
TEN
GENERATIONS OF
JORRE
HISTORY

INDEX

Chapter IV - Seychelles

Note on Front Cover:

This shows the flags of the five Provinces or countries in which our ancestors have lived. Clockwise from the top lefthand side are Normandy, Brittany, Reunion, Mauritius with that of Seychelles in the centre. Of course none of the latter three flags existed until the XX century.

PREFACE

This book is an attempt to trace through time a slender thread to the past, so that my children and their descendants will have some knowledge of their heritage and an idea of what sort of people at least a few of their ancestors were. It is written as a direct message to my three daughters, Louise, Susan and Danielle.

We all have two parents, four grand parents, and if one goes back 20 generations, 1,048,576 forebears from an era roughly 600 years ago. I was unable to go back that far, but I have been able to go back reliably to about 1650 or some eight to ten generations following the male line. At this distance in time, any one of these 1,024 ancestors has contributed only about 0.1 % to your genetic makeup, which is probably not much more than you would have in common with any randomly selected person of the same ethnic and geographic group.

So why bother spending time, effort and some money in finding out who these long dead people were, what they did and how they lived? Certainly not because of their prominence in their respective societies at any point in time. From the information I have obtained, they appear to have been employed in clerical or agricultural pursuits. They were not famous generals, nobility, scientists or doctors or even infamous rogues or scoundrels. The marks they have left in history are small, muted and often accidental. At most, they were medium sized fish swimming in small ponds.

To answer my own question, it is simply because it was relatively easy due both to the distinctive nature of the surname and to the path taken out of France in 1740 by Guilluame Joseph Jorre de St. Jorre (GJJ) to the French Indian Ocean colonies. Once out of France into the tiny enclave of the French in Reunion, Mauritius and the Seychelles, tracing our genealogy is simple. It is also made easier by the fact that they were always literate, at least a far back as I can trace. At times when very few people could read or write, those who could were far more likely to be employed in jobs that left identifiable traces.

Why trace a paternal line when there is at least as much interest and history contained in the maternal family tree? Two reasons; firstly because the latter is much harder, and secondly because this line probably stays in England for 12 generations or more and probably in London or the Home Counties for all of this time. As such it is much less interesting than a line that moves provinces and countries every generation or so, traveling to the then exotic Indian Ocean islands which still retain a faint shadow of this aura today.

I have gone back farther in time than I can trace only because there are solid reasons for believing that either Guillaume Jorre, Sieur de St. Jorre (GJ), the first traceable male in the line, or his immediate ancestors came from the Cotentin Peninsula of Normandy which is the present day Department of La Manche. There are church records of Jorre's (or variants of this name), living there as far back as the XVI century, but more importantly there are almost no such records this early of Jorres living anywhere else in France. Surnames at that time were a very flexible quantity, so there is not necessarily any connection between these Jorre's and our own line which starts with GJ.
In summary, this is essentially a historical exercise that is guided by genealogic line rather than an attempt to trace ancestors.

CHAPTER 1 - NORMANDY

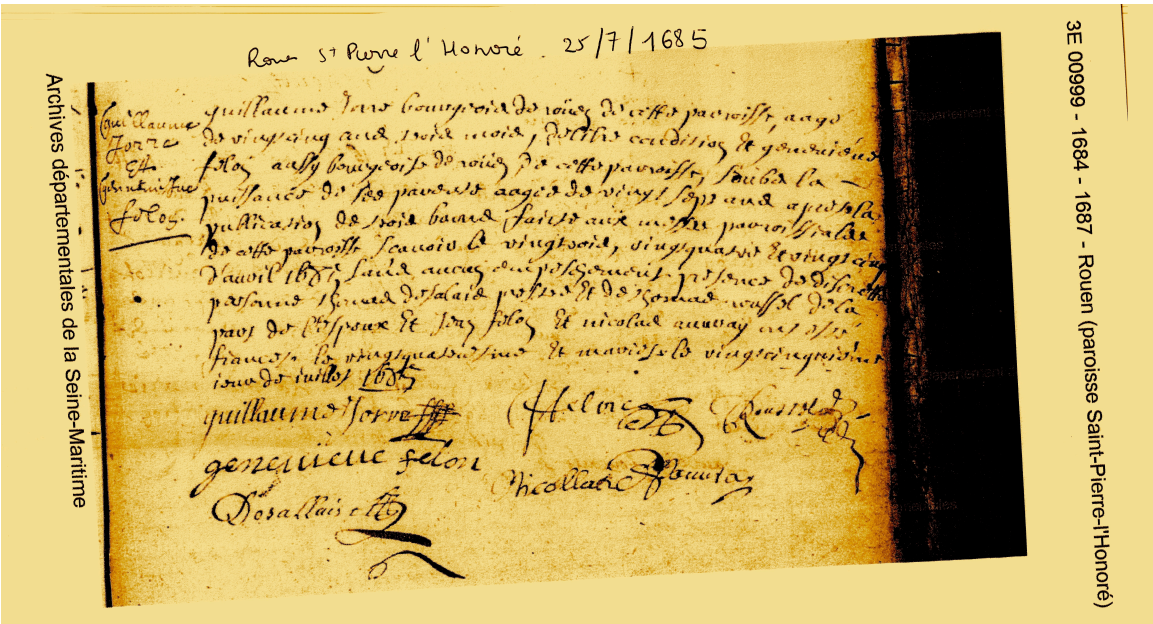
Introduction:

The starting point of this whole family history is the marriage of a Guillaume Jorre (GJ) to a Genevieve Felon (GF) at the parish church of Saint Pierre l'Honore in Rouen on July 25, 1685. The description of both is limited to "bourgeois(e) de Rouen" and that they were resident within the parish boundaries. Both signed the parish register, so it can be assumed that they were literate to a point. This certificate is shown below. The term "bourgeois" at this time of history suggests that they, or their parents were at least the owners of some property.

This register document is more or less illegible but it is possible that their ages are given, in which case GJ and GF would have been 25 and 27 years old respectively at the time of their marriage. This would put GJ's date of birth around 1660. Average ages of marriage for people of GJ's class at the time were 28 for men and 26 for women. A copy of this document is shown below.

I have been unable to find any other earlier reference to Jorres (of any name variant) in Rouen. However, I have found two XVIII century references to this name in the city, namely a Pierre Jorre and a Simon Jorre, both who are described as "marchand receveur" with dates associated with them of 1700 - 1701 and 1710 - 1711 respectively. The context of these references seem to indicate some sort of accounting or tax collection role. There were also a few references concerning females of this name later in the century, but none of which give any indication of a link to GJ.

However, GJ's family origin was probably located in the Cotentin peninsula west of Rouen, although this may have been from a generation or two before, so I have divided this section into two parts, the first concerning what information I have been



able to get on GJ's possible ancestors in and around the Cotentin and some historical background to life there in that era. The second part is about life in XVII century Rouen. In both, there is very little about the Jorre family since they were not prominent in any way and left almost no mark on history, but they were there and their lives must have reflected these times.

The Cotentin in the XVII Century

Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to provide some idea of where our Normandy ancestors may have come from, what their social standing may have been and what their lives may have been like.

There is little doubt that they did in fact come from Normandy since virtually all genealogical traces of the name ***Jorre*** (and all its many variants) lead back to the Cotentin Peninsula of that Province which is now the Department of La Manche. It is equally unlikely that we will ever be able to definitively trace them back there since the records that would prove this may have been long since lost. However, it is possible to pick up traces of several families with the ***de Saint Jores*** variant (and other similar names) that persisted for several generations in specific parishes over this 300 year period. Given the rarity of the name, it is possible that our ancestor, Guillaume Jorre, had some direct or indirect connection to one or more of these families. It is also possible, since the Sieur de Saint Jorre title was undoubtedly self awarded after GJ had moved to Brittany, he simply picked a title that he knew existed in Normandy near the place of his families origin.

There is a mass of information I have abstracted from a database of the Cercle Genealogique de la Manche (CGM). This organization has currently some 1.4 million records of births, marriages and deaths from the parish registers of about 75% of the 602 communes that make up the Department de la Manche over a 400 year period, starting from about 1500. This does not cover all periods or all parishes or even most of them. Probably many of these registers have been lost or destroyed, many records are illegible and even those that are abstracted are subject to errors from the original recording or the eventual transcription. The process is still ongoing so it is possible more information will eventually come to light. Because this information is both detailed, boring and may not have any connection at all to GJ, I have added it as an appendix to this narrative, rather than include it as a separate chapter (See Appendix A).

The Sieur de Saint Jorre Case:

GJ's choice of title, when it first appears at the birth of his first son by Beatrise Millier in 1703 in Chateauneuf du Faou, Brittany, strongly suggests that he had a connection to the Cotentin area since this is where so many of Jore name variants seem to have originated. His use of the Saint Jorre instead of that of the name of the existing Seignurie de Saint Jores may have simply been an artifice to avoid stepping on the toes of a rich and powerful holder of this real title, Robert Jean, Comte de Coigny.

He started off as simply Guillaume Jorre, initially described as "Bourgeois" at his Rouen marriage, then graduating to "Noble Homme" at his Gourin, Brittany marriage

and finally to "Sieur de Saint Jorre" in 1703 with a final promotion in 1710 to the title of Greffier of the Royal Jurisdiction of Chateauneuf du Faou, Huelgoat and Landeleau. All his children seem to have adopted the Jorre de Saint Jorre surname and it was used consistently for the next 8 generations.

During this era, Seigneuries and Sieuries were bought and sold and the purchasers would often adopt the name of their purchase dropping their previous name without much thought for future genealogists. Thus it is almost certain that if GJ's father did have a valid title to a Sieurie it was not that of St. Jores whatever else it may have been. At the time titles like this were of major importance from a social perspective so it seems unlikely that he could simply create it and have people believe it, particularly since he was an officer of the Crown even if not a very high one.

There are several interpretations that can be put on this set of facts. It is possible that he was the eldest surviving son of a father who held the title to the Sieurie de Saint Jorre who was still alive in 1697 but had died leaving it to GJ by 1703. The problem with this is there does not appear to be such a fief in Brittany (at that or any other time) and that there is only one in Normandy. This, the Seigneurie de Saint Jores, was held by the De Franquetot family who were one of the major landowners and political families of the Cotentin, and whose seat and principal residence was in Coigny just a few kilometers away from St. Jores. However the most likely one is that due to local circumstances (a reward for services rendered, a promotion or simply a purchase) he legitimately acquired the right to a title and he chose this one.

There is not really anything factual one can add to this but it is possible to look at the lives of contemporaries of GJ and his immediate Norman ancestors who did leave extensive records either by being famous and having their biographic details recorded or simply by keeping a diary. These individuals are:

Gilles de Gouberville (1530 - 1576), and
Francois, Duc de Coigny (1670 - 1759).

Gilles was minor member of the landed gentry who owned two fiefs near Cherbourg and was also the Lieutenant of the Matrise des Eaux et Forets for the north part of the Cotentin. As this is probably the same agency for which GJ worked in Brittany some 150 years later (albeit at a lower level), it has some relevance to what life may have been like for the previous two or three generations in GJ's family.

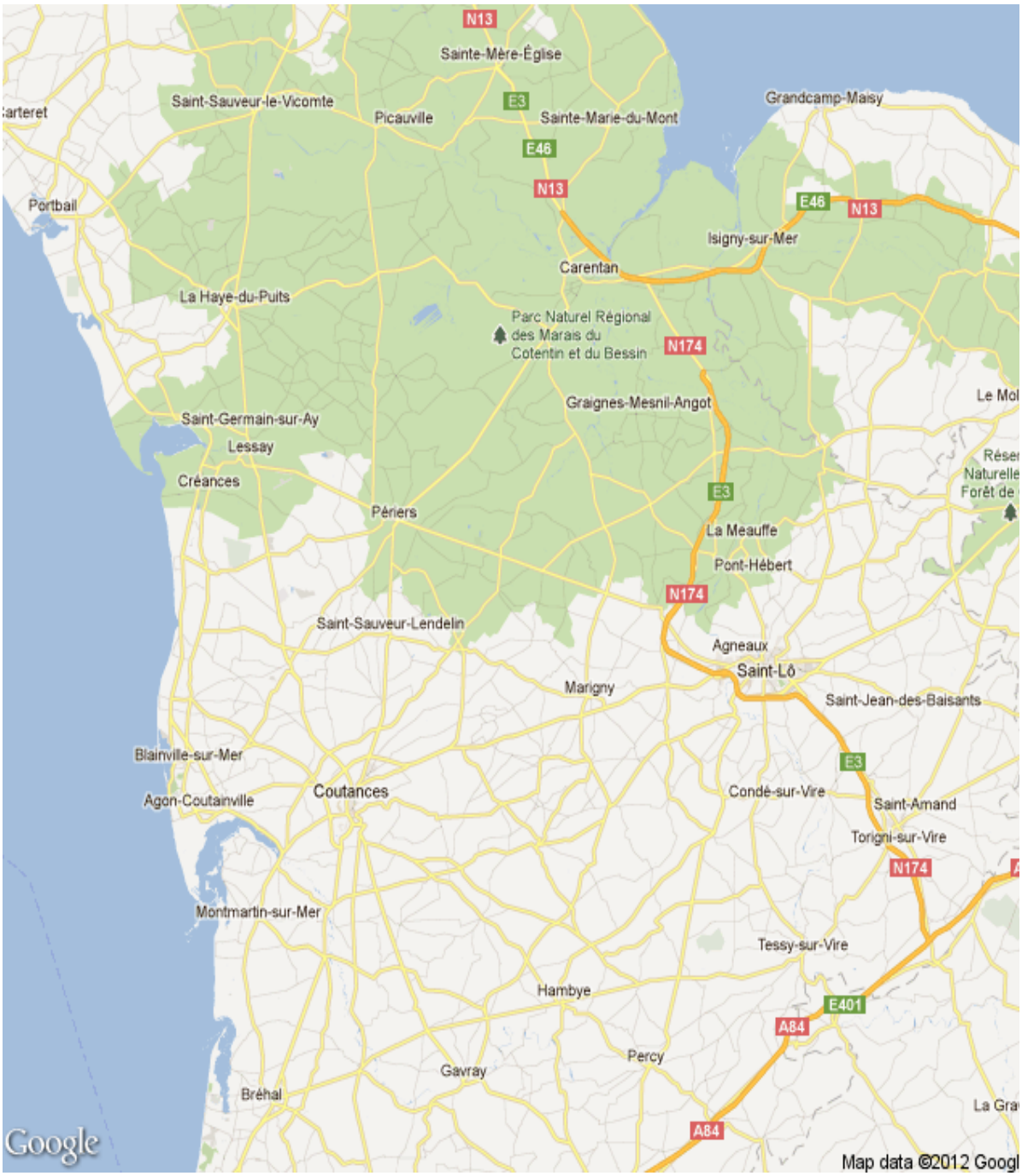
Francois was a third generation aristocrat who had both wealth and social position at birth and went on to a distinguished military career finishing as a Marechal de France. He lived next door to St. Jores in the Chateau de Franquetot at Coigny at the time of GJ's youth and adolescence.

In addition, there were two other historical events that occurred during this period in the Cotentin that are relevant to understanding life here during this era. These are:

The Nus-Pieds Revolt of 1639, and
The Haye du Puits Witchcraft Trials of 1669/1670

All of these have been dealt with in separate following sections in historical order.

In order to assist the geographical understanding of the area in question, four maps are attached showing respectively:



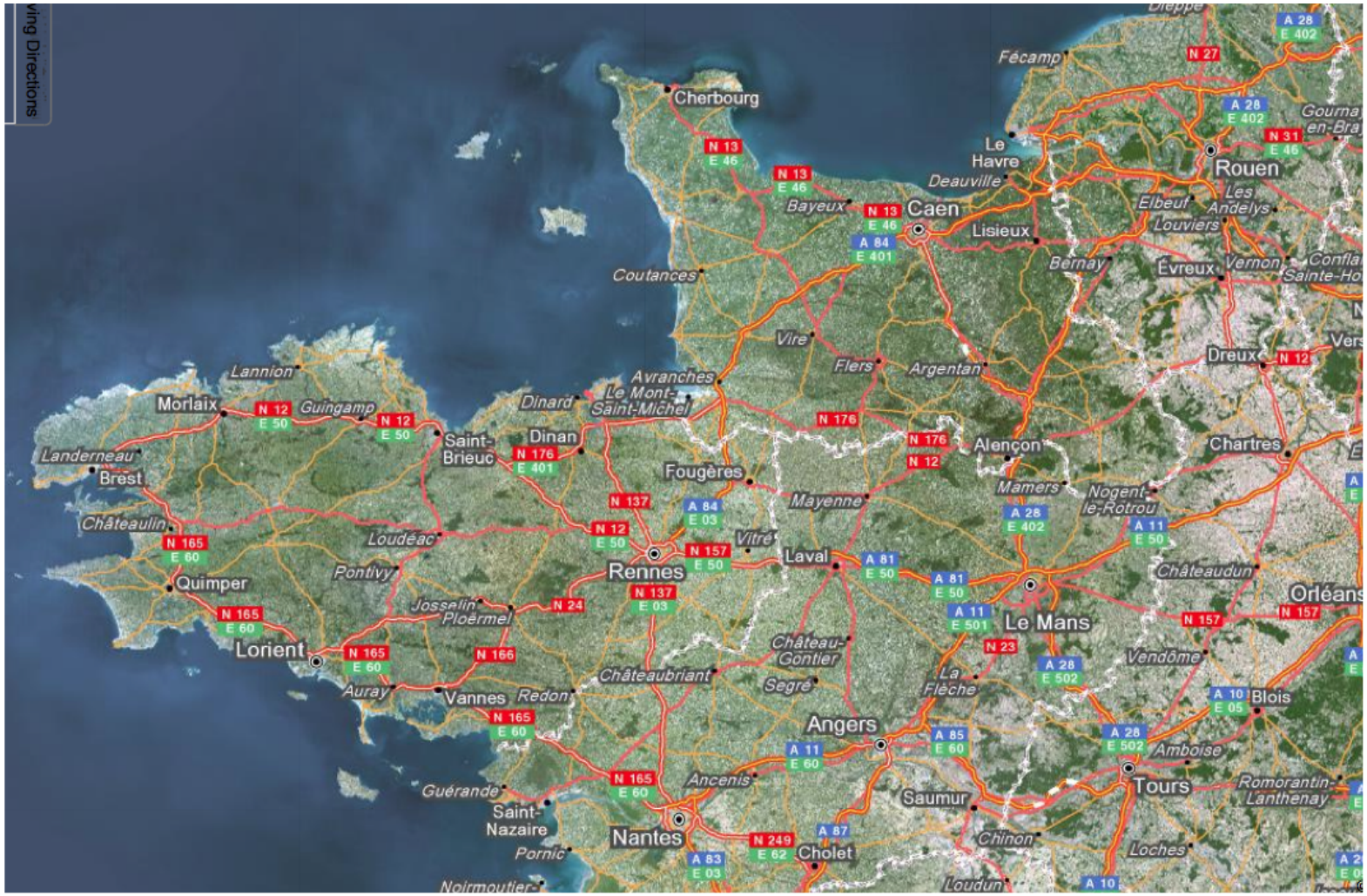
Map 1

Map of Central Cotentin, Normandy

Map 1 - Central Cotentin
Map 2 - Brittany and Western Normandy
Map 3 - Cassini Map of the Coutance / St. Lo Area
Map 4 - Northern France - Normandy and Brittany

Map 2 - Map of Brittany and the Cotentin Peninsula of Normandy

Map 3 - Cassini map of Coutance - St. Lo Region (St. Jores Marked A)



Map 4 Northern France Brittany and Normandy

The Life and Times of Gilles de Gouberville (1521 to 1578)

Introduction:

Gilles de Gouberville ("G de G") was minor noble whose lineage in Normandy was traceable back to about 1400 and whose social position depended on his ownership of a number of properties ("Sieuries") and his position as Lieutenant de Matrise des Eaux et Forets of the Valonges district of the Cotentin. He was not an historical figure in any sense of the word, but the journal he left covering most of the period from 1549 to 1562 and his social position provides an intimate window into a world GJ's ancestors would have inhabited, and one that would have been very similar to that in which GJ lived in Brittany a century and a half later. This is information that is not available for most of GJ's descendants as they moved about in the Indian Ocean islands.

