

**Joseph Thériot and Madeleine Bourgeois: Their Ancestry and Descendants**

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**Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to present the most recent research and findings regarding the genealogy of Joseph dit Le Bonhomme Thériot (1728-1759) and of a second Joseph (1732 - before 1796), husband of Madeleine BOURGEOIS. Joseph THÉRIOT and Madeleine BOURGEOIS are one of the key families in the Theriault/Theriot Acadian genealogy of Louisiana.

This research and the findings presented in this paper are largely the work of Karen Theriot Reader, genealogist and researcher of the Theriot families in Louisiana, as well as other researchers noted in this paper including Stephen A. White, Albert J. Robichaux, Donald J. Hebert and Robert C. West.

**Joseph dit Le Bonhomme Thériot**

Early research<sup>1</sup> assumed that Joseph THÉRIOT, born 1730, was the son of Joseph & Françoise MELANCON who married Madeleine BOURGEOIS around 1758. Arsenault recorded Joseph and Françoise as having had the following children<sup>2</sup>:

1. Alexis (1726);
2. Joseph (around 1730);
3. Étienne (1731);
4. Marie-Joséph-Françoise (1733);
5. Jacques (1737);
6. Marguerite-Suzanne (1740);
7. Thomas (1743);
8. Marie-Madeleine (1745);
9. Ambroise (1748);
10. Paul (1751);
11. François (1753);
12. Xavier (1754)

Genealogists since then have used these findings as the basis for their Theriot genealogy.

However, in the current thinking of some noted researchers and genealogists, some of the underlying assumptions of that genealogy are unlikely. The new research shows that Joseph (dit Le Bonhomme) who was the son of Joseph and Françoise MELANCON was married only once in his lifetime and that was to Marie-Joséph PITRE. His marriage to Madeleine BOURGEOIS in 1758 is highly improbable because records now establish clearly that he was deported to France in 1758-1759 along with his wife Marie-Joséph and their children.

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<sup>1</sup> Bona Arsenault "HISTOIRE ET GÉNÉALOGIE DES ACADIENS (Vol. 6, Iles Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Bordeaux, Belle-Ile-en-Mer, Louisiane)," Ottawa, Lemeac, 1978, p. 2594.

<sup>2</sup> There were three errors in Arsenault's book regarding the children: François and Xavier were recorded as two different sons born in 1753 and 1754, respectively, when there was a single son, François-Xavier. Also, the second daughter Euphrosine, born about 1735 was not included. (She died in St-Malo, France on 16 Feb 1759, age 34.) And, finally, the son Joseph was identified as having had one wife: Madeleine BOURGEOIS when other sources clearly show that the Joseph who married Marie Joseph PITRE was the son of Joseph & Françoise MELANCON.

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The pertinent details of this research follow:

The 1752 Census of Harbour of Bedec<sup>3</sup> lists a Joseph TERRIAUD (dit Le Bonhomme), a ploughman, native of l'Acadie, age 24 years [so born around 1728/1729] and as having been on the Isle Saint-Jean for 13 months. He was shown living with his wife, Marie Joseph [sic] PITRE, age 21 and their son Pierre Paul, age 7 months. Next door was [his older brother] Alexis TERRIAUD with wife and three children, who "have made no clearing having been constantly ill." The census also recorded that Joseph "hoped to sow three bushels next spring." Their oldest sister Marie Françoise is married to Charles HENRY, living near the rest of the family, also on Isle St-Jean but on the north side of the Rivière du Ouest. These included Joseph TERRIAUD, age 53 years, on Isle Saint-Jean for 2 years, married to Françoise MELANCON, age 44. The seven younger children were with them from Étienne, age 21 to Paul, age 1 year. The census further recorded that "They would be able next spring to sow about four bushels of wheat, but he (father Joseph) leaves this locality to go to Bedecq to live, and Charles HENRY, his son-in-law, is coming to live on this lot."<sup>4</sup>

