound mind, memory and will," feared that death would soon pay him a visit. He did not want to die before he could show his appreciation to Marguerite Cosset "for the good and comforting services which he has received from her and from her husband, his son Jean." The grateful old man made her a gift of all his property on the island situated in front of his house and in front of the house of his neighbor, Sieur Jean Desranlot dit Châteauneuf. Two other neighbors, Louis Guillot dit Saint-Marc and Luc Proteau witnessed this gift.

On 19 August 1720, François Trotain was summoned once again to the home of Jean Baribeau. By this time our ancestor had recovered his health, thanks be to God, and decided that the donation he had made to his daughter-in-law four years earlier was not as much as

she deserved. He enlarged his gift to her by adding half of the two arpents in width from his property on the Batiscan river.

THE CURATE WAS ANGRY

What happened later to provoke the wrath of Father Lefebvre concerning this donation? Was he upset because the gift was made to Marguerite rather than to her husband Jean? Did the other children of old François protest to the Curé about this gift? Did Marguerite influence her father-in-law to make her the beneficiary rather than her husband, his son? Who knows? However, the fact remains that on 3 November 1720, the notary Daniel Normandin appeared at the home of Sieur Damien Quatresous in order to record the objection of both father and son to the meddling of the priest in their personal affairs. They affirmed that Father Lefebvre persecuted and threatened them; even to refusing them the sacraments if they did not revoke the transaction made ten weeks earlier in favor of Marguerite. Therefore "to satisfy the pressure and the determination of said Sieur Lefebvre," François and Jean agreed that the gift should be annulled. A record of this involuntary consent was made by the priest himself, who took advantage of the absence of a notary to draw up a private paper revoking the benevolence.

WAS THE CURÉ OVERCOME BY REMORSE?

Therefore, on this November third, before notary Normandin, our patriarch and his son reiterated their willingness to maintain the grant of land to Marguerite "for the good services which she gives daily to the aforesaid Baribeau elder, just as he had declared it to be in his first gratuity. The Baribeaus, father and son, swore to the complete invalidity of the written document that Lefebvre made them sign, having consented to it under duress and by force." Less than a year later, when father Lefebvre laid our progenitor to rest, did he want the family to forgive him for his gratuitous interference? It would seem so from the near act of

canonization evidenced by the farewell eulogy. Or, on the hand, did François shed tears of contrition on his deathbed, bitterly regretting having dared to show his disapproval of his confessors action? We will probably never know?

EMPLOYED BY THE JESUITS

François Baribeau is one of the many ancestors of whom we know little or nothing concerning parental or regional origins. Some genealogists maintain that he must have come from Saintonge. According to Father Archange Godbout, this master cobbler, born about 1636, arrived in Canada around 1670 with his wife Perrine Moreau and his ten year old son Louis.(4) The year 1670 is little more than an educated guess, based on the supposition that the family crossed the Atlantic no later than 1669. In fact, on 18 January 1670, the notary Romain Becquet arranged a contract of service between Baribeau and the Jesuits. By this time, the family had settled in the area of Québec, probably at Charlesbourg, where their first daughter, Gabrielle, was born in early 1673. On 24 February of that same year,(6) François turned in his resignation to Brother Joseph Bousier,(6) of the Society of Jesus.

A PIONEER ON THE RIVER BATISCAN

Once he was free of his service with the Jesuits, François could go wherever he choose. Did he already have his eye on the Batiscan shore? Perhaps: The fact is that in 1674 and 1675, he turned over his holdings in the Québec region.(7) Three men were the recipients: Pierre Ledoux dit Latreille, René Rhéaume and Pierre Sicateau. It would appear that by this time François had already relocated his family to the Batiscan river, a short distance from its confluence with the Saint Lawrence.(8) A second daughter, Catherine, must have been born in 1675 while the family was living on the river. Her baptismal record should attest to it but unfortunately it was lost, as was that of her brother François, born in 1678.

On 15 January 1677,(9) our ancestor acquired a property from Jean Larieu dit Lafantaisie.(10) It was mentioned in the census of 1681 as the land belonging "to François Baribeau, a 45 year old cobbler and to his wife Perrine Moreau, 46 years old," situated between that of François Frigon and Jean Larieu. The children mentioned in the same census were: Jean, 11 years; Gabrielle, 8 years; Catherine, 6 years; François, 3 years; and Pierre 5 months old. The family owned a gun, four head of cattle and had 12 arpents of land under cultivation.(11) Only Louis was missed by the census taker; since this was November, he had most likely already left for the west to try his luck as a *coureur-de-bois* in the fur trade, which constituted the principal industry at that time. On 14 December of the same year 1681,(12) François Baribeau sold four arpents of land to Michel Feuillon,(13) but this sale was annulled on 3 March 1687.