GJ was the Greffier for the Juridiction Royal de Chateauneuf du Faou, Huelgoat et Landeleau which may have been either in the Matrise des Eaux et Forets or the civil district justice organizations. In both cases, he would have reported to the Lieutenant of that organization. Hence there are direct parallels between G de G and GJ that, despite the 150 years separating them in time, provide a means of seeing how he and his ancestors may have lived.

It is very unlikely that GJ's ancestors had any contact with G de G since the latters' properties and range of work were confined to the northern Cotentin, roughly between Cherbourg and Valonges, whereas all evidence of the Jorres presence comes from the central/southern Cotentin in the region of Carentan/St. Lo/ Coutances. Their way of life, morals and religious views would have been the same.

The G de G Journals:

These were discovered by an Abbe Toellmer, a priest living in Valonges, in the mid XIX century and consisted of a daily journal that G de G kept probably with the aim of providing a record of actions, expenses and other events that he found necessary in the day to day administration of his estates and job. It had no literary style, was repetitive and not particularly well written or grammatical but, because of these faults, there is no doubt that it provides a clear mirror of events of the day as seen through his eyes. It is unlikely that he ever thought anyone else would read it although he occasionally uses a crude form of code (the use of Greek letters to spell French words) for items that he considers sensitive if they were read by others.

There are some 4000 entries, which have been published as is, but the source I have used is a reprint of Toellmer's original 1879 books. In these, he has gone through the entire journal and abstracted information about every aspect of G de G's life and work, and turned it into a readable, and at times, a witty account. There is also a G de G website, a Society and numerous other publications about him; he is in fact a minor French cultural institution.

Gilles de Gouberville:

His family came from the Bayeux area, where his grandfather was Seigneur de Russy and owned properties in a dozen parishes which were split between G de G's father and his uncle (Cure de Russy, a priest) in 1517 on the death of his grandmother. His

father, Guillaume Picot acquired an additional property of Mesnil au Val through marriage, and it was here that G de G lived for most of his adult life. The family name was Picot, but the custom amongst the wealthy and titled was to take the name of their principal property as their surname, thus Gilles Picot became Gilles de Gouberville when he inherited that property on the death of his father since he was the eldest son. He also acquired his job as Lieutenant de Matrise des Eaux et Forets from his father in 1543 at the age of 22 and other properties on the death of his uncle in 1560.

He had three brothers and three sisters; all brothers had surnames reflecting their properties, and he usually referred to his married sisters by their husbands' names. The third unmarried sister, of whom he seemed disapprove, was called Tassine. There were also a number of illegitimate half brothers and sisters of which four were part of his establishment and either lived with him or close by. These were Guillemette, Symonet (m), Noel and Jacques. He was also involved socially with the family of his brother-in-law, Sieur de St. Nazer and his relatives, most of whom seemed have clerical positions. He never married but was certainly sexually active with numerous mistresses and a number of illegitimate children.

Gilles at his Journal

He was therefore minor nobility, but well connected locally and rich by the standards of the day. In Cherbourg, Valonges and Bayeux, he was a big fish, in Rouen he was known but not powerful, and in Paris or at the French court, he was a nobody. This was proven by his one major journey out of Normandy when he visited the French Royal Court at the town of Blois in 1556 to attempt purchase the position of Grande Maistre des Eaux et Forets for the Cotentin. His account of this reads like a Kafkesque nightmare of being run around between bureaucrats; he eventually gave

Dovecote at Mesnil aux Val Manor House of Gilles de Gouberville

up after 33 days and returned home. From this visit he provides brief descriptions of the court functions he attended and the historic figures he saw which included Mary Queen of Scots.

His work: Lieutenant of the Matrise des Eaux et Forets de Vicomte de Valonges:

This job in a sense was hereditary, but it was awarded and could be taken away by the Crown. It could also be sold, but any transfer required Crown approval. It was not a sinecure and required regular actions on the part of the holder. It also carried with it a staff to assist in carrying its functions. He had one superior, the Grande Maistre who supervised the work of the two other districts of the Cotentin.

The staff, in order of seniority, consisted of:

Grande Maistre	
Lieutenant	
Procureur	Prosecutor
Greffier	Administrative Secretary (keeper of records "le greffe")
Arpenteur	Surveyor
Verdier	Forester
Huissier	Enforcer (of laws)
Sergents	As for Huissier
Gardes	Local forest wardens

Not all of these positions are mentioned in G de G's account and may not have been in use at that time. They all were in use in the XVII century when GJ held the position of Greffier in Brittany.

His duties involved a lot of travel within his area, the principal activity being holding semi-monthly meetings (called "Hauts Jours") at the larger towns (Valonges, Cherbourg and others). These were in fact courts at which he settled disputes, fined those who had broken regulations and enforced contracts or awarded new ones. Taxes and other payments due to the Crown were also collected. Adjudications of disputes and possibly parcel auctions were held at these meetings which were sometimes attended by Crown Commissioners, presumably to ensure the honesty of local officials. Most of the latter visits seemed to have been taken up with eating and drinking, possibly to ensure that the commissioners would not notice irregularities if there were any.

He was also involved in leasing sections of the forests for various activities which included wood cutting, grazing, acorn harvest (for pigs) and assessing charges or auctioning off these rights. These agreements would be physically marked out by the Arpenteur and recorded by the Greffier on the "Greffe". G de G's Greffier was an individual named Maitre P. Collas, who when he was not working at this job was used by his boss as an additional worker on his farms. The records were stored in Crown offices at the nearest administrative centre.

He does not have had much to do with the water part of his job title; in 9 years he was only involved in two projects, one of which was dredging a river near Cherbourg and the other being something to do with a bridge or ferry.

Names:

Abbe Toellmer made the point that in this era, the propertied class changed their names almost as frequently as their clothes. Although his family name was Picot, neither he nor his father, uncle nor any any of his brothers went by this name. They all took the name of whatever principal property they owned or for those who were clerics, the name of their rank and church or abbey. A good example of this are the siblings of his brother-in-law Sieur de Saint Nazer. His four brothers are variously referred to as: Robert de Moncel, Bailli de l'Abbaye de Cherbourg; Bailli d'Ardennes; Chanoine de Bayeux and Sieur des Hachees. Thus there was nothing fixed about the names used and they could be changed as properties and titles were added through marriage, purchase or grant. There was a formal process ("la lettre de changement du nom") for doing so. G de G had written proofs of his noble birth dating back to about 1400 and on one occasion he was forced to prove this when in 1556 the Crown required all such people to demonstrate that their claim was valid. The reason of course was that nobles were largely tax exempt and therefore it was in the Crown's interest to cut down on the number claiming this exemption. After some trouble and visits to courts in Valonges and Bayeux, he was able to convince them of his antecedents and thus preserve his noble status and avoid massive fines.

Since noble birth made a huge difference to the sort of life one could lead in pre-revolutionary France, at that time it was not something that was easy to fake, and retaining proof of whatever showed that you were noble was a matter of considerable importance. However many times a gentlemen changed his name, one can be certain that an adequate paper trail was left behind. As far as GJ goes, it is entirely possible that the de Saint Jorre part of his name may have been a relatively recent acquisition going back only one or two generations.

Domestic Life:

Money:

Before getting into these details I will first look at money. In XVI century France, despite efforts by Francois I to reform the currency, coins from across Europe were in wide circulation . Those referred to in the Journal came from 10 different countries and total 34 different types and included gold, silver and copper. The nominal French currency was:

1 livre (or franc)	=	20 sous
1 sou	=	12 derniers

This of course is the same ratio as the British currency of that time. Most of the coins used were French, British and Spanish, but coins from as far away as Hungary, Milan and Bavaria frequently appeared. It can be seen that anyone handling money would have to have a detailed knowledge of what all these coins were worth and whether they were real and of full weight (for gold and silver). Making change must have been difficult to say the least. Apparently the flood of silver and to a lesser extent gold coming from Spain's New World possessions had caused turmoil in the values of currencies. The values of many of these coins varied over the period of the Journal, possibly due inflation, currency debasement or simply G de G deciding what a particular coin was worth on that day. Fortunately, he had the habit of converting everything back into L/S/D for his own records.

Typically he did not carry much cash with him, usually just a few coins tied up in a handkerchief which he frequently lost. Most transactions were either done by barter or on credit.

Servants:

These were numerous and the line between servants, farm employees and those of the Matrise was at times fuzzy. If he wanted something done, he would use anyone available to do it. The annual wage rates varied from a high of 200 sous to a low of about 20 sous. Often part of this was paid in clothing or shoes. A shepherd annual pay, for example, was 20 sous, a pair of shoes and a lamb. He must have also got some food as well because otherwise he would have starved to death. On average they probably got about 50 sous plus some clothing, food and accommodation. Turnover of employees was fairly rapid, and new employees could be picked up at "assemblees" in the larger towns such as Valognes, Teville and Negreville.

His household staff (at Mesnil au Val) consisted of 9 male and 5 female servants who were under the control of Cantepye (Langlois) who appeared to fulfill the function of his general manager. Relations with these servants was not always smooth and he would beat them on occasion and they would not infrequently quit without notice. His illegitimate half brothers were effectively servants but they were not treated as such. Symonnet, who seemed inseparable from G de G was treated almost like a spoilt child. The only time that G de G ever came close to showing emotion in his journal was when Symonnet made plans to sail to "Perou" (probably the West Indies) with a corsair from Cherbourg. This devastated him and until this cloud was lifted, probably by bribing the ship's captain to leave his passenger behind, he sounded totally depressed.

Cantepye was not a relative, but he came from a higher social class then most of G de G's entourage. This is shown by the fact that he married G de G's illegitimate half sister Guillimette and that his older brother was Sieur de Beaumont, Greffier de St. Saulver. Thus he was not a social equal, but not a peasant either.

Household Life:

Very little is said about furniture since he bought little over a 9 years period. Most of it must have been solid, decades old locally made pieces that were never altered or replaced. He had a clock and a locked cabinet for the storage of important papers. His bed was surrounded with heavy fabric curtains. Everyone in the household ate in one room, but at separate tables for the masters and the servants. All tableware was made of pewter, he did not possess silverware.

All their clothes and foot ware were made locally, for the most part from cloth woven in the immediate district or the hides of his farm animals that were tanned elsewhere. The fabrics therefore were wool and linen. The basic clothing for both sexes was a set of tights ("chausses") covered by an overgarment like trousers for men. Shirts were used at times but a jacket/shirt called a "pourpoint" was more common. Outer garments were "cape", "soye", "robe" and "collet", most of which had hoods. Hats were widely used and G de G liked expensive ones. The shoes and boots were made of leather and soled with it as well. They were waterproofed with a substance called "liege". There is no mention at all of the wooden clogs ("sabots") that were in common used in XIX century Normandy.

The final item of apparel for him and Symonnet was a sword. This was worn in a

scabbard hung from a special sword belt and was the defining badge of nobility.

In the 9 years of the journal he only made one mention of the purchase of soap, which does not necessarily mean that he never washed as it could have been made on the farm, but it appears that washing was not a regular occurrence. He never shaved. They made both rose water and "pomade" on the farm.

Food:

Bread and meat were the staple foods. G de G had his own water driven flour mill at Mesnil au Val and most of his households needs were baked on site or purchased from the village baker. Most of the meat was beef, veal, goat and mutton, either killed and butchered on farm or bought from the village butchers. Pork was the main meat produced by the farm, possibly because he had preferential access to the acorns from the forests under his control. Meat appeared to be as cheap or cheaper than bread.

Chickens, ducks and geese were also kept. There is a 1559 mention of a "poule d'Inde" which probably was a turkey although historical records show that these were not introduced into France until 1570. He also had a large "colombier" or dovecot that held 900 breeding pairs of pigeons. This is now the only part of the Mesnil au Val manor house that is left today (it is a private residence). During G de G's time the lower half of the colombier was used as the chapel where Sunday mass was said. Presumably there was a solid floor between the two halves of the building.

Pigeons, along with tax exemption and carrying swords were badges of the nobility with the former being the source of much anger between the classes. The pigeons ate the peasant's grain yet the latter were prohibited from killing them. Pigeons were a sort of currency and were often given as gifts on social occasions and used for rental payments. The birds droppings were periodically scraped out and used as fertilizer on the fields. It took four men a whole day to do this job, which on one occasion included Pierre Collas, G de G's Greffier . This does not seem a very suitable job for someone in a clerical position and may have been a form of punishment for some misdeed.

All sorts of wild game were also eaten as hunting was a major leisure pastime. Amongst the birds, heron and swan were included but were not common. Pigs, deer, hares, rabbits and feral goats were the principal animals hunted.

He lists over 50 different types of fish and crustaceans that he ate, either cooked, salted or (rarely) raw. Some of the sea fish came from his Gouberville estate which was very near the sea and may have been caught from his own boat.

Apples and pears were the principal fruits that were grown and eaten either fresh, dried or preserved. Apples grew wild in the hedgerows and were cultivated extensively by all social classes so everyone had access to them in large quantities. Most also pressed them to make cider or perry which were the drinks of choice in the Cotentin even though wine was both cheap and readily available. Citrus fruit was available in the larger towns (Valonges, Cherbourg) over the period November to March. Other dried fruit available were figs, prunes and raisins.

Dairy products are rarely mentioned. Cheeses were made on the farm as mention is made of them being given as gifts, so it appears that they were not staple items of diet.

Salt was used extensively as a preservative and was purchased in large quantities from the local salt works in Cherbourg at a price of 6 sous per bushel. At this time Normandy was exempt from the hated "Gabelle" or Royal salt tax. Where this tax was in force, the price of salt was 300% higher and worse still was the obligation for each household to buy a minimum amount at this price. The Nus-Pieds revolt of 1639 was sparked by the attempt to introduce this tax into Normandy. Other spices and condiments that were available included pepper, cinnamon, ginger, saffron, cloves, vinegar, mustard and olive oil.

Drink:

The principal drink consumed by all levels of society, young and old, male and female, was cider. It was made by everyone since apples were available to even the poorest classes as they grew wild in hedgerows and forests and typically was provided free to farm workers by their master. Its price not mentioned but it must have been low. If the apple crop ever failed, the price of cider rose steeply, making it unavailable to the poor. This usually resulted in outbreaks of water borne disease as this then became the only drink available and many water sources were contaminated.

Wine was also cheap and plentiful costing around 2 sous/pot (a measure larger than 1 litre). This was cheaper than a loaf of bread. Better quality wines, used on special occasions or for sickness cost from 3 to 5 sous/pot. For all drink purchases one had to bring one's own bottle. A mixed wine called Hippocras consisting of beer, wine, spirits and spices was quite expensive at 20 sous/pot (a shepherd’s annual cash salary) and was only used by the rich at their weddings and other festive events. Wine (and pigeons) were frequent gifts taken by guests invited for a meal. Spirits were available but are hardly ever mentioned. G de G had his own still from which he produced an apple eau-de-vie. It was not called Calvados at this time.

Hunting:

Although hunting was supposed to be the privilege of the landed classes through national laws that were enforced, enforcement cannot have been too strict since all classes hunted. The gentry used firearms and the peasants used crossbows. The firearms were arquebus and pistols, the former being a massive construction that required two men to carry it, cost about 150 sous and fired lead bullets and was wheel lock ignited. It had to be fired from a stand which makes it difficult to see how useful it was for hunting. He mentions that in 1545, when he was 24 that he had been shot by an arquebus when he was in Valonges. He owned a pistol but there is no reference to him using it. The ingredients for gunpowder (other than charcoal) were purchased in Cherbourg and it was manufactured on the farm; no mention is made of using sulphur.

The peasants used crossbows exclusively. These were made locally at Tourlaville and appeared to be quite sophisticated and effective. This of course was a time of transition from bows to firearms with the latter still being in their infancy.

The principal animal hunting aid was the dog. He refers to at least 8 breeds specialized in different forms of hunting and he had some sort of renown in the results of his breeding experiments. His social superiors would borrow these dogs for hunting and others would steal them. Several times he had local church authorities issue notices of excommunication against the suspected dog thieves. He also imported hunting dogs from England (complete with a dog trainer) since English

hunting dogs were held in high esteem. A popular belief was that bathing dogs in the sea would prevent rabies. He was bitten by a neighbour's dog in 1557 and spent an anxious few weeks waiting to see if he had contracted rabies.

Hawks were also used for birds and ferrets for rabbits. Nets were used extensively to trap birds and leg hold traps for foxes.

The hunting targets were basically every wild animal or bird in the then extensive forests. Wolves and wild boars are probably the only ones that do not exist today. Wolves seem to have been a problem, whether real or imagined. Their extermination had been a policy of the Crown and was formalized by Henri III in 1583. This required each village to provide an armed hunter and conduct wolf hunts at least 3 times a year. There were specialized wolf hunting dogs and even a firearm called "la boite" that was used to hunt these unfortunate beasts.

Education:

There is no record of how, where or by whom G de G was educated, but as with all of his class he would have received enough education to be able to read and write in French and have some limited mathematical ability. In addition, he was relatively proficient in Latin but had no Greek, despite his use of the Greek alphabet in his journal. To obtain this level of education he must have left home for a secondary school in Caen, Rouen or Paris, probably around 1530.

The utilitarian structure of his journal showed that he had no literary ambitions, but his reading taste indicates a broader interest in the outside world. Among his library, which probably did not include more than about 30 books, were Machiavelli's "The Prince", Nostradamus's "Prognostications" and "Almanac", a work by Rabelais, a geometry text book and a religious work called "Lecons de Pierre Messye". Almost half of his library came from his Parisian brother who died in 1555. On winter evenings he sometimes read to his entire domestic family group with the books read either being novels, legends or fables, often having a religious sub-text. He valued these books and ensured that they were well kept and maintained. When he lent them out, he made insisted on signed receipts for them.