In an interesting note, Karen Reader points out that when Joseph and Françoise's third son, Étienne (Joseph's younger brother) was born at Cobequit on 9 Jun 1731, they brought him to Grand Pré on 14 Jul 1731 for his baptism. This is their only child for whom a baptismal record survives. The godmother on record was Marie Madeleine MELANSON. At that time, Françoise had an older sister, Marie-Madeleine (born about 1695) who was living in Grand Pré with her husband and children. This provides yet another link of these parents with these children. The other Joseph THÉRIOT of our study was shown to be son of Jean & Madeleine BOURG on his baptismal record at Grand Pré.

Consistent with the record of the 1752 Census, Albert J. Robichaux documents<sup>5</sup> a Joseph TERRIOT, born about 1728, who married about 1751 to Marie-Joséphé PITRE. Robichaux also identifies two other children: Isabelle-Ozite, born about 1753, and Anne, born about 1755. Both of them along with their older brother Pierre-Paul and their mother died at sea during the crossing to France in 1758-1759<sup>6</sup>. These deaths were apparently recorded in France, either on the ships' logs, or at the harbor where the Acadians arrived. In his record, Robichaux writes "On January 23, 1759, Joseph TERRIOT, widower of Marie-Joséphé PITRE, disembarked at St-Malo from one of the 'Five ships.' He was given permission and passage to go to Cherbourg on March 8, 1759. No additional information is available." It is noted by Karen Theriot Reader that Joseph (dit Le Bonhomme) probably wanted to go to Cherbourg in 1759 after his family had died because his sister Marie Françoise Josephé who was married to Charles HENRY was also in Cherbourg at that time. That same year, a Joseph THÉRIOT died in Cherbourg on 29 Dec 1759<sup>7</sup> who probably was Joseph dit Le Bonhomme, age around 31. His sister also died three weeks later in Cherbourg. The rest of the

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<sup>3</sup> By Sieur de la Roche, Bedec is located on the south side of Isle Saint-Jean.

<sup>4</sup> Placide Gaudet "REPORT CONCERNING CANADIAN ARCHIVES, 1905.", reprinted by Heritage Press in 1994, pp. 81-82 & 160.

<sup>5</sup> "ACADIAN EXILES IN SAINT-MALO," pp. 745-746. Robichaux is known to have used original documents as the basis for his books.

<sup>6</sup> One theory which is presented by Karen Theriot Reader is that the two young families (of Joseph and of Alexis) were swept up by the British and deported directly to France during the exiles of 1757/1758, along with that of Charles HENRY & their sister Marie Françoise Josephé TERRIAUD. However, the widow Françoise MELANCON migrated separately to Louisiana with her other surviving children.

<sup>7</sup> His burial is recorded at Church of Très-Ste-Trinité in Cherbourg, in Donald J. Hebert, "ACADIANS IN EXILE," p. 414.

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Acadian exiles in England and France waited until 1785 before they were able to emigrate to Louisiana with the help of Spain.

**Joseph THÉRIOT, husband of Madeleine BOURGEOIS**

Robichaux's view is also supported by Stephen A. White, who recently culminated more than twenty years of research in his recent volumes<sup>8</sup> which represent one of our most authoritative sources on Acadian genealogy today. Although the book does not include the family of Joseph, Le Bonhomme<sup>9</sup>, he does find that the Joseph THÉRIOT<sup>10</sup> who married Madeleine BOURGEOIS in 1758, was the son and 8th child of Jean THÉRIOT & Madeleine BOURG who was born 2 Jun 1732, baptized at Grand Pré on 3 Jun 1732<sup>11</sup>, and died sometime before 22 Nov 1796.