On 29 April 1697, at the home of the notary François Trotain, our patriarch acquired a homestead from Jean Baril. This windfall was located on the banks of the Batiscan, between the concessions of François Fortage and Jacques Tiffault. It measured 3 arpents wide by 21 deep, with buildings already in place. François obtained all this for the sum of 215 livres, paid in cash. On the following 5 May, at the office of the same notary, Baribeau sold to his son Jean, the property which he had bought twenty years earlier from Jean Larieu; for which son Jean had already paid his father 500 livres. Finally, on 7 August 1698, in their home and in the presence of witnesses Louis Guillet and Gabrielle Lefebvre, François and Perrine gave their 23 year old daughter Catherine, the land which they had bought from Jean Baril the preceding year. This donation was made to reward Catherine for "the good and useful service and care which they had received and do receive daily, and in the hope that she will continue these services to them, without prejudice to the property division with their other children, which would take place after the death of the aforesaid donors."

When did Perrine Moreau pass away? We don't

know exactly: She was still living at the time of Catherine's marriage on 29 August 1698. However, the gift given by François to his daughter-in-law Marguerite Cosset in 1716, does not mention her. Sometime in between these two dates Perrine had left for a better world.

NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS

François and Perrine had at least four sons and two daughters. We say "at least" because it was possible that other children might have been born in France. These six all married and accounted for the numerous descendants, not only named Baribeau, but also Bertrand dit Saint-Arnaud and Germain dit Magny. Several hundred of these families live in the Mauricie (Three-Rivers area), but we also find large numbers of them in and around Montréal and Québec. We can list the first generation as follows:

1. Louis (1660-1748), married Marie-Madeleine Feuilhon at Batiscan in 1687. They settled in Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade and had 11 children. Louis was a voyageur and traveled west to the land of the Outaouais and to Détroit.
2. Jean (1670-1725), married Marguerite Cosset at Batiscan in 1697. They had 12 children and it was she who gave the care to his parents in their old age. Jean also plied his trade in furs by voyaging to the west.
3. Gabrielle (1673-1725), married twice. First to Guillaume LeBellet and then to Paul Bertrand dit Saint-Arnaud. She had several children by each husband.
4. Catherine (1675-after 1745), married a soldier, Jean Germain dit Magny, in 1698. They had 7 children.
5. François (1678-1724), married Marie-Joséphé

Robert dit Saint-Amant in 1721 at LaPérade. They had 2 children. Like his brothers Louis and Jean, he too was engaged in the fur trade.

6. Pierre dit Beaupré (1681-?), married Marie-Madeleine Dessureaux in 1708 at Batiscan. They had 6 children.

Among the more notable descendants of François Baribeau was one Calixte-Ovide, founder and curate of the parish of Saint-Louis-de-France in Champlain county in 1901. Also there was Jean-Louis, a Deputy in Ottawa and the last President of the Legislative Council of Quebec. It was he who made that memorable speech, following which the councilors themselves initiated the break-up of the Chamber on 18 December 1968.