There was a school at Mesnil au Val that would have customarily have been run by a cleric lacking a church position, but in this case was not. It provided only basic primary education. G de G's only contacts with it were when the school choir came to sing or recite Christmas carols to him at the manor house on New Years Eve, for which he gave them money. He also paid the school fees for some of his servants' male children. At this time apparently 80% of men and 30% of women in Normandy could sign their name, although this ability to write one or two words can hardly be classed as being literate. Village schools were not rare.

His use of Greek letters started in 1554 and probably came from a visiting scholar named Francois le Tourangeau who lived in Mesnil au Val for 2 years and was given clothing shoes and money by G de G, presumably in return for lessons. The only thing we know for sure that the latter learned from him was how to distill spirits from cider.

Medicine:

The medical establishment had essentially four layers for those living in Mesnil au

Val. G de G was the first level; a sick or injured person would come to him and he would decide on who would provide the treatment, and if it was him, then he would carry it out. If not, the next level and cheapest practitioner was the barber, followed by "les rebouteux" who seemed to have been a sort of osteopath/naturopath, and finally the most expensive was a doctor. The latter were only available in the larger towns such as Valonges and Cherbourg. The fee structure ranged from 5 to 8 sous for a barber, 30 sous for les rebouteux and more for a doctor.

The medicine he practiced was largely repairing the results of work accidents, knife, cudgel and sword cuts from domestic brawls, lancing boils and infected wounds and fixing dislocated joints. He had decided views on the treatment of illnesses and would not allow them to use remedies on his people that he considered worthless. His medical team of choice included a doctor (actually a priest) from Valonges named Raoul Dager, a surgeon Jehan de Breuville from Cherbourg and a barber, Richard le Gros from Montebourg.

Diagnostics were limited to the patient's visual appearance and his urine sample. Since the town based doctors were the urinalysis experts, this resulted in the patient's sample being carried to the doctor, who made his determination from it, prescribed the remedy (usually some special beer or wine based drink brewed and mixed by a religious order), which was then dispatched back to the patient. Hopefully this was not in the same container.

The remedies were primitive. Surgery seems to have been non-existent other than stitching up deep wounds. No attempt was made to amputate an infected farm worker's badly crushed foot, from which he eventually died from blood poisoning. Apothecaries carried a wide array of herbs, spices and other "decoctions" including elemental mercury. Most seem to have been given in some alcoholic drink although goat's milk was sometimes used. The alcoholic drinks inevitably came from an abbey or monastery. Several antiseptics were in use, common ones being "oil of tourmantine" and "orties" (whatever they were). His one dental problem in 10 years was cured by a "cauterization" carried out by someone who was not on his regular medical team.

The standard treatment for most sicknesses was to put the patient to bed next to the fire in the kitchen or living room, and then friends, relatives and neighbours would all gather around to commiserate. For infectious diseases, this probably ensured the rapid spread to the entire village. Despite this, he makes no mention of any actual epidemics over the period of the journal. One case of smallpox and two of "la peste" are mentioned. Major epidemics were common and usually arose from contaminated water.

The diseases he mentions include cancer, colds, flu, pleurisy, fever, vomiting, anthrax, and gout. Most female complaints relate to childbirth. Much of his personal sickness seems to stem from food poisoning since they often occur after one of his massive meals either at his home or while on the road being entertained by his hosts.

Entertainment:

Toellmer divides these into three groups which I have treated separately below. The fourth group was executions.

Jeux de la Maison:

Cards: Most of these were card games and were played by all social classes and most involved gambling. Although he provides the names five or six of these games he provides little or no details of what they were.

Momon: This game was part to pre-Lenten festivals and involved masked groups of men and women carrying some sort of effigy from house to house. Excessive drinking accompanied these tours.

Other: Paume was a racquet sport played indoors by the upper classes only. Palet was a bowling game using iron or wooden discs.

Jeux de Dehors:

G de G remarks on six outdoor games, most of which took place on a parish level and were played on Sunday between church services. Boules and Quilles were respectively bowling and skittle games, Lutter was a form of wrestling, Crocher, a team sport of uncertain rules and Volerye, another team sport played by young men of which he gives no details although the name suggests something to do with stealing.

A very popular inter parish game was Choule. This was played by male teams and involved carrying a ball like object across parish boundaries to some objective with the opposing team trying to stop them. The teams consisted of all social classes including the clergy, and the game was carried out with a high level of violence. The teams were often reinforced by men from other parishes. G de G was injured in one of these games and spent some time recovering from these injuries. Sometimes the opposing teams were made up of married and unmarried men.

There is one reference to a bull fight between a domestic bull (his) and a wild forest bull. The latter lost. It is not clear if this was organized or spontaneous.

Jeux Publiques:

These were performances that usually had a religious basis, namely morality, mystery or miracle plays. They were performed in either in churches or cemeteries, or more rarely in other public places. They took place on Sundays or other religious holidays and were attended by all levels of society.

Executions:

These usually took place at the larger towns such as Cherbourg and Valonges and were quite popular, possibly because it provided something out of the ordinary. I have dealt with this aspect of life under the Justice System.

The Justice System:

Civil Justice:

G de G was litigation minded so his journal provides an interesting window on how this system worked and going through some of the cases he was involved in is instructive. A common theme in all the civil cases quoted seems to be the length of

time it took to get a final decision, the cost and complexity of the process, and the minimal resultant wins and losses of the final outcome.

The Sieur de Gatteville suit:

This started in 1553 at the court in Valonges with an action by G de G to recover a rent of 30 sous from Gatteville. Whether it was just the rent or the asset producing the rent is not clear. In Jan. 1554 he sent a bribe of a young goat to the judge on the case and a month later got some sort of judgment in his favour. Gatteville appealed this to a higher court in St. Lo. Further gifts followed from G de G to the officials of this court prior to the court date in March 1554 but the outcome was indeterminate. Still more gifts were dispatched in 1555, and in 1556, he was back in St. Lo talking to these court officials, offering bribes of sugar, an expensive commodity in those days. He finally won at this court in April 1556 and hosted a celebration banquet for his legal team (at least 10 strong) at which the wine alone cost 126 sous.

A month later he was back in St. Lo to record his victory at a cost of 311 sous, but it was not yet quite the end as Gatteville appealed the decision to the court in Rouen. This appeal must have failed since the action then disappears from his journal.

The Pretot suit:

This had been initiated by his uncle Sieur de Russy prior to his death in 1560 against a M. Pretot of Carentan and was continued by G de G as his heir. Some sort of judgment was rendered in December 1561 that resulted in G de G paying everyone involved, including the judge, various sums of money.

The Pillon suit:

This was launched in Oct 1556 in Bayeux against a M. Pillon and appears to have been over two cows. It was finally decided four years later in G de G's favour for which he was awarded and paid 49 livres (980 sous).

He expressed astonishment when he lost a case, probably because he lavished gifts, mainly of food and drink, on the judges of all the local courts, whether or not he had cases ongoing in front of them. These gifts were known as "spices". Many of the cases were for non payment of rent on farm or forest land and may have been related to his job rather than his own assets. Winning these suits often depended more on extra legal actions, social position, bribing the judges and knowing how to manipulate the system rather than the merits of the case.

Dowries:

These were another fruitful source of litigation that impinged directly on G de G. His younger brother Francois seems to have led a dissolute youth, and although he had properties and income of his own, G de G was frequently called on to pay off his debts. In the early 1550's Francois married an upper class lady from Cherbourg named Marie de la Fontayne who brought with her a dowry. The marriage did not last long and after she had a child, he left her to go and live near his uncle in Russy. In 1556, G de G received a legal notice from the Valonges court from her demanding her dowry back. This court found in her favour in 1557 and because G de G lived in its jurisdiction and his brother did not, he was liable for the damages. He tried to get the verdict altered and the venue switched to the Bayeux court (where his brother was under their jurisdiction) and provided the usual stream of gifts to the tribunal

judges, but all to no avail. He eventually paid half of the 13 livres of the Valonges court award and continued to support his brother's wife through to 1562 and probably beyond. His attempts to get his brother to reimburse him met with no success.

Criminal Justice:

Theft:

Theft was the most common crime and seemed to happen continually, partially because of the weak system for catching and punishing the thieves. This largely relied upon the victim chasing after and catching the thief. If they succeeded at this, then punishment of the thief and property recovery or compensation in lieu was between the two of them to work out. This obviously favoured those who already had power such as G de G.

The targets of theft were mainly household items such as money, silver plate, iron fittings and weapons which were often stolen by servants. Livestock were also stolen as many roamed free in the forests and hence were easy prey with horses being the preferred targets. The animals were seldom recovered and, in such cases where they were, it was often the receiver that got fined and not the thief.

Cutting wood without a contract and planting crops on others land was also treated as theft.

A detailed account of one theft is given by G de G after the death of his rich uncle at Russy in 1560. He and his brother Francois arrived at the manor some 11 hours after the uncle's death, and they believed that a Guillemette Saint-Sanson had been in the house before them and had stolen money or materials. Twelve days later he charged Saint-Sanson with theft at the court in Carentan, who later wound up in prison. He obviously did not bear grudges for long since Saint-Sanson was back in his confidence by 1562.

Violence and Murder:

Everyone appeared to carry weapons of some sort both on business and pleasure and they did not seem to need much of an excuse to use them. Quarrels frequently arose at fairs and festivals, probably because drunkenness at these was widespread. A simple game of bowls resulted in a fight between two of his servants and two others at which swords, knives and clubs were used. No fatalities arose from this brawl.

Fighting was common to all classes; he recounts arguments with his own brother at which death threats were made. He describes in detail how one of his cousins was shot in a church by a gang of upper class people over a disagreement concerning a guarantee the cousin had made. The bizarre outcome of this was that the shot cousin was put in prison and the shooter went free.

Over the period of his journal he lists a total of 18 executions, and provides details on the seven of these in which the murderer was from his class. There were usually multiple executions on these days. There is a fairly detailed account of the murder of a Guillaume Chandeleur committed by a cure called Le Parmentier and his son in August 1558. The victim's widow came to G de G to ask for his help in getting justice. There was no action against the murderers until G de G persuaded the Rouen

Parlement to send a commission of inquiry to the Cotentin in May 1559. An effort of conciliation between the widow and the Le Parmentiers was made in September and again in November 1559. Both failed and they were arrested, imprisoned in Rouen and executed there a year later.

Criminal Penalties:

There was a tariff of compensation in which the criminal paid off the victim in return dropping the treat of further action. This was probably extra-legal and approved by custom rather than law. As can be seen from the Chandeleur murder it extended to capital crimes. Toellmer cites a 1435 murder case where the victims family settled for 20 sous plus perpetual masses to be said for the victims soul.

G de G often acted as a judge for local crimes, decided on who was right and what penalty would be paid by the loser.

Jail time was also a penalty with the jails being only in the larger towns. The prisoners had to pay for their board and lodging, which in the mid 1550's was 6.75 sous per day. G de G paid this for two of his servants who were jailed for 8 days for fighting over the outcome of a skittles game. He also paid their fine of 900 sous, of which, a third went to the judge.

Executions were usually either by decapitation or hanging; the former for the upper classes and the latter for the lower. He also mentions burning, beating, starvation, quartering and walling in although the latter may be a synonym for solitary confinement. Executions were carried out in the evening after supper and had the entire town come out to watch. On one such occasion in 1553, two were decapitated and three hung that evening.

The use of torture was common.

Church Courts:

There were a whole series of crimes that came under the jurisdiction of these courts. He does not say much about these but one thing they did handle was the conciliation and compensation for the mothers of illegitimate children. The going rate then was 600 sous.

Witchcraft trials were also handled by these courts (see the section on the Hay les Puits witchcraft trial of 1679).

Morals:

Sexual morals were weak for all classes and the clergy were not immune to this frailty. G de G never married but had more than five illegitimate children, similar to his father who had at least four. His approach to this type of sin was to repent it sincerely, obtain absolution and then directly go out and re-offend.

The Catholic Church:

Hierarchy:

The local hierarchy of the Church was as follows:

Cures
Vicares
Pretre Libres
Auxiliary volunteers

Les religieux:

Cures:

There were 602 parishes in the Cotentin that came under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Coutances each of which in theory had a Cure who was responsible for all church activity in his parish. In practice, many cures held more than one benefice and apart from gathering the revenues associated with them, seldom if ever visited them. During the period of G de G's journal, the Cure of Mesnil au Val visited the parish once in 1562. This casual approach was also common at the time in the higher levels of the Church; the Bishop of Coutances at the time spent no more than a few months in Coutances over the 8 years in which he was bishop of this diocese. G de G's uncle was Cure of three parishes Russy, Gouberville and Menesqueville, but he at least lived in one and visited the others on a regular basis.

The appointment of a new Cure was not entirely a church affair since the local seigneur had some part in the selection, but since significant revenues went with the position, the actual appointment process probably varied considerably with the diocese and parish. G de G was involved in the selection of his uncle's replacement as Cure de Russy after the latter's death in 1560.

In practice the Cures position seemed to have been one of a financial collector rather than a "guardian of souls". The church taxes were collected by the Vicars, the front line soldiers of the church at the parish level, who then passed them on to the Cures. There were at least two taxes collected, the "fermage" and the "decime". The former was the basic church tax collected from more or less everyone and the latter a 10% part of the ecclesiastic tax that was eventually remitted to the Crown. Some annual amounts that were quoted for the fermage for Gouberville and Menesqueville were 2000 and 1540 sous respectively.

Vicares:

Each church had at least one Vicare and often more (Mesnil au Val had three); priests appear to have been in over supply in XVI century Normandy. They were responsible for all church functions in the parish but at least had some accommodation and access to revenue even if they did not get to keep much of which they collected. They were the primary collector of church taxes. Often what little they did get was insufficient since the Vicar of Mesnil au Val frequently did manual work for G de G at his farm.

Pretres Libres:

These people were ordained priests who were not attached to any specific parish. They picked up whatever work they could and were little better than "Journaliers"; daily paid labourers. G de G records using them to repair his water mill, carry letters, work in his garden and fetch groceries. He records one payment to a priest of 5 sous for 20 days work in his garden (3 derniers per day). Some may have worked as teachers in the local primary schools or in some aspect of the health care system.

Buildings:

Each church usually had a presbytery for the use of the Cure or Vicare; if the former it was usually well maintained; if the latter probably less so. The one at Mesnil au Val was falling down because there was no money for its repair and neither the Cure, who did not live there, nor G de G, because it was not his responsibility, seemed to care.

Religious services:

The Sunday services went on all day, Matins, followed by two masses then followed by a sung or High Mass and then a service for the dead. All of these were not well attended, sometimes only by the priests, but all were expected to attend at least one mass if for no other reason than this was to inform the local population of new laws, regulations and other notices from the civil authorities which were read out at each mass by the local Vicare. The priests typically did not give sermons of a religious nature, this being the province of visiting monks who came from monasteries in Coutances, Valonges and Bayeux. During these fairly infrequent visits, these monks usually stayed as guests of G de G at his manor house. One gets the impression that these monks, at least the preaching ones, had a higher social status than the lowly Vicares.

There was a chapel at this manor house which was sometimes the destination of religious processions. Such processions occurred on a fairly frequent basis on various Saints days going to different neighbouring churches and probably had as much a social aspect as religious.

Births, Deaths and Marriages:

Baptisms were not usually major functions unless the child was from the upper social classes. With infant mortality so high, there was little point. G de G would show up if the baptism was of one of his immediate family servants and often take the position of godfather to the child. He would also pay the priest for the service.

Secular uses of churches:

As the church was often the only building of any size in most villages, they were often used for purposes that had nothing to do with religion. G de G frequently carried out dispute settlements (either his or those of local residents) and often while the service was in progress. Other uses were for the election of locals to official positions, and for the serving of notice of communal work obligations. Churches were also used as markets although the church hierarchy frowned on this; there were periodic edicts banning the use of sacred places for selling wine and other products.

Military Service:

The Journal covers a 10 to 13 year period immediately prior to the start of the religious civil wars that took place over the last four decades of the XVI century from 1562 to 1598 and includes part of 1562 when the first of 8 such wars broke out. (See separate sections of G de G's coverage and of the general history of these wars in Normandy.) What is dealt with here is the military service obligations under normal peace time conditions. Toellmer divides these into three groups.

Ban / Arriere Ban:

These are possibly the same thing, but both relate to either actual military service or the payment in lieu to avoid it. In any event, it was a Royal order for military service against internal or external enemies of France and was levied against property and not individuals. Therefore, the owner of multiple properties had to satisfy it for each of his holdings.

Notices were periodically sent out by the Lieutenant General of the district to all gentlemen (ie. those who had a ban obligation) to appear at meetings at the local county seats such as Valonges, Coutances, St. Lo or Cherbourg. These were called "Monstres du Ban". After G de G inherited his uncles' properties in Russy (in the Bayeux district), this presented problems since he had to be at both Bayeux and Valonges at the same time. His physical presence was required since a Royal Ordenance of 1534 threatened death for non-attendance. However, he seldom attended but always sent servants or associates in his place to explain his absence, with the excuse usually being due to sickness or injury. He always paid the amount assessed in lieu of actual service promptly. These taxes were significant, usually being in the range of 500 to 700 sous per year per property.

He was present at one in Coutances in Jan. 1562 that he describes in some detail, possibly because this was just prior to the start of the first religious civil war and virtually all of the Cotentin movers and shakers attended. It was a three day affair and was organized and controlled by the three principal figures, the Lieutenant General, the Captain and the Commissar, with the meetings being held at the Bishop's Palace. G de G was on the role as the Sieur de Gouberville and Mesnil au Val; his major comment was to complain bitterly about the amount he was taxed. The importance of this particular meeting was that it gave the participants a chance to see who was going to be on each side of the then inevitable civil war and choose a side that they thought would prevail.

The period of service was normally 3 months (per year) inside France or 40 days outside, but this did not include the time of travel to and from the scene of conflict or costs of travel and support. In fact, the noble was expected to bring his own servants and in some cases soldiers with him. The noble could designate a servant or relative to take his place, and G de G cites his faithful retainer Cantepye providing this service for a relative of the latter (Sieur de Senoville) in 1553.

Regular Troops:

These companies were between 300 to 500 in size but were scattered throughout the major towns in the Cotentin. Their provisioning was usually requisitioned from the local population under the authority of the district military chief (a Lieutenant Bastard in Valonges in G de G's area) and no payment was made for this. The actual troops were paid both poorly and infrequently, and were periodically demobilized when no money was available to pay them. Thus they were unloved by the locals and were usually disaffected and unreliable.

Local Militias:

There was some form of local military organization that had very little in the way of professional organization but did play a part in the religious civil wars of the late XVI century. These were called "monstres paroissiale" (or "monstres du rivage" in coastal towns and villages) and usually occurred on Sundays after church services. There

were usually led by an outside visitor who had some military training or background and often consisted of firearm training or crossbow target practice. Since they lasted less than a day and were probably infrequent, they did little to improve the peasants warlike skills other than provide a basic means of recruitment for when the need arose.

Corps du Guet:

There was a body of regular troops who had a special coastal surveillance or possibly even an intelligence function. They appeared infrequently in his account but they were referred at least three or four times and once in relation to the supposed presence of an English spy.