Karen Reader elaborates that Joseph and Madeleine were married "...probably while they were still in Acadia. Their oldest child, Rosalie was born there, and probably baptized as well. We know that Joseph and Madeleine were in Louisiana by 9 Dec 1765<sup>12</sup>, since their second child, Marie Rose was baptized that day, at nearly three years of age at St-Louis Cathedral in New Orleans. They had two sons next, Pierre about 1766 and Joseph II about 1768, followed by the first Charles who was baptized in 1771 in one of the first entries in the St-James Church records. Charles was buried in March 1773 during the absence of a priest. Child #6 was baptized Fulgence on 5 Sep 1773 (but later called Jean). Child #7 was Marie Madeleine (later called Nanon or Anne), baptized 6 Jan 1776. Child #8 is another Charles, baptized 1 Jan 1779, who later married Rosalie LE BLANC."

Reader continues that it is not clear "... where the family was between 1765 and 1777 but the family of Joseph & Madeleine BOURGEOIS appears on the 1777 census at St-James. This Joseph may be the man listed on the roster of St. James militia in Apr 1766. If so, they were living outside the area covered in the 1766 and 1769 censuses at St. James. Later, after Joseph's death, his widow Madeleine remarried to widower Pierre BERTEAU, on 22 Nov 1796 at St. James. Their merged family had two children who also married: Joseph Jr. who married his new step-sister Marie Marguerite BERTEAU on 27 Feb 1797. Most of the children of Joseph & Madeleine BOURGEOIS stayed in St. James Parish where they became prosperous. Youngest son Charles moved to the Attakapas (St. Martin parish) and became well-to-do. Unfortunately, the yellow fever epidemic of 1853 and the Civil War later, all but wiped out that prosperity.

White explains that he believes

that the husband of Madeleine BOURGEOIS, Joseph THÉRIOT, was the one who belonged to the family of Jean THÉRIOT, because the age which is attributed to him on the census at Cabahannocer in 1777 corresponds to that which the son of Jean THÉRIOT would have had.

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<sup>8</sup> "DICTIONNAIRE GÉNÉALOGIQUE DES ACADIENNES, Vol. I & II, Première Partie 1636 à 1714."

<sup>9</sup> Since Stephen White's first two volumes only cover marriages up to 1714, and Joseph's parents did not marry before 1714, their family is not yet covered in White's series.

<sup>10</sup> He is listed as #(47) on p. 1502 of Volume 2 of White's DICTIONNAIRE.

<sup>11</sup> Sponsors were Jean-Baptiste THÉRIOT & Marguerite THÉRIOT.

<sup>12</sup> The Acadian Memorial Wall of Names lists the family as Joseph TERRIOT, Madeleine BOURGEOIS, Marie Rose, Marie. Thus these two children were listed as born outside of Louisiana.

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Moreover, it seems to us quite plausible that Joseph, son of Jean should have married a daughter of the same BOURGEOIS family as his brother, Jean-Baptiste.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, Robert C. West<sup>14</sup> produced similar conclusions in his description of the arrival of the Theriot's in Louisiana:

The earliest to arrive were two Theriot families, who by 1766 had settled along the Mississippi River in the first Acadian Coast (St-James Parish). One of the families included Françoise Melançon (widow of Joseph Thériot) and her four sons; the other was headed by a relative of Françoise's dead husband, another Joseph Terriot and his wife, Madeleine Bourgeois.

...The blood relationship between the two early Theriot families in Louisiana is not clear, but the Joseph Terriot (b. 1732) who married ca. 1758 Madeleine Bourgeois was recorded<sup>15</sup> as being the son of a Jean Terriot (m. Madeleine Bourg), Jean being a second cousin of the Joseph (b. 1699) who married Françoise Melancon in 1725.