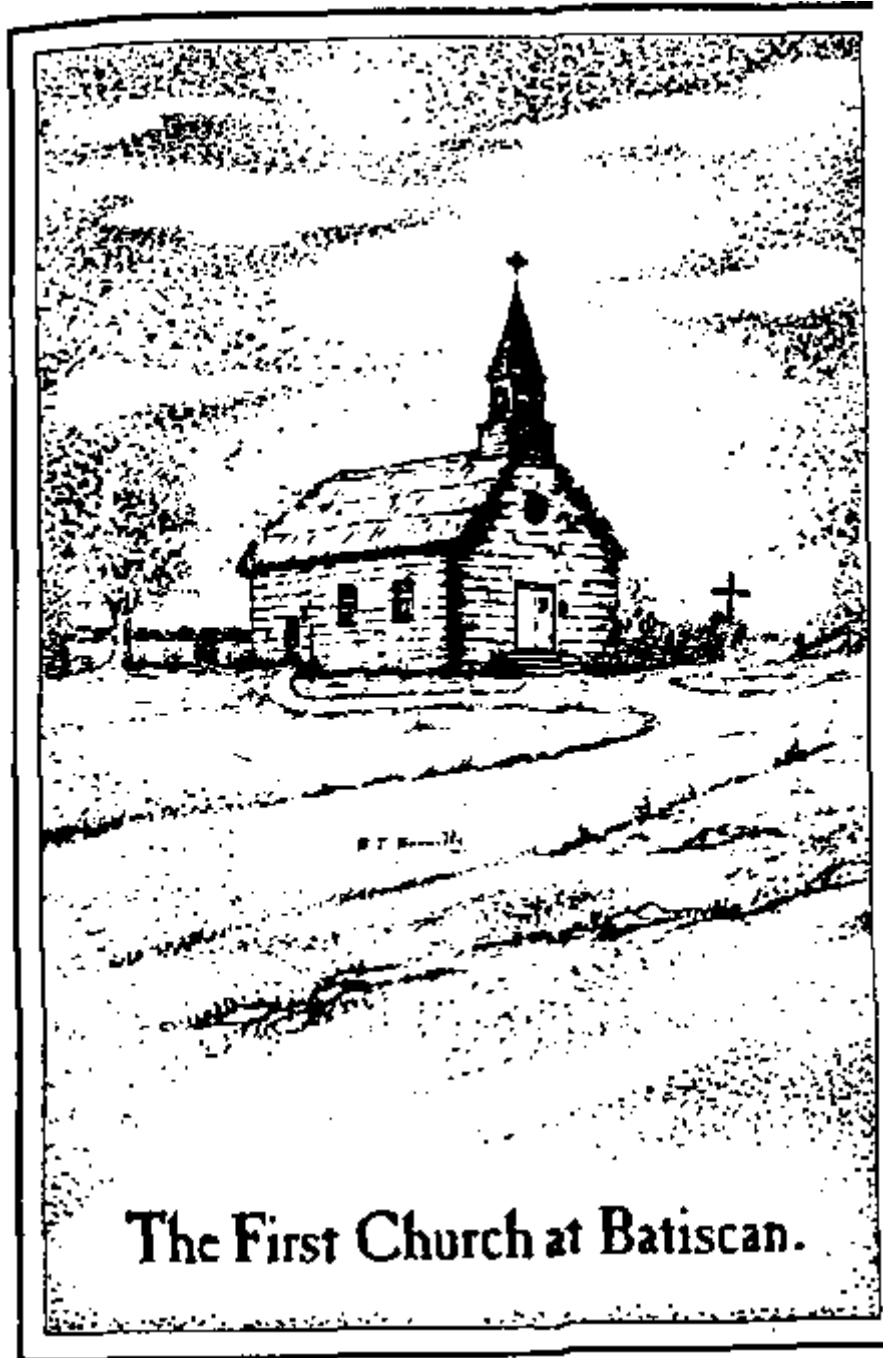
Variations of the name Baribeau seem to be limited to: Baribaut, Boisvert and Lalotte.(14)

END NOTES

- 1) Georges Bouchard, *Viellès choses, viellès gens*, 1943 p 44. "Les funérailles du vieux terrien".
- 2) Gervais Lefebvre, born at Montreal on 19 May 1685, was the son of Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre dit Saint-Jean and of Cunégonde Gervaise. When he was named curate of Batiscan in 1714, at the age of 29, he had just come back from Paris with a doctorate in theology from the Sorbonne. In 1730 he accused Pierre-Thomas Tariou and Madeleine de Verchères, the seigneurs of LaPérade, of having spread false rumors about him. These latter defended themselves so well that the Provost of Québec dismissed the complaint of the Curé and fined him 200 livres plus court costs. However, Monsieur Lefebvre appealed to the Sovereign Council, who reversed the first judgment. The Abby Lefebvre died in 1736.
- 3) The exact age of François Baribeau was not noted on

- his death certificate. He was more probably about 85 years old.
- 4) *Nos ancêtres du XVIIe siècle*. RAQ, 1953-1955, p 482.
 - 5) Record of Gilles Regout.
 - 6) Joseph Bourcier dit Desforges, arrived in Canada in 1646 and was immediately sent out to the Huron country. He returned to France in 1650 but came back to Canada a few years later. In 1656 and 1657, we find him in Onondaga country along with Fathers Jacques Fremin, René Ménard and Joseph Chaumonot.
 - 7) Records of Gilles Regout and of Romain Becquet.
 - 8) The cadastral map drawn by the engineer Catalogne in 1709 showed that François Baribeau and his sons were all living on the left bank of the Batiscan river. There were five sections in the name of Baribeau. These were the first recorded on that side of the river after those of François Rivard dit Lacoursière, of Louis Guillet dit Saint-Marc and of Luc Proteau.
 - 9) Record of Antoine Adhémar.
 - 10) Originally from Gascony, Jean Lariou dit Lafontaine or Lafontaine, had been already living in the mauricienne for a dozen years at the time of this transaction. On 15 November 1668, the notary Jacques de la Touche had drawn up the report on his cure by the surgeon Louis Pluard.
 - 11) Benjamin Sulte, *HFF*, Vol.5, p 62.
 - 12) Record of Michel Roy dit Châtellerault.
 - 13) Ancestor of the Filion families of the Mauricie.
 - 14) Cyprien Tanguay, *DGFC*, Vol.7, p 498.





The First Church at Batiscan.