The Religious Wars:

France, along with most of Europe in the XVI century, was riven with wars, both civil and national whose root cause was the schism between Catholic and Protestant factions but were often used as a means of deciding power struggles between political rivals. There were 8 separate civil wars in France with the first starting in the spring of 1562 and the last ending in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes which, in theory but not in practice, guaranteed freedom of religion in France. In fact, Protestants were discriminated against after this and massacres again resumed after the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685. After 1789, it then became the Catholics who were the targets of religious repression.

G de G's journal covers only the start of the first war which was particularly violent in Normandy. His own views are never clearly articulated but in 1561, he and his entourage attended sermons by reforming monks and he seems to have received them with interest.

To confuse things, there were actually three different factions active in Normandy at this time:

1 Protestants (also called Christandins or Hugenots) who were loyal to the King, Charles IV, whose local chief was the Duc de Boullon, Govenor of Normandy.
2 Radical Protestants whose Norman chief was Montgomery and whose national leader was the Prince of Conde. This was initially the majority.
3. Catholics who were opposed to both of the above whose Norman chief was de Matignon. The Duc de Guise was the national leader of this faction.

G de G's sympathies lay initially with group 1, but he later switched to 3 as it became clear that Protestants were the losing side.

His first mention of the troubles is in March 1562 when he talks about the Vassy massacre of Protestants by the Duc de Guise in central France. In May on a visit to Russy he meets a mob of 200 who had just finished smashing all images and statues in Bayeux churches. Things got much worse in June when the unrest reached Valonges and, on the appointment of a new govenor of Valonges by de Matignon, a number of prominent Protestant citizens were murdered and their houses burnt. Because of this, G de G did not go there to carry out the customary "Haut Jours" court days, sending only some servants to check on the situation, while he retired to Gouberville and made plans to send all his valuables by boat to Russy in case he got looted and burnt out. The whole countryside was awash with rumours; a Protestant

force of 1000 men was supposed to be near Valonges; M. de Matignon, a local Catholic aristocrat with whom G de G did not get on with, had organized a troop of 160 men and was in control of Cherbourg.

He spent the rest of June, hiding his valuables, fleeing from one property to the next depending on rumours. On one occasion when he heard that de Matignon was about to descend on him, he left in the middle of the night. Eventually the Duc de Boullon retook Valonges and only then did G de G venture back there.

Things were no better in Bessin (the neighbouring department) as the Duc d'Aumale (Catholic) had laid siege to Caen and Rouen and was rampaging through the countryside sacking villages with no regard to which faction they supported. His brother, Francois, who lived in Sorteval near Russy in Bessin, asked G de G to lend him his Gouberville house to store his possessions at more or less the same time the latter was trying to move valuables to Russy.

Throughout July and August the situation remained fluid with Boullon trying to oust Matignon from the Cotentin without success. The church at Mesnil was desecrated by a group of Hugenots in mid August, but the priest who stood by while this happened was unhurt. G de G remained at Russy with his brother and they seemed to have had an intermediary function for two of the warring factions since they carried letters between Boullon and Matignon.

At the end of August, he received a summons from Boullon to attend a "monstre" at Caen. He did not want to go but, as he could not come up with a valid excuse, off he went. The situation in Caen was very tense, so having recorded his presence, he left as soon as he could, returning to Russy. He eventually returned to Mesnil in September, carefully avoiding all towns en route. He finally visited Valonges in October where he was forced to take an oath of loyalty to the King and the Catholic Church by Lt. Bastard, the local commander of Matignon's troops. At a dinner that night, he was again forced to take the same oath. A few days later he (and others) were presented with a bill for a 1000 Livres per month to pay for the Royalist troops and to form a Valonges militia. A meeting to elect a chief of this force that evening ended in argumentative disarray since the choice of the majority was deemed by some others to be a crypto-Hugenot. G de G held his first "Haut Jours" in six months the next day. At this time, the siege of Rouen (of Hugenots under Montgomery by Royalist Catholic forces) was under way, and the troops under Matignon and d'Etampes left Bayeux and the Cotentin to join the besiegers. The town fell on October 25 and a general massacre of its inhabitants followed. Montgomery escaped.

After this, things seemed to have calmed down, and until mid December, G de G went about his daily business without much reference to the religious troubles. Some sort of a general pardon was issued by the King at this time which further calmed Normandy, but this respite was used by the opposing sides to regroup and reinforce. In mid February 1563, G de G was receiving requisitions from Lt. Bastard in Valonges for food and wood to provision his soldiers, and Matignon was fortifying Cherbourg. More Hugenots were arrested in Valonges and sent to Cherbourg. In Bessin, things also got worse and Caen was under siege by Admiral Coligny (Hugenot) and Bayeux (by ?). Both towns fell by March 5 and refugees from Bayeux arrived at Mesnil a few days later. These subsequently moved on to Carentan and Cherbourg. On March 24 he was visited by a supply officer from Matignons' forces, but gave them only some oats for their horses. This was the final entry in his journal since his year ended on March 24 and the New Year started on March 25. All of his subsequent journals were

lost, although he lived until 1576 and is believed to have kept his daily journal until his death.

DE FRANQUETOT DYNASTY IN XVI and XVII CENTURY NORMANDY

Introduction:

I have picked the de Franquetot dynasty as an example of Norman upper class life over the period when GJ or his immediate ancestors lived in the central Cotentin for two reasons; firstly, because they were an extremely wealthy family who had a position of social prominence from the mid XVI century and retained this all the way

XVI Century Woodcut, Normandy

through to the fall of the Ancien Regime and beyond, and secondly, because their ancestral seat and principal home was the Chateau de Franquetot at Coigny which was within 5 kms. of St. Jores. They were the seigneurs of this and several other seigneuries in the immediate surrounding countryside.

Thus many of the de Saint Jores referred to in Appendix A would have been direct vassals of the de Franquetots and would have owed them both tax and labour obligations regardless of their actual social position. They would have seen them as direct social superiors in every sense. In XVI and XVII century Normandy, the seigneurs behaviour to, and treatment of the inhabitants of these villages would have a major impact on their lives, probably equivalent to that of the Catholic Church on all Normans of that era.

History:

The dynasty started with the purchase of the de Fanquetot fief in 1528 by three brothers named Jean, Jacques and Matthieu Guillotte. They were not at this time particularly wealthy or socially prominent, but by mid century, one of the sons, Robert was enobled by Francis I (in 1543) and this started their social rise. G de G would probably have known the family although he never mentions them in his journal. Robert's son Thomas acquired the additional fiefs of Coigny and St. Jores in 1577, and in 1598 he started to build the Chateau de Franquetot at Coigny. Subsequent generations continued to add to this chateau over the next 150 years, and also expanded their list of fiefs and real estate by building town residences in Rouen and Paris. The photos on the following pages show this chateau as it is today.

The fourth generation, Antoine (died 1643) bought the fief of Cretteville and the title of Vicomte de Carentan. The fifth Robert, (died 1666) added the fief of Tourlaville. The sixth, Jean Antoine added Appeville and acquired the title of Comte de Coigny, but was killed in battle in 1652 before inheriting the estate from his father. His son, Robert Jean was also a soldier and reached the rank of Lieutenant General before dying 1704 after first being created Comte de Coigny by Louis XIV. His son, Francois, was first Marquis de Coigny and then Comte after his father's death, continued this successful military progression and was rewarded by being appointed marshal of France in 1735 and Duc de Coigny in 1747 by Louis XV. He died in 1759. His son Jean Antoine Francois was not as successful and wound up being killed in a duel by the Prince of Dombes, an aristocratic way of dying.

All of these individuals also played prominent roles in Norman political life and several were Presidents of the Rouen Parlement. Thus over the late XVI and XVII centuries, the lords of Franquetot were Thomas, Antoine, Jean Antoine and Robert Jean, with Francois following in the XVIII century. The latter was probably the most successful of the lineage, which thereafter, slowly declined in wealth and social prominence.

An interesting footnote in this line of descent was Aimee de Franquetot de Coigny, born in 1769 and who lived an exciting life in the final years of the Ancien Regime, the Revolutionary Era and through to the restoration after Napoleon's defeat. Her affairs at that court at Versailles were said to be the model for the anti-heroine the Marquise de Meurtuil in Choderlos de Laclos's novel "Les liaisons dangereuse". She did not come to a sticky end however, dying in her bed at the family home in Paris in 1820.

These were the people who directly or indirectly held the Seigneurie de Saint Jores over this period. The is no question of GJ being descended from them since their progeny are well documented and they are definitely not in his family tree. It is possible that he was descended illegitimately from one of them since having mistresses was normal practice in upper class France and treatment of bastards by wealthy fathers was usually benign; they would provide dowries for daughters and some means of livelihood for sons. However, there is no reason at all to suppose this was the case.

In the XVI and early XVII centuries, before their rise to national prominence, they would have had significant contact with the local population in and around their estates. This would have been similar to that Gilles de Gouberville had with his vassals, retainers and employees. However by the time Robert inherited the title in 1643, much of his time and that of his successors would have been spent in Rouen and Paris, with most of the summers being devoted to the interminable military campaigns that filled that century and the next.

There are extensive records of this family in libraries and archives but none are readily available (or may exist) that deal with relations between these seigneurs and the people living on their lands during this 150 year period. There may be glimpses of them at home in Normandy but most of these will pertain to their political positions in the Rouen Parlement and are unlikely to mention activity around their estates unless it has something to do with events of a wider interest. There are two events that may have caused this:

a) the Nus-Pieds revolt of 1639, and
b) the Haye-les-Puits witchcraft trials of 1669.

Chateau de Franquetot by Day

Chateau de Franquetot by Night

Both of these are worth looking at since even if no connection with GJ emerges, they illustrate quite clearly what life was like in the Cotentin over this period.

The Nus-Pieds Revolt (1639)

This revolt started in the summer of 1639 in the town of Avranches which is situated at the SW corner of the Cotentin on the coast, a fishing port and the location of a salt works supplying sea salt to much of Normandy. Several tax increases were about to be imposed and there were rumours of others to come. The taxation system was extremely regressive, with the rich being largely exempt and the very poorest paying to every level of government and the church as well. Normandy had been exempt from the Gabelle, a tax on salt that had to be bought from the French Crown and was produced at Crown owned salt works. The rumour was that the Gabelle was to be imposed on Normandy and that all Norman salt works supplying salt locally were to be shut down. This, if it happened, would have a drastic economic effect on Avranches and the surrounding area since around 10,000 people were said to be dependent on the salt trade. This number, which is probably an exaggeration, included not only those who were employed at the salt works, but also those who transported to wood to fire the evaporating pans and hauled the finished product to its markets, plus their families, merchants and priests who provided services to them. The local landed gentry also were dependent to a certain extent on payments from some of these workers.

Thus, in August, when a M. Poupinel, the Lieutenant Particular of Coutances arrived in Avranches on a legal matter that had nothing to do with the Gabelle, a rumour was spread that he was there to institute it. A mob of some 40 people, led by a priest named Morel, gathered outside his inn and attacked him when he came out with rocks, clubs and swords. He died about 3 hours later. The mob increased in size and others in government service were attacked.

The military commander of Avranches was a Sieur de Canisy who was sick and unable (for lack of troops) to control the revolt which rapidly spread to the surrounding countryside. Pleas assistance went out to Caen and Rouen but the only military force of any size was 400 soldiers commanded by a M. de Matignon, which was inadequate to deal with the 3000 army of the Jean Nus-Pieds which rapidly assembled, and raided the estates of the wealthy, seizing money, weapons, and ransoming their inhabitants for additional resources. Pressure was put on the local gentry to join the revolution together with their workers; if they did not join, their property would be burnt and farms destroyed.

A leadership quickly developed which consisted mainly of disaffected priests and gentlemen, many of whom took noms de guerre. The leader was claimed to be a poor salt worker given the name Jean Nu-Pieds, in reference to the habit of the salt workers to work barefooted in the salt beds. In fact he was probably a myth to obscure the identities of the actual leadership. Others were:

Captain des Mondrin	(Morel - priest)
Colonel des Plombes	(Pont Herbert - gentleman)
Boidrot	(Bastard - priest)

A Sieur de Reffuville also commanded a separate brigade of 800.

Towns attacked by the Nus-Pieds were Coutances, Pontorson, St. James de Beuvron, Mortain, Vire, St. Lienard, Versey, Susey, Montanel and Monthuchon. Rioting also spread to the major cities of Caen and Rouen. This unrest continued throughout September, October and into November. Finally a strong force of mainly mercenary troops, which included cavalry and artillery, commanded by Colonel Gassion, got under way in mid November reaching Avranches late in the month and suppressed the revolt without any major battles. The rebel force apparently reached a peak size of 5000 to 6000 men and was grouped around Pontorson, Coutances, Vire, Bayeux and Caen. Like most peasant revolts, these troops were no match for professional soldiers, and they quickly crumbled once sufficient force was brought into play.

My source for most of this information is the "Journal of Voyage of Chancelier Pierre Seguier to Normandy" which essentially gives a first hand account of the repression of the revolt. Seguier was Chancellor of France to Louis XIII and in December 1639 he was commissioned by the king with more or less unlimited powers to judge and punish all those involved in the revolt. He did so by traveling through the affected area over a 5 month period to May 1640 holding courts and inflicting punishments on those found guilty. Some of the leaders (and others) had already been executed by Gassion, but numerous others were condemned to death, sentenced to the galleys or banished. Large fines were also levied against individuals, towns and villages and property was seized and sold to pay these. A picture of Pierre Seguier mounted on a horse appears below. Apparently he had a reputation for vanity taken to extremes.

Apparently the villages around Avranches were depopulated since so many people had fled the expected repression. Vengeance was also levied against the gentry; the Baron Pont Herbert had his house demolished (it is not clear what happened to him). Numerous other building were razed and an order was given for the total destruction of the village of Cerences. A Jacques Saint Simon, Lieutenant General of Coutances, fled after he thought he was about to be arrested, presumably for not having opposed the Nus-Pieds vigorously enough. Some of the rebels sought sanctuary in the Channel Islands which of course were British.

Oddly, the de Franquetot name does not appear in this account. Antoine would have been the seigneur and Vicomte de Carentan at that time and if he was in Normandy, one would have expected him to take a major role in the revolt's suppression. It is possible that he may have been off fighting elsewhere in Europe. De Matignon, the local commander of Royal troops in Normandy, was connected by marriage to the de Franquetots.

Avranches Castle

Apart from Coutances, none of the villages referred to in the section on Jorre genealogy are mentioned and there is no reference to any of the names contained in that section. This of course does not mean that they had no involvement, just that if they did, it was as a minor players. As both the Cerisy and St. Jores areas are sufficiently close to Avranches and Coutances, the Nus-Pieds would have been in all these villages to recruit new soldiers, raise or steal money and arms, as well as burning the homes of those who did not cooperate. Everyone would have had the delicate job of deciding what level of cooperation would preserve most of their assets yet not get them hanged when the Crown inevitably suppressed the revolt.

Unfortunately, we will probably never know what they (GJ's ancestors) decided, but it could have been the trigger that got them to leave Normandy.

Pierre Seguier - Possibly the vainest man in XVII century France

THE HAYE DU PUITS WITCHCRAFT TRIALS 1669 TO 1670

Introduction:

These trials happened over the period 1669 to 1670, although the root cause of them probably occurred much earlier, dating back to the Nus-Pieds revolt of 1639. It is extremely unlikely that anyone was actually practicing any form of Satanist belief or ritual, and that the principal trigger for the whole affair was initially from ambitious clerics from the bishop's office in Coutances and subsequently, from the civil administration in Carentan. Once the process started, it acquired a life of its own, grinding down all those unfortunates who happened to be in the way. It was eventually ended by the intervention of Colbert, the Chief Minister of France, but not before it had destroyed the lives of dozens of locals.

Most of the following account comes from a not very well written book entitled "Car ils croyaient bruler le diable en Normandie" by a Louis Costel and published in 1978. He at least researched original court documents from the trials although his attempts

to imagine and reproduce dialogue in a Norman accent make it hard to read and understand.

Some of the characters in the trials were also active in the Nus-Pieds revolt thirty years before, and it appears to me that the motivation for the whole affair was a demonstration of authority of both the Catholic Church and the secular powers to keep the peasantry cowed and submissive. In this it probably succeeded, but because of the embarrassment it also caused to the French Crown, it was in fact the last of such trials in northern France. The age of enlightenment was dawning.

It is of interest because all of the action took place around Coigny, the locus of one group of XVII Century "Jores" in the Cotentin; however none of these individuals are named in Costel's account.

The Characters:

Cure Antoine Questier: This priest was the central figure of the whole affair. He was a person of humble origins, born in 1600 of a peasant family who became a priest at Caen and worked his way up the ecclesiastical ladder until in 1639 he acquired the patronage of the Comte de Franquetot and through this acquired, the title and position of the Cure of Coigny. For him to obtain such a position without a noble sponsor would have been impossible.

He was a simple but humane man and was obviously intensely religious. He had taken part in an evangelical reform movement in the 1650's led by a Pere Eudes who, amongst other things burnt books, images, denounced music, dance and most other simple pleasures and also threatened to burn blasphemers and magicians. At least until 1658, Questier was held in high regard by his superiors in the Bishopric of Coutances. Some time over the next 10 years he must have lost this support. The other characters in this drama were as follows.

The Coigny priests were: Etienne Le Monnier, teacher; Jacques Cuquemelle, treasurer and Michel Besnard, deacon. All of these were poor and simple men who probably had to supplement their church income with out side work in order to survive.

Charlotte la Vavaseur: She was an old woman who had been married to Questier's brother. After the latter died, 15 years before, and left her without support, Questier gave her the job of looking after his house. She was probably partially senile at this time.

Messire Rossignol: He was the Archdeacon of Coutances. Part of his job was to visit and inspect all of the parishes in the bishopric several times a year, accompanied by a greffier who recorded most details of the visits.

Richard Baude: He was a shepherd who lived rough near Coigny and who had been involved in the Nus-Pieds revolt at the age of 16. In its aftermath, he had moved from the Avranches area to Coigny and managed to evade capture and execution until a general amnesty was declared several years later. He was still regarded as a dangerous renegade even after thirty years had past.

Robert de Franquetot, Comte de Coigny: The nobleman who assisted Questier become the cure. Since he died in 1666 and had no direct heir, an under age nephew

Robert Jean Antoine de Coigny inherited the title, but this left Madame de Coigny in charge until he achieved his majority.

Madame de Coigny: The wife of the deceased Comte de Coigny. She did not like Questier.

Jacques Lemenager: Intendant of Haye du Puits. He appears to have been ambitious and saw these trials as a path to advancement. He was directly responsible for involving La Vavasseur and Questier in the process.

The Timeline:

Easter 1669:

The saga starts with a routine visit of Rossignol to Coigny at one of the Easter services. At this service each of the priests had to report on their sphere of activities as did the village midwife on births the latter being 20 for the past year of which 8 had already died. Those absent from this service were declared sinners (Richard Baude), and one unmarried mother (Catherine Chastans) was threatened with excommunication because she had had two illegitimate children in the past two years. At the end of the service, each priest had to sign the record produced by Rossignol's greffier, after whichRossiggnol's party returned to Coutances. On Easter Sunday, Questier distributed the Easter loaf of white bread to all parishioners but saved two for the missing Baude and Chastans. After his evening meal, he rode out to an abandoned hamlet with this and other food to give them. Chastans, who had lived alone since age 15, eked out a precarious existence without much help from anyone. Questier tried to help her despite Rossignol's threat. On his return to Coigny, he met Baude and was seen by several parishioners, who were scandalized that he should help either of these people.