As to the children of Joseph and Madeleine, a review by Karen Theriot Reader of the Catholic Church Records of the Baton Rouge Diocese shows the following:

- ✓ Their first two children (Rosalie and Marie-Rose) were apparently born outside of Louisiana, the second probably in Halifax where the family may have been imprisoned. The second sister was baptized in New Orleans soon after the family's arrival. The third child, Pierre has no baptismal record in Louisiana since there were very few churches at the time. There is also no baptismal records for the next child Joseph.
- ✓ The last four children (Charles [the 1<sup>st</sup>], Jean Baptiste Fulgence, Marie Madeleine Anne, Charles) are recorded in the Register at St. James Catholic Church, St. James parish, Louisiana and are listed in the Baton Rouge Diocese set, Vol. 2. Charles was baptized in 1771 [no month or day given] (SJA-1, 16), Jean Baptiste was baptized as Fulgence 5 Sep 1773 (SJA-1, 21)<sup>16</sup>. Marie-Madeleine was baptized 6 Jan 1776 in (SJA-1, 29a) and Charles was baptized 1 Jan 1779 which is recorded in (SJA-1, 59).<sup>17</sup> None of these records shows the grandparents. Later, the Catholic Church did require parish priests (including those at St-James) to record the grandparents, but unfortunately, it was after the records of this family were created.

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<sup>13</sup> Translation of White's text.

<sup>14</sup> "AN ATLAS OF LOUISIANA SURNAMES OF FRENCH AND SPANISH ORIGIN", Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, 1986, pp. 137-138.

<sup>15</sup> Baton Rouge Diocese, "CATHOLIC CHURCH RECORDS;" Vol. 1a, p. 184, Joseph THERIOT, son of Jean & Magdeleine BOURG, was born 2 May 1732, baptized 3 Jun 1732. This is recorded in the old Grand Pré records carried by the exiles to St-Gabriel Church in Iberville, Louisiana (SGA-2, 119).

<sup>16</sup> These are some of the very earliest records extant.

<sup>17</sup> These four references are in the Baton Rouge Diocese, "CATHOLIC CHURCH RECORDS;" Vol. 2, pp. 688-189 & 691.

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**Summary and Conclusion**

Our conclusion, which is supported by this compelling and consistent body of research must therefore be that:

**Joseph (dit Le Bonhomme) who was the son of Joseph and Françoise MELANCON, was married only once, to Marie-Josophe PITRE** and could not have married Madeleine BOURGEOIS in 1758 because he was deported to France in 1758-1759 along with his wife and children. He died in Cherbourg, France on 29 Dec 1759 at the age of about 31.

The children of Joseph dit Le Bonhomme and Marie-Josophe PITRE included the following:

1. Pierre Paul, born around 1751
2. Isabelle-Ozite, born around 1753
3. Anne, born around 1755

While in fact there are no records which definitively establish whether the son of Joseph or the son of Jean THÉRIOT married Madeleine BOURGEOIS, these new findings indicate that it was most probably **Joseph THÉRIOT, the son and 8th child of Jean THÉRIOT & Madeleine Bourg, born 2 Jun 1732, baptized at Grand Pré on 3 Jun 1732 who around 1758, married Madeleine BOURGEOIS, daughter of Pierre & Marie-Françoise CORMIER**. They went to Louisiana, where they appear on the 1777 census at Cabahannocer (St-James Parish) when Joseph was 46 years old. He died before 22 Nov 1796.

The children of Joseph and Madeleine therefore included the following:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Rosalie                                   | married Mathurin LE BLANC        |
| 2. Marie-Rose                                | married Isaac LE BLANC           |
| 3. Pierre <sup>18</sup>                      | married Anastasie MICHEL         |
| 4. Joseph                                    | married Marie Marguerite BERTEAU |
| 5. Charles                                   | buried Mar 1773 (SJA-1, 67)      |
| 6. Jean Baptiste, baptized 5 Sep 1773        | married Marguerite RICHARD       |
| 7. Marie Madeleine Anne, baptized 6 Jan 1776 | married Jean Baptiste BOURGEOIS  |
| 8. Charles, baptized 1 Jan 1779              | married Rosalie LE BLANC         |

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<sup>18</sup> There are no known primary source records which record this name as Pierre Joseph. Pierre and Anastasie's family included 15 children including Paul Phillipe, born 4 Jul 1812 and Augustin, born 1816.