Several days later Questier was summoned to the Chateau de Coigny by Mde. de Coigny and in the presence of her personal chaplain, l'Abbe de Saint Georges, was asked to explain his assistance to Chastans and Baude after Rossignol's instructions not to do so. He was not intimidated and was eventually angrily dismissed by her.

Summer 1669:

Rumours of witchcraft in the Coutances diocese that had swirled around since the previous January when an epileptic young man named Jacques Noel made accusations against a number of individuals of trying to convert him to devil worship. He was taken into custody in Haye du Puits and provided his interrogators names of a wide variety of people including priests. The local prosecutor made a call for action of the Bishop of Coutances, but nothing happened until 6 months later in January 1670.

January 1670:

A pastoral letter was read in all parishes denouncing those who had bewitched Jacques Noel, but without naming names. This created a climate of fear and suspicion. La Vavaseur made up a list of those she suspected and showed it to Questier; she was told to mind her own business and not cause trouble. Nevertheless she circulated gossip throughout the village and soon wild rumours of Sabbaths

involving priests and others were current. The first arrests were made in Cretteville and the prisoners taken to Haye du Puits for examination.

An incident then occurred in Coigny when a group of children, believing that La Vavaseur was a witch, chase her through the village throwing stones at her. This was reported to Jacques Lemenager, the Haye du Puits intendant, when he visited Mde. de Coigny shortly after the event. With Mde. de Coigny's encouragement, he decided to investigate the accusations further. On his return to Haye, he had the suspects questioned about La Vavaseur; these, under duress implicated her in the Sabbaths. She was arrested, and despite Questier stating that she was innocent, taken to Haye to appear before a tribunal.

The tribunal consisted of Boissier, the Mayor, the Prosecutor (no name given), Lemenager, two other prominent citizens of Haye, Jean de la Place, the Prior of Lessay Abbey and several other priests. La Place was the acknowledged witchcraft expert. Her principal accusers were Noel and a teenager named Martin Couillard from Coigny. Despite protesting her innocence, she was told that 10 others had also accused her. The following day she was threatened with torture and agreed to all accusations regardless of how improbable they were. She also supplied names of others at these Sabbaths and included both Baude and Questier.

On the following day the tribunal reviewed its progress, having 20 prisoners based on accusations from 50 "witnesses" of whom some were just children, but now Baude was considered to be the chief sorcerer and should be arrested together with

Lessay Abbey

Questier because the former was a Nus-Pieds and the latter had aided him 30 years before. All but La Place and Lemenager considered this was unjustified since there was no direct proof. However they issued a warrant for Baude's arrest and waited until he had been questioned before making further arrests. They did decide to try to exorcize the devil from La Vavasseur using Dom Mathieu Maury, a professional at this technique.

The exorcism took place in a chapel and was initially aimed at getting the devil in her to talk. Questions were asked in Latin and French which received no intelligent replies since she barely understood educated French. Eventually she turned hostile so they decided she really was possessed and that they needed to torture her to make the devil speak. The following day when brought into the court room to be tortured she confessed that Questier was the principal sorcerer, that 20 babies had been sacrificed at Sabbaths, and that he had Satanic medicines stored in his house. The tribunal did not know if all of this was the invention of the devil or the ramblings of an embittered old woman, so they decided to torture her anyway. Under this, she collapsed unconscious and, given her condition, the local doctor (who was in attendance) said that no further torture should be applied.

January 18, 1670, Haye du Puits:

Baude was captured and tortured before the tribunal, but admitted nothing. Another dozen or so residents of Coigny were arrested and questioned. Many of these were children as young as 11; others were up 75 years old. Most under torture implicated others who in turn were arrested. Questier tried to comfort the families of the accused, and eventually decided to go to Haye to speak to the Tribunal. His appearance before them was not successful since they decided he too must be guilty. La Place told him to mind his own business and let the Tribunal decide who was guilty or innocent.

He then went to Cretteville to see his confessor who counseled him to flee to Bayeux out of the Coutances diocese where he could be protected. However he refused to leave his flock.

The Tribunal was divided about arresting priests but eventually La Place persuaded Boissier to sign the warrant and Questier was arrested. He was taken to Haye where he was accused of providing magic medicines to his parishioners instead of looking after their souls. He refuted all such charges calmly which led them to believe he was assisted by the devil. They then prepared to torture him but the attending doctor said he was too ill to stand this treatment.

April 1670, Haye du Puits:

By the end of March there were 66 accused in prison of whom 18 were under the age of 15, 7 had already died and 3 had gone mad. The witnesses were also incarcerated but had better treatment. Questier and Baude were kept in the same cell.

La Place returned to the Abbey at Lessay and reported to Rossignol in Coutances about the slowness of the civil authorities in pronouncing judgment. Lemenager was complaining about the cost of keeping the prisoners in Haye, and both because it was necessary to obtain approval of the sentences from Parlement in Rouen and because many of the accused came from the Bauptois region whose centre of administration was Carentan, they decided to move the "ringleaders" there for

Haye-du-Puits Castle

sentencing. On April 25, 10 of them were taken by wagon through St. Jores to Carentan together with all the interrogation records.

April 1670, Carentan:

A new Tribunal was formed consisting of 7 members of the local gentry under a M. de Longuanay, the local Governor, and including Herve de Gourmont, Prosecutor, and Nicolas de Gonneville, Vicomte de Carentan. They decided to concentrate on Questier and La Vavasseur and look for the "devil's mark" on each by probing their bodies with knives looking for a place that did not register pain. Both collapsed under this treatment. Several days later this process was repeated and the Tribunal satisfied themselves that they had found such marks.

May to July 1670, Rouen:

The 10 were sentenced to death on May 20, but first they were told that they would be re-tortured to name accomplices and that they would be taken to Rouen to have their sentences ratified by Parlement and then to be executed.

They arrived in Rouen on June 30. Some of them were questioned by a panel of 14 judges; this panel could not agree on whether or not they were guilty, but eventually on July 13, it confirmed the sentences of Questier, Baude and 3 others.

While this process was going on, the President of Parlement, a Claude Pellot, who was a distant cousin of Colbert, the Chief Minister of France, wrote to the latter explaining the case and stating that it was foolish to condemn the prisoners to death on testimony of teenage boys obtained under torture. On July 16 Questier, Baude and the three other condemned prisoners were returned to Carentan for execution.

July 1670, Carentan:

The scaffold and pyre had been erected in the Place Royal as the only location in town that could accommodate the crowd. The entrance into Carentan of the prisoner's wagon caused a near riot, requiring the soldiers to use force to control the crowds who believed these "sorcerers" would bring plague to the town. Of all the prisoners only Baude remained defiant, the others being too weak and sick to react to anything.

The following day, in the Carentan jail, after blessing his fellow prisoners, Questier died as the result of his injuries. His body was found by his guards the next morning and removed from the town.The news of his death caused further disturbances in the town. Longuanay and Gonneville met to try and calm the situation, but the council disagreed on what action to take; some wanted to execute the prisoners immediately, others, expecting that a Royal pardon would be granted, wanted to wait. Eventually a decision was taken to carry it out at 4 pm that afternoon, but to move it outside the town onto the Haye du Puits road so that crowd control would be easier and to remove the chance that the pyres would set light to adjacent buildings. Only four were to be executed, Baude, La Vavasseur, Charlotte Ledy and Gabriel Leseigneur. They were prepared for execution and offered a priest for their confession. Only Baude refused this.

The cortege left the prison on foot accompanied by a huge crowd and walked to the place of execution. The dead Questier was already hung from the scaffold and the other four were placed there with ropes around their necks. At the last moment a Royal messenger arrived on horseback and announced that the King had commuted the sentence from death to banishment from Normandy. The crowd was ordered to disperse, which they generally did. Questier was cut down and buried, the two women taken to a convent and the two men back into town where they remained in custody but not in prison.

The switch from a crowd baying for their execution to one showing extreme pity for the prisoners deplorable state was astonishing, although it was mainly the upper classes who demonstrated this. La Vavasseur was given permanent refuge at a charity home for old people in or near Carentan. The other three were assembled the following morning and taken to the Haye crossroads out of town by soldiers and told they had two days to leave Normandy. Ledy and Leseigneur took the road to Periers and Baude went to Haye and eventually to the house of an old salt worker named Lemperiere who had a boat and lived near Barneville. The following day he was taken to the English island of Jersey where he spent the remainder of his life working as a shepherd.

The Aftermath:

What happened to the others and the remaining prisoners was not detailed in the sources I consulted, but in all probablilty, they were just left to get on with their lives. The surprising thing about all these revolts and civil eruptions is that if the participants managed to avoid the immediate retribution, a Royal pardon would come along in a year or so essentially wiping the slate clean. However, in the aftermath, the niceties of guilt and innocence were not of prime importance to the justice administration; what was needed were people to punish and thus to cow the rest of the population.

Again, there is no direct mention of any St. Jorre (or variants of the name) in the accounts I have read, although the epicenter of the whole affair is also the centre of the St. Jores grouping of these names. One slight connection was a Marin de Saint Jores from Gorges who married a Suzanne La Vavasseur around 1655 and whose daughter Michelle was married in a "society" wedding in Lessay in 1685. This family appears to have had some wealth and social position. La Vavasseur was not an uncommon surname at the time so not a lot can be read into any connection with the unfortunate Charlotte, the anti-heroine of this sad affair.

Rouen in the XVII Century

Historical Background:

The major events of this century as experienced by Rouen were the overhang of the XVI century religious wars that Henri IV had brought to end with the Edict of Nantes in 1598. During these wars, Rouen was caught up in a series of sieges and massacres, partly because its population included a significant proportion of Protestants of one creed or another and control of the city swung backwards and forwards between the warring factions.

After the turn of the century, the city was France's second largest in population (Paris being the largest with about 600,000) with around 80,000 in total. It gradually declined from this level over the next hundred years reaching no more than 60,000 at the death of Louis XIV in 1715. There was however considerable variation both up and down in response to repeated epidemics and the occasional economic boom which sucked impoverished peasants in from the surrounding countryside. At this point, at the start of the XVII century, it was still largely Catholic although the Protestant population was probably around 10%. This religious group was made up largely of the more prosperous merchant and skilled artisan classes.

The percentage slowly decreased as the century progressed due to both overt and hidden religious discrimination, falling to around 5,500 in 1640 and much less when the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes occurred in 1685. This essentially reduced it to near zero, at least in terms of those who openly professed their religion. The exodus of the Huguenots at this time had a distinctly negative effect on the economy of Rouen since many of those who were driven away were those who owned or participated in the textile and grain trades on which the city depended or were the skilled workers in these industries. As these industries declined, an increasing proportion of the cities inhabitants depended on the Catholic Church and the government bureaucracy for a living, neither of which generated any direct income from economic activity.

Rouen, being located on the navigable part of the River Seine, was however a port that was accessible by small ocean going ships (up to about 200 tons) and was directly involved in trade with France's colonial and maritime trade through the port of L'Havre at the Seine's mouth. It retained this role well into the XVIII century and beyond. In the 1830's, records show some 3000 vessel movements in and out of the port of Rouen annually.

The Catholic Church:

As Rouen was the capital of Normandy and France's second city, the church played a disproportionate role in the affairs of the city. There was a cathedral, 30 plus parish churches and several dozen, monasteries, convents, seminaries, hospitals and poor houses. All of these were run by the church.

Saint Pierre L'Honore

As this church is the only "address" we have of GJ, I have looked at getting a little more information about it. There does not seem to have been anything remarkable about its age, construction or location in the city. Probably constructed in the XVI century, it was located on the Rue des Bons Enfants , near the western gate to the city. If it was typical of Rouen churches of the era it would have provide parish services for about 2,500 people. Its location is shown on the attached 1665 map of Rouen. In 1668, its priest was Jean Toutin, and who was still officiating in 1685 when GJ and GF were married. His signature does not appear on their marriage certificate.

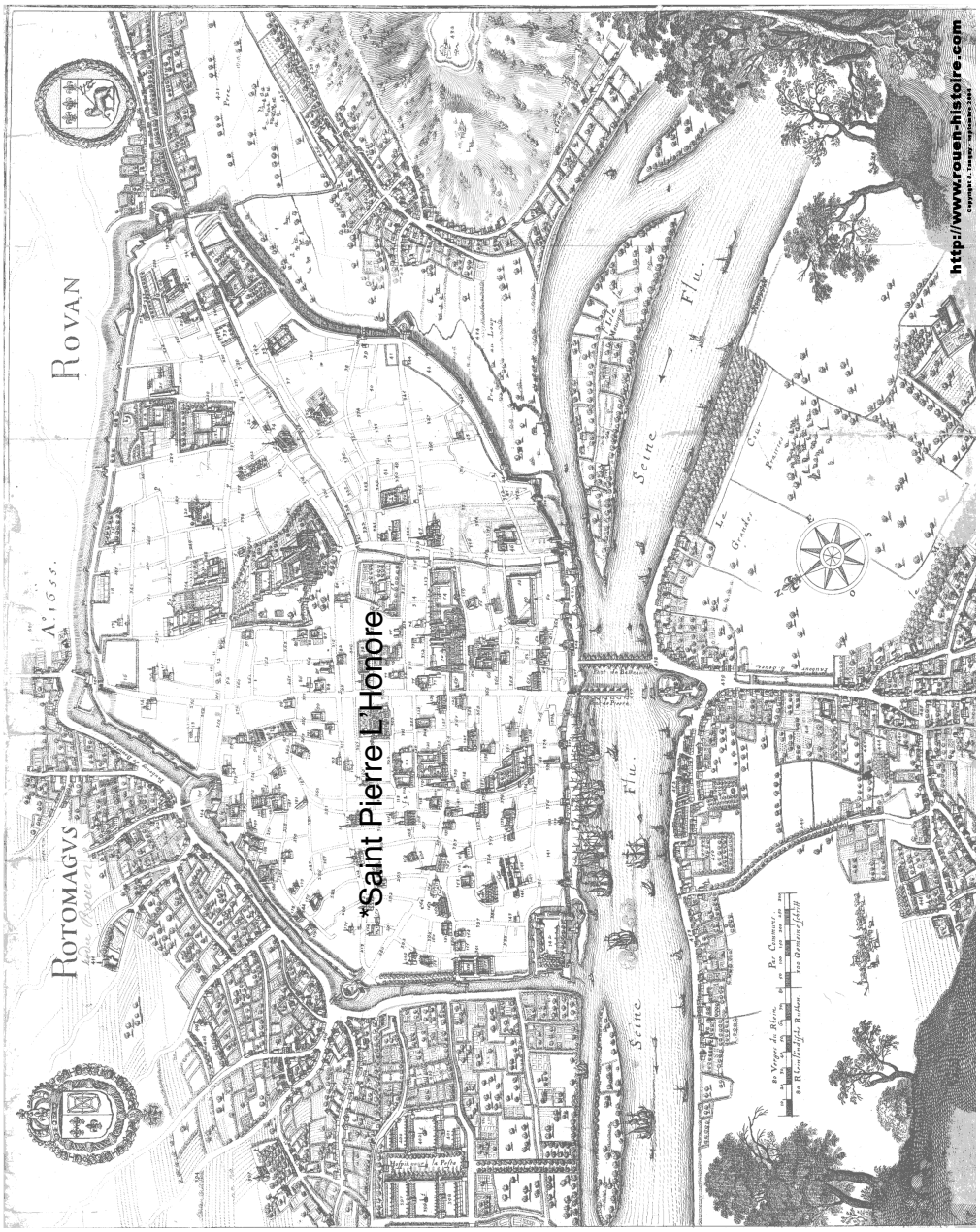
The next reference to this church that I have found was in 1830 when the church was still standing but was no longer used for any sacred purpose; it had apparently been relegated to being a metal foundry of some sort. Later in the XIX century, it was torn down, presumably leaving no trace behind. There are still some 12 houses on this street that date back to the XVII century or earlier. Many of the parish churches were seized during the French Revolution and either torn down or converted to secular uses. Turning them into stores seems to have been a popular alternative use. So much for the Catholic Church.

It is probable that GJ and GF were both Catholics. However, because the penalties introduced for Protestants by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes were extreme, if they had not been, they may well have converted to Catholicism. The basic penalties were as follows; males who took part in a Protestant service could be sent to the galleys for life, women imprisoned for a similar period and any pastor who conducted such a service would be executed.

Life in XVII Century Rouen:

From all I can gather it was nasty, brutish and short. There were regular epidemics of various sorts which included plague, typhus and cholera. When these were in abeyance, frequent famines added to the misery of the working poor inhabitants of the city. Particularly serious famines occurred in 1660/1661 and 1693/1694. Life expectancy varied from 25 years for the working poor to about 35 years for the rich, but both of these numbers a skewed by the appalling infantile mortality rate which reached close to 50% and struck at both rich and poor alike.

Rouen was an industrial city. Its industry was mainly based on the textile trade but it also had thriving support services of related works, including dyeing, bleaching, tanning and the production of the chemical agents used in these trades. There were also grain mills, paper production, pottery and slaughter houses. All of these were located either in Rouen itself, or on the three small streams that flowed into the Seine. It is easy to imagine the extent of water pollution in and around the city.



Rouen in 1655

Water supply for the entire city came from five sources which were probably springs or reservoirs of sorts. These were piped to fountains, most of which were located at or near the parish churches where the local population could access their domestic water supply. Needless to say, there was no control of the cleanliness of these sources, which must have been repeated sources of disease and poisoning.

The presence of the port right in the city was also another conduit of disease since during this century, L'Havre and Rouen were the principal location for trade with Frances' overseas possessions in America and Asia. Incoming ships frequently carried a cargo of bacteria in addition to trade goods. Epidemics occurred on average about every 4 years over a two century period, killing thousands on each occasion.There were hospitals in the city but, given the quality of medical care in this era, these served more as places to die in rather than get better. Most of the population would

rather pay the church for the intercession of the Almighty through the prayers of priests than layout the same or more money on the medical profession.

On top of the exactions of the church were several layers of civil jurisdiction, all supported by a series of taxes levied on the working population. The noble classes who were exempt by virtue of their titles.

The highest level of these was Parlement which was effectively the Supreme Court of Normandy. It had about 50 appointed representatives all of whom were from the upper reaches of Norman society. It, in general, did not concern itself with matters of day to day administration but was concerned more with policy and as a court of final appeal. It was not a legislative body.

Below this was the Juridiction Royal, the court and administration of both civil and criminal justice and encompassed both the police force, such as it was, and the court in which justice was administered. Subordinate to this was the Juridiction Seigneurial which appears to have operated mainly outside of the major towns and was exercised solely by the seigneur within his fiefdom and on those who fell within this sphere of influence. Such courts may not have had any power within Rouen, but they certainly did within the surrounding countryside. Finally there were a series of specialized courts dealing with such matters as water borne trade (Admiraute), Waters and Forests (Eau et Forets) and other similar organizations that had narrow jurisdiction over certain sections of the economy.

All of the above made life difficult for the working population since the many laws affected them directly whereas the nobility and the rich upper classes could usually avoid or circumvent the application of these to themselves.

A rough census of Rouen in the mid XVII century showed the population split in the following proportions:

Nobles and administrative	1000
Clergy	2000
Merchant class	1000
Cloth workers	10,000

These numbers do not include all other occupations, the families of these workers or the jobless poor.

The city had a gradient of poverty with the workers and poor being concentrated in the east end with the richer classes residing in the west and NW sections. The latter of course would have included Rue des Bons Enfants near where GJ must have lived. Not that anywhere in the city would have appealed to his 9th. and 10th. generation descendants. Streets were on average about 3 m. wide, probably filthy with garbage, human and animal wastes and extremely dangerous after dark. Disease was no respecter of subdivision boundaries.

GJ and GF in Rouen:

The persistent question is what was the background of this couple. What we know is limited to their ages, their social class, their education and where they lived. All of these are at best only approximately known, and short of finding more details on them, we will probably never know anything more with any degree of certainty.

However all is not lost since the custom of Rouen marriages of their class do suggest the following:

1. There would have been a marriage contract which would have specified the amount and form of the dowry that GF's family would have paid to GJ.

2. Most marriages of the time were between families who had close social contacts. It was very common was for the son of a merchant to marry the daughter of another merchant, but not only in the same class, but also in the same trade.

3. Given GJ's later employment in Brittany as a Huissier and Greffier in the Juridiction Royal de Chateauneuf du Faou, it is almost certain he had a similar position (but lower down the pecking order) in Rouen. By extension GF may have had family who were employed in the Juridiction Royal organization in Rouen.

Efforts to trace any of these avenues of further research have so far been unsuccessful, but it is possible that a marriage contract still exists in the Seine Maritime Archives.

The Move to Brittany:

The underlying reason for this has to be the same reason that most of his following 10 generations adopted; a job opportunity that appeared to be superior to staying put. That said, it is difficult to see when and why this would have occurred. We do not know when they left Rouen; it could have been at any time over the 12 year period between his first and second marriage, but it seems probable that it was not before 1688 or after 1693. The former date results from the assumption that the two children from the GF marriage were born in Rouen.

Although he was married in July 1685, some four months before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, it seems unlikely that the latter event, traumatic as it was for Rouen in general and the unfortunate Huguenots in particular, would have any effect on his life . As a good Catholic and an officer of the court (probably), if it had any effect at all, it would have been positive for his career since the legal oppression of the Huguenots would have been at least partially the responsibility of the Juridiction Royal. It is remotely possible that GJ was a closet Huguenot and that he had decided to leave Rouen to avoid negative consequences. However going to Brittany (an almost entirely Catholic province) would hardly have been a step in the right direction.

There seems to be no real correlation between the 1675 Breton peasant rebellions and his move to Carhaix in Brittany. It may simply be that there was a need for court officials in Carhaix and no suitable candidate locally to fill the position. The Bonnets Rouge uprising had certainly convinced French authority that the local population of Bretons were not to be trusted.

It does appear that the decade from 1690 to 1700 was economically disastrous for Rouen. This probably was for multiple reasons but the population did shrink and the disappearance of the Huguenots reduced business activity (and tax receipts), so it is possible that either GJ was laid off or that any hope for promotion had faded leaving a search for other employment as his only option.

View of Rouen from the NE at the Start of the XVII Century

Map of Rouen in Mid XVII Century Showing Medieval City Wall Boundary

CHAPTER II - BRITTANY

INTRODUCTION

The structure of this chapter is somewhat different from that of Chapter I on Normandy, as there is a lot of factual information about our direct ancestors. After indicating from where this information arose, I have provided the historical background against which they lived, followed by details of what is known about their genealogy and what life was actually like in XVII and XVIII century Brittany. To complete the picture, I have taken an eyewitness account of an Englishman's summer travels in Brittany in 1837 and 1839, which while they may not be quite as authoritative as Gilles de Gouberville's memoirs of XVI century Normandy, given the backwardness of Basse Bretagne in that era, they may not be far from XVIII century reality.

As detailed in Chapter I, GJ was married in July 1685 in Rouen to Genevieve Felon (GF), moved to Carhaix some time between then and 1696 with his family. After GF died, probably in 1696, GJ was remarried to a Beatrice Millier (BM) on February 14, 1697 at Gourin in the department of Morbihan, Lower Brittany. This ceremony took place at the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, photos of which are included in this chapter. The brides' ancestors can be traced back at least two generations prior to this date, which is more than can be said for the groom. I have seen a reference that suggests that GF died in 1710 at an undisclosed location, but this does not make any real sense and is probably untrue.

There is no doubt that GJ's first marriage produced at least two children who survived to adulthood, Anne Genevieve Jorre, and Sylvia Thomase Jorre. There are no dates or places of birth for these children. However, Anne Genevieve is listed as the godmother of two of GJ's children (Julien Marie, March 1708 and Jeanne Therese, April 1710), and in one of these birth records she is clearly identified as GJ's daughter. If one assumes that she must have been 18 to fulfill the godmother's role, then she was probably born around 1690.

There is also a record that GJ was married to an N. Gensiliau (NG) before 1697 and that the she died in 1697. This seems improbable unless there was either a father and son of the same name living in Carhaix at the same time, or that GF died early after their arrival in Brittany and that GJ first married NG, who subsequently died, leaving him free to marry a third wife in 1697. The latter is possible, but there is no hard documentary evidence that NG was ever GJ's wife.

The most likely interpretation of this information is that:

* GJ moved to Carhaix with GF and one or two children before 1690,

* GF died in 1696, leaving GJ with at least two surviving children, which encouraged him to rapidly remarry, and

* resulted in his Valentine's Day marriage for BM in 1697.

It is known that GJ then returned to Carhaix, where he stayed until 1702, and where BM had 4 or 5 children before moving on to Chateauneuf du Faou then or in 1703. After this move, she had a further seven children.

Because the only backward avenue of research at this point leads through BM, her antecedents have been taken as the starting point, and since her mother was a Liscoet and possibly related directly or indirectly to the du Liscoet family, this history starts with Yves du Liscoet in the mid XVI Century.

Map 5 (Western Brittany) and Map 6 (Gourin / Carhaix Area) are attached at this point so that some idea can be grasped of where all the events recorded took place.

BRETON HISTORY

France, in the mid XVI century, was wracked by a series of eight religious civil wars that started in 1562 and finally ended in 1598. The principal player in all of this was Henri IV, who despite being a ruthless soldier and serial womanizer, was also a highly intelligent man who recognized that France could never be prosperous and at peace unless the common peasantry, on which the entire economy rested, at least had some security and a small share of society's production. After his death, he became known as Henri the Great, and was probably the only French monarch who showed any concern for the common people in the 200 years before the Ancien Regime fell in 1789.

The following account gives a brief overview of Henri's life and his connection to Yves du Liscoet as well as giving some idea of how chaotic life was in XVI century France.

Henri IV:

The Henri IV Connection:

His connection to our ancestors is quite weak and certainly there is none in a strict genealogical sense. He is a figure of great interest, in that he dominated France during the latter part of the French religious wars that filled that period, and he was instrumental in finally bringing them to an end with the Edict of Nantes and the Treaty of Verviers in 1598. This was followed by what almost what passed as a "golden age" in France for the 12 years until his assassination in 1610. It was during this time that peace finally returned to France, and with it, a measure of prosperity, advancement of the arts and sciences and the start of French overseas expansion and colonization.

Since there were at one time during this period at least three "Henris" who were either on or were aspirants to the French throne, I will call Henri IV by his eventual title although he did not accede to it until 1593.

Henri's Youth (1553 to 1576):

He was born in Pau in the Pyrenees in Dec. 1553 as the heir to the Kingdom of Navarre and inherited his Huguenot religion from his parents. He was brought up to be tough and trained as a soldier from a very early age. In his early teens he was already involved with the Prince of Conde and Admiral Coligny on the Huguenot side

of the religious wars, which started in 1562 when he was only 9. He fought in his first battle in 1569 at the age of 16.

There were in total eight wars, which in fact, were one long war with periodic truces in between, during which each side plotted renewed violence in the hope of a decisive victory. One such peace occurred in August 1570 and the diplomatic efforts arising from it resulted in the marriage of Henri IV on the Huguenot side to Marguerite of Valois in the Catholic League camp at Paris on April 10, 1572. Six days later, the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre occurred in which up to 100,000 Hugenots were slaughtered in Paris and throughout France.

Henri and the Prince of Conde were seized and brought before Charles IX, the then king of France, and offered the choice of death or conversion to Catholicism. They both chose the latter. He was then essentially held prisoner at the French Court in Paris and other locations, but was left free to live a dissolute life, which he apparently entered into with enthusiasm.

It was during this period that he may have met and socialized with Yves du Liscoet who in 1572 was 19 or two years younger than Henri IV. I have seen references to this on the Internet, but have been unable to relocate them. He seems to have be a protégé of Henri IV, being appointed as Gentilhomme of the King's Chamber 14 years later in 1586. The wording of the brevet of the November 1593 in which Henri IV appointing du Liscoet as Mareschal de Camp of his armies in Brittany suggests that he may have known him personally.

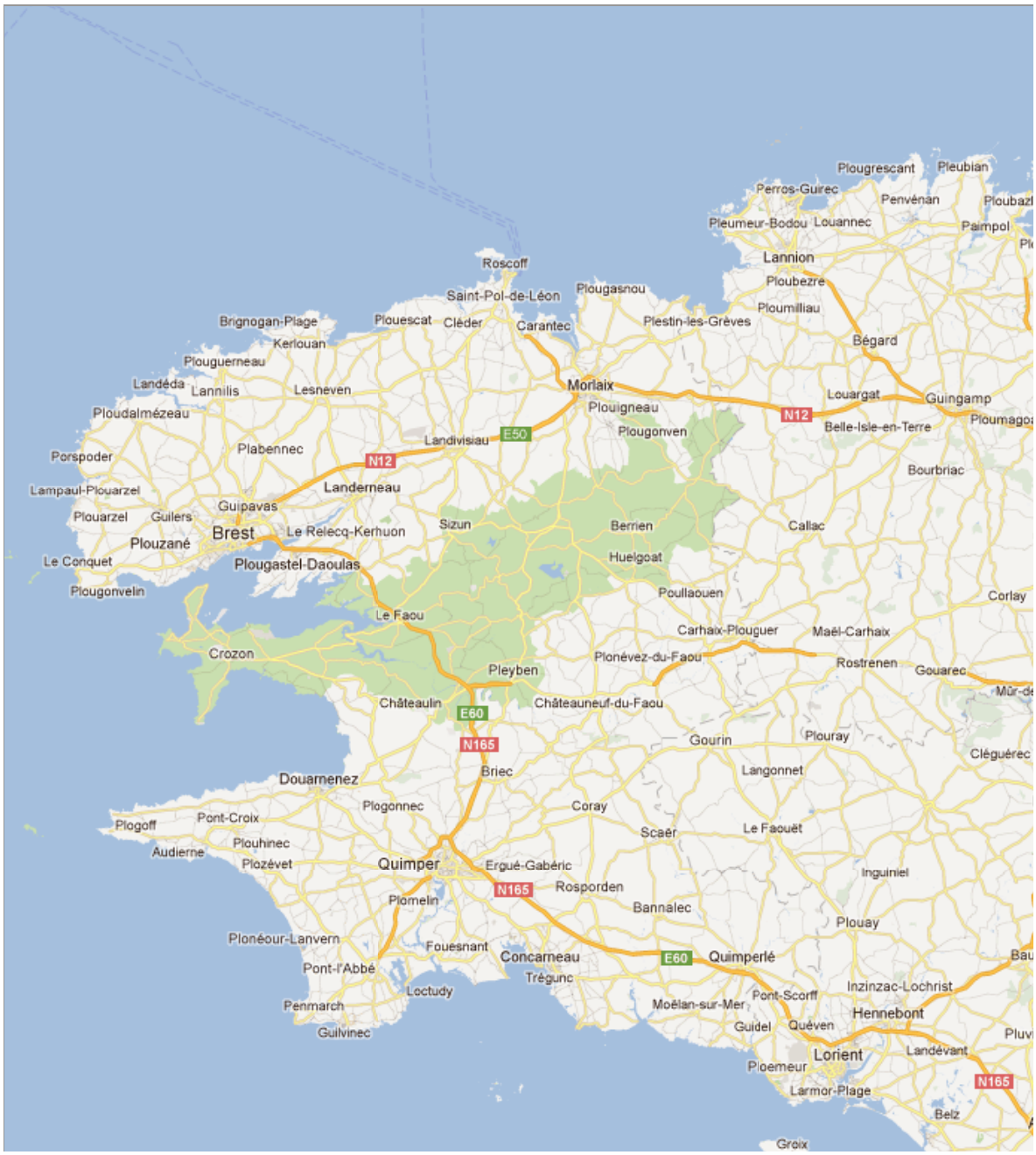
Around 1576, Henri eventually escaped, declared himself for the Hugenot side, and took over his Kingdom of Navarre, his father having since died in 1572.

The struggle for power (1576 to 1598):

At this time, Henri III, the successor to Charles IX, convened the French parliament in Blois and declared himself chief of the Catholic League, and promptly resumed hostilities. The wars continued with intermittent breaks until 1587 with neither side gaining much advantage, but with Swiss and German troops invading France to support the Huguenots, a decisive battle took place at Coutras in October 1588 from which Henri of Navarre emerged the victor. Unfortunately, he did not press this advantage. To further complicate matters, Henri III, fearing the rising power of the League, attempted to suppress it by force. His aim was thwarted by the Duc du Guise, who now led the League and who seized Paris and most of the major towns in Northern France.

There were now three sides fighting for power, the Royalists under Henri III, the Huguenots under Henri of Navarre (the future Henri IV) and the League under du Guise, all battling in the name of religion. Henri III fled to Chartres where several months later he persuaded du Guise and his brother (a cardinal) to come to him to negotiate a peace. Foolishly, they did so and were promptly murdered, a reward for their credulity.

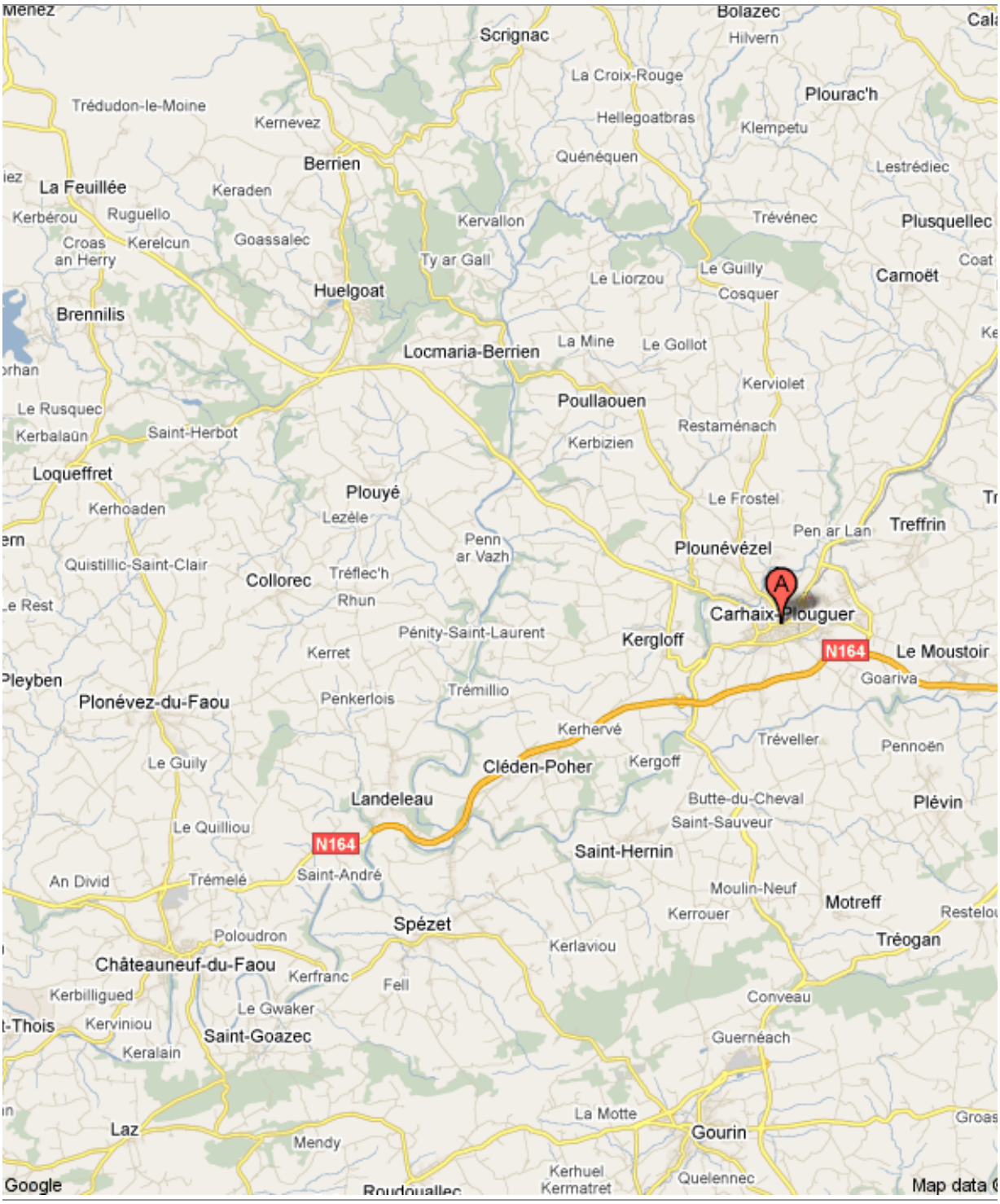
The two Henri's now made a pact to jointly subdue the League and lay siege to the latters' forces in Paris, with the bizarre situation of an army consisting of both Catholics and Huguenots who had recently been fighting each other, now trying to destroy the Catholic army of the League. Total confusion then arose with the assassination of Henri III by a young monk.



Map 5

Map of Western Brittany

Since Henri IV was not the only claimant to the now vacant throne of France, an assembly of nobles decided to support Henri's claim if he embraced Catholicism and repress the Huguenots. He gave in to most of their demands, but allowed some freedom of religion. All of these compromises soon fell apart with the individual factions gravitating to one side or the other.



Map 6

Map of Carhaix/Huelgoat Area of Western Brittany

Map 7 **Cassini Map of Northern Morbihan (Gourin Marked with A)**

He eventually moved north from Paris for safety and to meet with English reinforcements promised to him by Elizabeth I of England. With these, he returned to take Paris, but did not have the strength to hold it. The war dragged on until July 1593 when Henri IV finally converted to Catholicism, removing the last reason for the League to reject his claim to the throne. He was crowned the same year. It was at this time he made his famous comment that "Paris is at least worth a mass".

There was however a diehard group of Leaguers under the Duc du Mayenne, who with Spanish troops and money, continued to fight on in Brittany.

The war finally came to an end in 1598 (when Henri IV was 45) with the signing of the Edict of Nantes, which guaranteed a limited freedom of religion and that of the Treaty of Verviers, which ended the war between Spain and France. After 36 years France was finally free of both civil war and foreign troops.

I have not detailed any of the rest of his reign since, with du Liscoet having been dead for 4 years, it has no direct historical bearing on the saga although the direct ancestors of Jacquette Liscoet no doubt benefited from the peace.

The Du Liscoet Family:

Yves du Liscoet Family Connection:

The connection is not direct in the sense that there is no firm genealogical link between Yves du Liscoet, a XVI century aristocrat, and Jacquette Liscoet, Guillaume Jorre's mother-in-law and Guillaume Joseph Jorre de St. Jorre's (GJJ) grandmother. However, Rene, the younger brother of Yves, was the Seigneur du Saint, a seigneurie some 10 kms. south of Gourin and the location of some property at one time owned by Jacquette. In addition, her brother (also named Yves Liscoet), lived in Gourin and was Procureur (roughly the chief prosecutor of the civil and criminal court) of that principality during the latter part of the XVII century. All this is circumstantial, but since Liscoet was not a common name, the proximity and social position of the Liscoets and the du Liscoets at least suggests some indirect connection. There was also a Marie Liscoet of no known parentage born in or around Gourin in 1638 who may have been Jacquette's sister.

The du Liscoet Family Roots:

They were a prominent Breton family whose lineage goes back at least several centuries before the advent of Yves into this world in 1555. He was born to an aristocratic and prosperous family in NE Brittany, where his father, Charles, owned the Seigneurie of Planches and his mother, Francoise de la Boissiere, held the title of Dame de Kerauffret. He had one younger brother (also called Charles) who went into the Catholic church, and eventually became the Bishop of Quimper, an office he held until his death by natural causes in 1614.

From what is known of it, Yves early life seems to have been typical for a boy of his social class, with an emphasis on preparation for a military career. I have seen some Internet references to him spending some time at the French royal court over the period 1572 to 1576 where, as previously mentioned, he met and may have socialized with Henri IV. As Henri was a virtual prisoner at this time, their activities were probably confined to drinking and chasing women. Henri was a renowned

womanizer and it is likely that his comrades were chosen for their compatibility with him in these pursuits.

Not much is known about his life after his return to Brittany or when he actually returned, although there is a suggestion that he formed and led a group of young men who roamed the countryside acting more or less like brigands under the guise of fighting in the religious wars. In 1579, when he was he was 24 years old, his father died leaving him the Seigneuries of Planches and that of Bois de La Roche, both of which carried significant revenues. The same year he also received the Ordre du Roi (St. Michel) from the then king (Henri III) and, in November 1579, married Phillipes de Maridor at Le Mans. She apparently was a woman of great beauty and strong will who would agree to marry Yves only if he converted to the Huguenot religion.

They had four children, Phillipe, born in 1580 and who died in infancy, followed Benjamin, Rene, and Anne. The latter was born in 1588 and the other two somewhere in between 1581 and 1587. What is known about the three surviving children is as follows.

Benjamin, who essentially would expect to inherit all his fathers' properties, married an Anne de Coetrieux in 1603 and subsequently acquired the title of Marquis des Coulombieres and finally died in 1645, a relatively old man for those times. He appeared to have climbed at least one social rung of the ladder, but otherwise left no mark on history.

Rene married a Jacquinne de Gesne (or Gennes) in 1619 and at sometime before this event, his brother must have either sold or have given him the Seigneurie of Bois de la Roche. In 1644 he bought the Seigneurie of Le Saint from a Gabrielle de Goulaine for the sum of 54,000 Livres. There is no direct record of them having any children although there is at least a hint that a du Liscoet continued as the Seigneur of Le Saint after Rene's death. An obscure reference indicates that a Guillaume du Liscoet was the Seigneur of Le Saint and Kernabou and held the title of Marquis in the early 1690's. Since Rene owned at least two significant revenue producing properties, he could have lived at either although the custom of the time was to use one as a principal residence leaving the other to be looked after by stewards or relatives. It is through this Rene that there may be some connection to Jacquette Liscoet.

Anne du Liscoet married a Claude de Lanloup in 1605 (at the age of 17) and died in 1622 at the age of 34.

The Historical Setting:

The worst of the religious wars of the late XVI century had passed Brittany by until the assassinations of the Du Guises by Henri III in 1586 . This event prompted the Duc de Mercoeur, the Governor of Brittany, to rebel against Henri III and declare for the League. Brittany was largely Catholic at the time and remained so for the remainder of the religious wars.

Initially, he held most of the Province. However there was considerable fragmentation in that not only were there Leaguers, Huguenots and adherents to Henri III, but there also semi-independent towns and cities who, though nominally on one or other of these sides, basically wanted to be left alone and were prepared

to fight off anyone who tried to force choice on them. The city of Quimper was one such place.

As each side fought for control, Henri IV brought in Protestant allies from England, German, and Switzerland prompting Mercoeur to get support from Phillip II of Spain, but neither side gained any permanent military advantage. The conflict was eventually brought to an end in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes and the Treaty of Verviers, though the political seeds for the end of hostilities were sown four years earlier with Henri IV's re-conversion to Catholicism.

Yves du Liscoet's Military Career:

Although he seems to have served an early apprenticeship in brigandage after his return to Brittany from Paris, the event that initiated his public career and received wide historical coverage was the sack of Carhaix in 1590. This was followed a string of military engagements of varying levels of brutality and effectiveness, culminating with his death in 1594 at the hands of the Spaniards defending the fortress of Crozon south of the port of Brest.

The Sack of Carhaix:

In March 1590, he received from Henri IV the office of Captain of 50 Lances which appeared to be his first formal military rank. Later that year, he was in command of a force of about 3000 men in association with another Huguenot captain named Le Tremblaye, and were ordered by the Royalist Baron de Rostrenen to attack Carhaix. This town was either controlled by or at least sympathetic to the League, and since it had not been plundered recently, it was probably a prime target to loot.

The town was attacked early in the morning of Sept. 5, 1590, and the fighting, rape and pillage continued for most of the next three days. The accounts of what happened during this period vary but the focal point of all of them was that du Liscoet had his right hand cut off at the wrist during the one of the battles. They seized the town initially with very little opposition, probably because there had been a wedding between two of the area's prominent families that had had the fortuitous effect of concentrating wealth from the surrounding area into the town and rendering the armed upper classes at least partially incapable. One account puts a Sr. Olymant de Launay, a local luminary, as the wielder of the sword that cut off du Liscoet's hand; others put the credit for the act to an axe carrying priest named Linlouet.

The initial attack gave du Liscoet the town, but warning church bells aroused the countryside and a resistance force was raised by local gentry and priests. This force was led by an squire named Lanridon who was elected as their leader. He obviously did not think success was probable and tried to refuse the job. This prompted his peasant troops to threaten to kill him immediately if he did not lead, so he reluctantly led them back into Carhaix. By this time, du Liscoet was aware of this threat, and ambushed them with cavalry at a bridge just south of town where most of them were slaughtered, including the unfortunate Lanridon.

The following day a second force was organized by a Sr. de Bizit (or may be Berit) and the axe priest Linloulet to avenge the massacre of the previous day. This group actually did get into Carhaix and caused du Liscoet significant losses, but in the end, they too were defeated and most of them killed. As a reprisal, du Liscoet then burnt most of the town, seized anyone with wealth for ransom, and looted houses, churches and anything else of value, burning the records of both civil and church

archives. Sr. Olymant was amongst the many held for ransom. He and two of his servants were taken to du Liscoet's chateau at Quintin, where he was held until his ransom of 1500 ecus, plus a charge for board and lodging of 3 ecus per day, was paid by his surviving Carhaix friends and relatives. In that day and age, rich opponents were seldom killed if they could afford a ransom; the poor did not merit this privilege.

There was apparently a third attempt to defeat du Liscoet was organized from Chateauneuf du Faou, but it arrived too late to help and its gentlemen leaders were apparently killed by their disaffected troops in anger either over their incompetence, or more likely, because of the lack of pay.

It is not clear how long du Liscoet held the town, but given its condition, he probably moved out within a few days, taking his ransom prisoners with him. Another account has him returning in November of the same year to repeat the whole process, leaving Carhaix in a ruinous state from which it still had not recovered 25 years later. In 1615, the town administration made a plea to the King for aid in the reconstruction of the public buildings and church properties that were still in a state of desolation.

The now right-handless du Liscoet commissioned someone to fabricate an iron hand with a socket to hold his sword; this apparently was a great success and he went on with his career of rapine for the remainder of his short life. It may well have affected his mind since his brutality and lack of scruples plumbed new lows until his death in 1594.

The Siege of Craon:

Craon is a small town about 60 kms. SE of Rennes. Today it appears of little strategic interest, but in April 1592 it was the scene of a bitter siege with the League side in the fortress and the besiegers consisting of an Anglo-French force under the command of Montpensier. The army included 2000 English soldiers, 800 German mercenaries and an unspecified number of French, which included du Liscoet and his troop. The town was skillfully defended by a Pierre le Cornu against overwhelming odds until the arrival relief force of League and Spanish troops under the respective commands of the Duc de Mercoeur and Juan d'Aguila. The battle actually took place on May 22, 1592 and was a major victory for the League, with the Huguenot losses in the thousands. The remains of Montpensier's army retreated north to Laval, which itself fell a few days later, with the defeated Huguenot troops dispersing west into Brittany.

If anything remarkable was done by du Liscoet in this battle, it was not recorded. He next surfaces as the Governor of the town of Quintin, which today is not much more than a village about 15 km. SW of Saint-Brieuc. It had been captured by Huguenot forces under a commander with the improbable name of Le Noue Bras-de-Fer in July 1591. Du Liscoet was put in charge of it some time after his retreat from Laval. The Duc du Mercoeur laid siege to it in November 1592 and it capitulated later that month. Du Liscoet does not seem to have suffered any serious problems from either side with this defeat and retired for the winter at his chateau of Bois de La Roche.

The Chateauneuf du Faou Martyrdom:

In March 1593, bored by a winter of inactivity, he put a force together of several hundred men and launched a successful surprise attack on towns in Lower Brittany.

An expression attributable to him or to one of his chroniclers was "ou l'oie etait encore grasse" or roughly translated, "be where the goose is again fat". In this case, it was a series of towns and villages that had not been pillaged in recent years and therefore had plunder worth fighting for.

The first of these was Corlay, then held by a garrison of French League and Spanish troops. Most of these were killed, leaving him the town as a secure base of operations. On March 25, in another surprise attack with 300 plus men, he took the town of Chateauneuf du Faou, killing, burning and pillaging in his usual fashion. The population of this place was swollen with refugees which added to the desirability of the target since these carried most of their valuable possessions with them.

Du Liscoet and some of his soldiers went on to loot the Chapel of Notre Dame des Portes in the courtyard of the Chateau and found several priests there trying to protect the altar and church valuables. One of the soldiers seized the silver Ciborium (the vessel containing the blessed wafer that is supposed to represent the body of Jesus Christ), throwing its contents on the floor. One of the priests, named Thepault Derrien, outraged by this sacrilege, prostrated himself in front of the Host, prayed to it and then ate it to prevent further desecration. This moved du Liscoet to fury, and with the cry of "Idolater", promptly ran the poor priest through with his sword, thus raising the latter to an official status of "Martyr" within the Catholic church.

Photos of L'eglise Saint Julien, the XVIII century rebuilt church of an earlier vintage, Chapelle de Notre-Dame des Portes (rebuilt in the XIX century) and its stained glass window of the same era celebrating this action together with a contemporary town house in Chateauneuf du Faou appear later in this chapter. Du Liscoet received his second military promotion from Henri IV in November 1593 when he received the brevet of Marechal du Camp to serve under the command of Sieur d'Aumont, Marechal de France, the leader of Huguenot forces in Brittany. This may have been his reward for his activities earlier in the spring.

The de Mezarnou Pillage:

In August 1594, when du Liscoet was the Governor of Landerneau, a town NE of Chateauneuf du Faou, he was on a mission to Brest and accepted accommodation for the night for himself and his men from a local squire named Herve de Parcevaux, Sr. de Mezarnou at the latter's chateau. On the following day, or according to other accounts, after the evening meal was finished, du Liscoet and his soldiers attacked his host, killing several servants. raped others and put Parcevaux under arrest in the name of Sourdeac, the Governor of Brest. They then pillaged the chateau of everything of value that was moveable and took Parcevaux off to prison in Brest where he was held for a ransom of 9500 ecus. To add insult to injury, Parcevaux was a staunch Huguenot whom one would expect to have some ability to avoid Liscoet's depredations.

There is at least one theory as to why, other than simply for the money, that du Liscoet would do something that was considered, even by the low standards of the time, as totally detestable. Apparently there was a Marie Chevoir was in residence at the Mezarnou chateau during du Liscoet's visit. She was both a Catholic and the fiance of Guy de La Fontenelle, a Leaguer whose reputation for destruction and cruelty exceeded even du Liscoet's. It is possible that the latter, either of his own volition, or at Sourdeac's instructions, decided that Parcevaux was a traitor and therefore fair game for looting.

This was not the end of the story. In 1603, through the offices of Henri IV, Parcevaux's heir launched a suit against du Liscoet's widow in order to get recompense for his fathers' losses in 1594. As part of this court case a detailed inventory of the goods taken, lost or damaged totaling 70,000 ecus was submitted, but whether or not the action was successful was not recorded.

The Landerneau Land Extortion:

This may have occurred in 1590, or more likely in 1594 when du Liscoet was Governor of that district. There was a land transaction between Alain Henry and du Liscoet concerning a property near Landerneau which sold at a price of 14,000 ecus. After the deal was completed, du Liscoet used threats of force to get back the money he had just paid, and so wound up with both the land and the money. His estate held this land until long after his death. The widows of both parties to this transaction fought (in court) over the land for years. Eventually justice was served when it was awarded to Henry's widow.

The Siege of Crozon:

The NE point on the peninsula of Crozon had an extremely strategic position in that it commanded the entrance to the harbour of Brest. Recognizing this, Spanish troops had occupied it early in 1594 and fortified it with gun batteries overlooking Brest harbour. The Huguenot Marechal d'Aumont decide to remove this threat, and in the fall of that year laid siege to it with a force of 3000 men, many of which were English. Although his English and Flemish allies held control of the sea, the steep cliffs below the fort ruled out any attempt to take it from that direction , so the siege took the conventional route of digging trenches and advancing batteries of cannon to destroy its inland facing defenses.

The fort was commanded by a Captain Praxede, an able and experienced soldier, and had no more than 400 French and Spanish troops in the garrison. They were however, well supplied and equipped. His opponents, under d'Aumont, appeared to be less well organized and to be a less coherent force.

The siege commenced in late September in wet cold weather with the besiegers ill prepared to deal with these conditions. Soon sickness added to their problems, and to that of the blockading fleet of the English. Praxade's strategy was to disturb the siege works of his attackers with frequent large scale sorties and to repair damage caused by d'Aumont's daily cannonade each night.

A sense of urgency was added to the siege by the approach of a relief column of Spanish troops who reached the Blavet River in Morbihan by early November. However, eight days before the fort finally fell, a sortie of some 100 Spaniards trapped du Liscoet with a party of sappers repairing one of their trenches, and he, and most of the others were killed. An improbable myth records that on his death, his faithful horse jumped into the sea, swam across Brest harbour to the beach at Plougastel (a location known even today for the excellence of its strawberries), then galloped to the Chateau de Kergoat where Phillipes de Maridor, Liscoet's wife was living. After delivering these mute bad tidings, the poor beast promptly expired.

Eight days later, and before the arrival of the relief force, the fort fell with most of the garrison, including its commander, perishing in the final assault.

Map 7 Cassini Map of Carhaix Area (Marked with A)

Map 8 **Cassini Map of Chateauneuf-du-Faou Area (Marked With A)**

Possible Connection of Jacquette Liscoet to the du Liscoet family:

The supposition that there is a connection rests on the fact that Rene du Liscoet purchased the Seigneurie du Saint in 1644 from a Gabriel de Goulaine and that he, or a successor, lived there for at least part of the mid XVII century. Rene was born around 1585, married a Jacquinne de Gennes in 1619 at the age of 34 and was 59 years old when he acquired the above seigneurie to add to his existing title of Seigneur du Bois de la Roche. This marriage apparently produced 11 children between 1625 and 1646, none of which seem to lead to Jacquette. He died in 1656 with Jacquinne passing away 29 years later in 1685.

Jacquette's father's given name was said to be Olivier but I have seen no written confirmation of his existence. She did however have an older brother named Yves who was born around 1630 or about 5 years before she was born in 1635. I have a note that Olivier died in 1661 but again I do not have firm evidence of this. It appears impossible that Olivier, if he existed, was a descendent of Rene, although it is conceivable that Yves and Jacquette were his illegitimate offspring. The fact that Rene did not purchase the Seigneurie du Saint until 1644 does not necessarily mean that he did not live in the area before this date. Liscoet was not a common name and finding two families with more or less the same name in the same geographical area suggests some linkage. The attitude to illegitimate children of the upper classes in that era was usually supportive; boys were educated and given a career; girls were made marriageable and given a dowry to attract a husband. If they failed in this mission, they usually became nuns. This also required a dowry. The fact that Yves subsequently became a prosecutor of the Gourin court and Jacquette was able to sequentially obtain two husbands, both of which had reasonably prominent jobs, suggests that their family had some local influence at least.

Known Facts about Jacquette Liscoet:

1. She was the younger of at least two children born to an Olivier Liscoet, in or around Gourin about 1635. There may have been a third child named Marie who was born around 1638.

2. She had a brother Yves Liscoet, Sieur de Kergouin who was probably born in 1630 and who subsequently became the Procureur for the district of Gourin.

3. She married twice, her first marriage was to a Francois Millier about 1659, from which 10 children were born over the period Nov. 1660 to March 1676, and of which Beatrice, the mother of Guillaume Joseph Jorre de St. Jorre, was the eighth child, born on Nov. 23, 1673. Francois had a brother named Jan Millier, Sieur de Kereven, who was the ancestor of a French air force officer named Christian Millier, who as a quite distant relative of our family, helpfully supplied many of the details in this section.

4. Francois Millier, Sieur de Kelan was a Agent du Fisc or tax collector and would probably have been reasonable prosperous. He is referred to as "Noble Homme". His death in 1675 coincides with the Bonnets Rouge revolt of that year. There is an historic account of an attack on Francois Millier's house on June 30, 1675 by a mob of some 300 people who seized and burnt his tax records. What happened to him is not recorded except that he died that year.

5. Five years later, Jacquette remarried to a Francois le Maoult, Sieur de Kergadiou. There do not seem to have been any children from this marriage. This Francois seems to have had a somewhat chequered history. There are some interesting glimpses of both his, Yves and Jacquette's lives in a 19th. century inventory of Ancien Regime records that were held in the Morbihan Archives at that time. These, along with those of many other French departments, were published at Napeolon III's request in the 1850s. The records I have used concern the Senechausse of Gourin. I have not checked to see if these documents still exist, but it may be an interesting line of future research. What I obtained from them is listed below.

a) 1675 Gourin Council missed 8 days of business because of the Bonnets Rouge revolt.

b) 1676 Goods of Francois le Maoult, Sieur de Kergadiou seized by Francois le Rest, Sieur de Beaupre for debts owed.

c) 1676 Lists of pardons and non-pardons issued for those involved in the Bonnets Rouge revolt.

d) 1682/1685 Judicial sale of Chateau du Saint.

e) 1682 Sale or rent of property in the village of Penangarz by Yves Liscoet, Sieur de Kergouin , procureur of Gourin to Francois Cozic.

f) 1686/1687 Appropriation for Jacquette Liscoet of houses and lands situated in the village of Kergistiou, treve of Le Saint (note that a "treve" is a sub-division of a parish).

g) 1689/1692 Notice of the beneficial succession of Francois le Maoult , Sieur de Kergadiou. This presumably refers to his accession to the estate of a relative.

h) 1692/1694 Judicial seizure of the lands and seigneuries of du Saint and Keranroux owned by Guillaume, Marquis of Liscoet at the request of a Vincent de Kermabon.

i) 1696/1697 Appropriation of a house in Gourin for the benefit of Yves Liscoet, procureur de la Senechausse de Gourin.

j) 1728 Contract of Marriage between Francois le Maoult and Jacquette Liscoet. (Note that since this marriage took place in 1680, it is obviously misfiled).

There are numerous other interesting references to the execution of criminals, the punishment of prostitutes (leave town or spend three days in the stocks), regulation of prices, repair of roads, removal of garbage, the oppression of non-Catholics, the dress code for officers of the court, the penalties for trade with regions in which plagues were in progress (death), blasphemy (500 livres fine for the first offence, tongue amputation for the second) and for the fallout from the Bonnets Rouge revolt.

One notices that all these “gentlemen” had titles in the form of “Sieur de Ker-----” . I am not sure how these titles were awarded but I suspect that they were largely self bestowed and related to property they owned. I have researched most of the above on the internet and largely drawn a blank. A few hits give locations outside the Gourin area, Kergadiou is the location of the tallest stone age menhir in Brittany but

this is NW of Brest (see Plate 5) and Kermabon is on the Ile de Brehat which is off the Brittany coast. Neither have any significant chateaux or any other buildings of note.

Looking at the Cassini maps, it is obvious from the multiplicity of tiny villages (some probably no bigger than a few houses), that there is no shortage of locations after which one can call oneself as a Sieur de X.

Known Facts About Beatrice Milier (BM):

1. She was the eighth of the ten children of Francois Millier and Jacquette Liscoet over the period 1669 to 1676. She was probably born on Nov. 23, 1673 and would have been 24 at the time of her marriage in 1697.

2. What is known about her father Francois is listed above in the Jacquette Liscoet section. GJ's Acte de Mariage describes him as " deceased noble homme Francois Millier, Sieur de Kelan of Gourin". The birth records for the ten children are shown below and provide some idea of the chronology of the family.

a) Jacques	Nov. 29, 1660
b) Louis	Feb. 23, 1662
c) Claude Henri	Feb. 28, 1669
d) Alliette Brigitte	Feb. 4, 1670
e) Jan Rene	May 28, 1671
f) Barthelemy	July 12, 1672
g) Francois Louis	1673 (?)
h) Guillaume	Oct. 2, 1673
i) Beatrice	Nov. 23, 1673 (?)
j) Charlotte Claude (?)	Mar. 25, 1676

There is some confusion about the dates and order of the last four births, which is probably due to some of them being birth dates and others the dates of baptism or rather the recording of baptisms.

3. The birth record for Charlotte lists the father as deceased, so he must have died sometime between June 1675 and March 1676. It is interesting that this period covered the Bonnets Rouge peasant rebellion which was centered on the Gourin / Carhaix region and resulted in some mortality among the local gentry and political administration. It is at least possible that he was one of the casualties.

At least one birth record was signed by a priest named Jan Millier. The 1697 Acte de Mariage was also signed by another priest named Louis Millier.

4. Her mother, Jacquette Liscoet came from a more prominent family. There are numerous references to the Liscoet (or Liscouet) family in Brittany over the period 1500 to 1800. Details this family are shown under the two preceding sections.

5. A Charles du Liscoet, one brother of Yves du Liscoet, was Bishop of Quimper during the period from 1583 to 1614, and the other brother, Rene du Liscoet, the seigneur du Bois de La Roche bought the Seigneurie of Le Saint (about 10 kms. south of Gourin) in 1644.

6. The Liscoet family owned the Chateau du Bois de La Roche in the Guingamp area (NE Brittany) from 1526 to 1781. Apparently both Yves, Rene and presumably Charles, were born there.

7. There is no record of Beatrice Millier's death but she probably died in Chateauneuf du Faou sometime after 1715.

Known Facts About Guillaume Jorre (GJ):

1. Guillaume Jorre (GJ) was born in Normandy around 1660, married Genevieve Felon (GF) in Rouen in 1685, moved to Carhaix, Finistere around 1690, and with whom he had at least two children named:

Anne Genevieve
Sylvie Thomase

The former is unequivocally GJ's daughter, so it must be presumed that Sylvie is his daughter too. Both could have been born in Carhaix or Rouen.

These girls were probably born in the 1690 to 1695 range and their mother must have died in 1695 or 1696. Their were no birth dates given for them but both were subsequently married at Chateauneuf du Faou, the former in Sept. 1710 to a Jean Marie Thepault, and the latter in Sept. 1715 to a Alexis Kersauson.

In XVII century France, death of one spouse was common and was almost always followed by a quick remarriage. Since social class of the partners was a prime consideration, particularly amongst the petite noblesse, it is probable that GJ would have had to widen his search from Carhaix to the surrounding towns. Beatrice Millier (BM), at the then age of 23 (in 1697), was probably the best choice available to him and became his second wife.

If one assumes that GJ, like most males of his class, would marry in their late twenties, and his first marriage occurred in 1685, then he would have been born in 1660 and have been around 37 at the time of his second marriage to BM in 1697.

If Anne Genevieve was born in 1690, she would have been 18 when she became godmother to Julien Marie (GJ's 8 th. child by BM) in 1708 and 19 when she married two years later. All of this is consistent with Anne Genevieve being GJ's daughter and not his sister as some internet records show.

2. His second wife, BM, came from an established Breton family that had been resident in the Gourin area for more than 100 years. Her mother was a Liscoet, a family name that was fairly prominent in Breton history from the 1500's on. (see separate account on the Liscoets). Her title was shown as "Demoiselle" and his as "Noble Homme", indicating that both families were of the petite noblesse and had some social position.

Her father, Francois Millier, Sieur de Kelan, had died prior to the marriage date, probably in 1675. Her mother Jacquette Liscoet was present and signed the record as a witness. Although Guillaume Jorre is described as a Noble Homme, he is not listed as Sieur de St. Jorre on the Acte de Mariage. There were no other Jorres on the witness page although there were several Milliers and Liscoets.

3. The marriage banns had been read in both Carhaix and Gourin, but some sort of special dispensation from the Bishop of Quimper (a Francois de Coetlogon) seems to have been required. There were 13 witnesses to the wedding of which at least two were priests. They are referred to as friends and relatives of the bride and groom but no division is made between them. GJ's children from his first marriage would have been about 6 and 4 respectively at this date and presumably were not present.

4. After the wedding, they would have returned to Carhaix and lived there until 1702 where the first 5 of the 12 children from this marriage were born. Their 6 th. child was born in Chateauneuf du Faou in 1703. GJ would have been around 43 years old at the time of this move. In birth record of this child, GJ is referred to as Noble Homme, Sieur de Saint Jorre which is the first record of him having any title. This may imply that he was the eldest son of his family, but that 6 years earlier at his wedding, his father was still alive, so he had not yet inherited the title, or it may mean that he acquired the title by purchase or as a reward for some serviced he had provided.

5. GJ and family continued to live in Chateauneuf du Faou at least until their twelfth and probably last child (Claude Alexis) was born on Dec. 30, 1715. By this date, the respective ages of GJ and BM would have been 55 and 41.

These twelve children, their dates and places of birth were:

Beatrice Jacquette	3 Dec. 1697	Carhaix
Sylvie	1 Jan. 1699	Carhaix
Marie Augustine	23 Dec. 1699	Carhaix
Ursule Louise	5 Dec. 1700	Carhaix
Claude Guillaume	1 Mar. 1702	Carhaix
Pierre Joseph	11 Apr. 1703	Chat. du Faou
Francois Pierre	18 Apr. 1706	Chat. du Faou
Julien Marie*	25 Mar. 1708	Chat. du Faou
Jeanne Therese*	6 Apr. 1710	Chat. du Faou
Guillaume Joseph**(GJJ)	24 Jan. 1712	Chat. du Faou
Corentine Therese **	23 Aug. 1713	Chat. du Faou
Claude Alexis (CAJ)	30 Dec. 1715	Chat. du Faou

* Anne Genevieve godmother
** Marie Augustine godmother

It is noticeable that over this period that the birth records have progressively fewer witnesses sign the register. The last one that is available (Corentine Therese) was signed only by GJ , his daughter Marie Augustine and two priests. GJ's signature was quite shaky on this last record.

6. The Carhaix birth records have not been seen. On the first three of the Chateauneuf du Faou birth records, GJ is simply listed as Sieur de Saint Jorre, but from the birth of Jeanne Therese in 1710, his title (or profession) is shown as "Greffier de Jurisdiction Royale de Chateauneuf du Faou, Huelgoat et Landeleau". Landeleau is a small town some 12 kms. east of Chateauneuf and Huelgoat a slightly larger town about 25 kms. to the north. The latter was one of the principal lead mining areas of France in the XVII and XVIII centuries. It remained so at least in the first half of the XIX century as well (see later in this chapter for an account of Trollope's visit to these mines).

L'eglise Saint Julien
Chateauneuf-du-Faou

XVII Century Town House
Chateauneuf-du-Faou

Martyrdom of
Thepault Derrien
by Yves du Liscoet
1590

There was a Crown Dept. of Water and Forests ("La Matrise des Eaux et Forets") which had control of most natural resources on the district and that seemed to be part of the justice administration of the region. Assuming he acquired (or bought) this position around 1709 he would have been in his late 40's or early 50's. There apparently are extensive records of this organization in the Brest branch of the Finistere Archives covering the period 1665 to 1789. They are indexed and include personnel lists, correspondence and a host of other details. It is almost certain that GJ left some trace here if he was part of this organization and not an employee of the Justice Administration. A Greffier was not a high level post, more that of a recording secretary rather than an actual decision making administrator.

7. His oldest daughter by his first marriage first appears in 1708 as godmother to Julien Marie. She is described as "Demoiselle Anne Genevieve Jorre, Dame de Nanges". She is clearly identified as the daughter of GJ. Anne Genevieve is shown, from internet sources, as being married to a Jean Marie Thepault at Chateauneuf du Faou on Sept. 1, 1710. This marriage record was not seen at the Finistere Archives.

Marie Augustine was the godmother to her brother Guillaume Joseph and sister Corentine Therese; she would have been 12 and 13 respectively at these birth dates. She does not have any other title in either birth record.

8. There is no record of what happened to any of these people except for Guillaume Joseph and Claude Alexis. The former became an employee of Compagnie des Indes and left for Reunion (Isle Bourbon) in 1740. The latter became a priest, left Brittany for Versailles and worked in the entourage of Madame la Dauphine (Marie-Josephe de Saxe) as a Clerc du Chapelle Ordinaire. After her death in 1767, he was awarded a pension from the Royal Treasury (see details of Claude Alexis).

It seems unlikely that either GJ or his wife ever left the area but there is no record of either of their deaths.

Known Facts about Guillaume Joseph Jorre (GJJ):

1. He was born on January 24, 1712 at Chateauneuf du Faou.

2. He left France in 1739 or 1740 from L'Orient as an employee of Companie des Indes (CdI) and arrived in Isle Bourbon (Reunion) in 1740. He started work in the position of Greffier or Notaire at Ste. Suzanne on the north coast of Reunion.

In August 1742, notice was sent from France for his dismissal in order to give his job to some new arrival who had more political pull than he did. By 1743 he was again working for CdI as a Garde Magasin.

4. He married Marie Anne Michelle Calvert on June 14, 1743 and had 3 children by her. Their names and dates of birth are:

Jean Jacques Joseph	Feb. 17, 1745
Marie Marguerite Beatrix	Feb. 7, 1747
Jean Francois Marie (JFM)	Sept. 6, 1758

The third child (JFM) was born in St. Andre, Reunion.

5. In 1770 he left Reunion with his wife and JFM for Mauritius where he became a

farmer in the Flacq district in the east central part of that island. The other two children stayed on Reunion.

6. Both he and his wife died within a week of each other in late July 1778 at their farm in Riviere des Remparts. They may be buried in the cemetery of the church of St. Julien near Flacq or more likely on their property.

Known Facts about Claude Alexis Jorre (CAJ):

1. He was born on Dec. 30, 1715. His birth record for this year is missing from the Finistere Archive microfiche, possibly because it was the last entry for that period. It is however shown (with no details other than the name) in the summary of births for 1715 in the parish records.

2. Nothing is known of his earlier life, but he became a priest and at least by 1758, he had a position in the entourage of Madame la Dauphine (Marie-Josephe de Saxe, the second wife of Louis, the eldest son of Louis XV). She lived in Versailles from 1747 to her death in March 1767, so it must be assumed that he entered her employ sometime during this period and certainly before 1758. Note that this Louis would have been king of France (and therefore Louis XVI) if he had not died before his father. As a result it was his son who actually became Louis XVI and ultimately went to the guillotine.

3. CAJ's principal claim to fame is that he was a published author of a religious work entitled " Les Pelerins au Tombeau de Notre Seigneur; Poeme Sacre". This was published in 1762 by a Paris publisher named Desprez who appeared to have been an official printer to the Court at Versailles in the mid XVIII century. This poem of some 36 pages accompanied nine other works by various authors of which the principal was an account of a journey made by two of Louis XV daughters (Adelaide and Victoire) to a spa at Plombieres in eastern France in the summer of 1761. The latter was written by a M. de Lespine who seems to have a connection to the household of Madame la Dauphine and was also married to a daughter of the publisher Desprez.

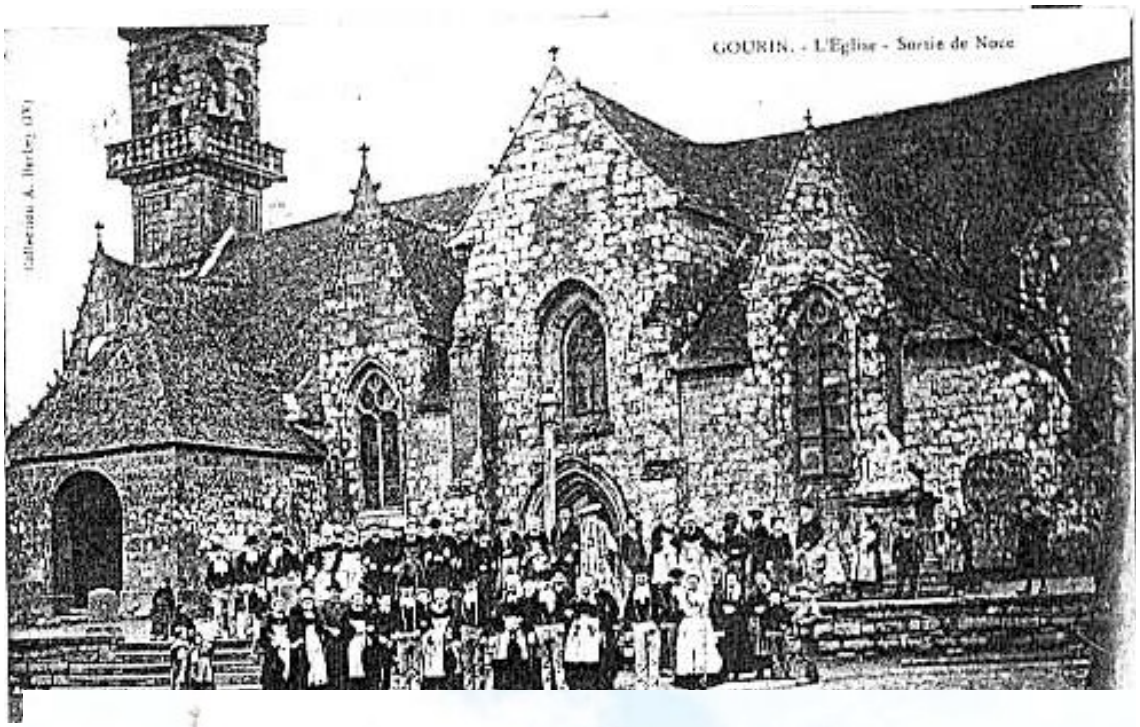
4. This is the only known work of CAJ. It is referenced in Querard's 1836 book "La France Litteraire".

5. A copy of this work was available at a Spanish rare book dealer in 2004 for a price of E350. The advertisement for this described it as "traduit ou imite de l'Oratorio de Pallavicini" so it may not have been an entirely original work.

6. Another internet reference also lists his name as a French author and gives him a title of "Prieur de Sarton". Sarton is a vanishingly small hamlet in Pas de Calais just south of Doullens. It does not appear even to have a church or any other religious establishment although it may have at the time. The title "prieur" does not suggest that he was very far up in the church hierarchy. Further research indicates that there was a Prieure de Sarton controlled by the Diocese of Amiens which carried some annual cash benefit that presumably went to the Prieur. The most appropriate English translation of these words are Priory and Prior. Since CAJ was part of La Dauphine's household, it is certain this benefice carried only rewards but no duties.

7. A record from the French National Archives listing Crown granted pensions in the latter part of the XVIII century lists his name. The entry in French) reads:

L'eglise de St. Pierre et St. Paul, Gourin
Late XIX Century



L'eglise de Gourin Mid XX Century

"Jorre de Saint Jorre, Claude Alexis
Clerc de Chapelle de Madame. Baptise le 30 Decembre 1715 a Chateauneuf du Faou, diocese de Quimper, fils de Guillaume Jorre, Sieur de Saint Jorre, et de Beatrix Millier. Pension accordee pour lui tenir lieu de pareille somme dont il jouissait en qualite de clerc de chapelle ordinaire du feu Madame la Dauphine."

Another record from the French treasury in 1790 listing all (or at least many) State pension recipients gives the amount as L 150 per year and that he had received it since 1767, the year in which Marie-Josephe de Saxe died. It gives his age as 74.

There is no record of CAJ's death but again it must have been after 1790.

8. A footnote to an article in the 1906 " Bulletin de la Societe archeologique de Sens" Vol. 22 provides some information about his position in the religious establishment of Madame la Dauphine. Sens incidentally is a small cathedral town in the Department of Yonne about 130 kms. SE of Versailles. For some reason the Dauphin was buried here in 1765, instead of the more usual interment in Saint Denis in Paris, and his wife followed suit on her death in 1767.

This lengthy article covers the deaths and funerals of both the Dauphin (December 1765) and the Dauphine less than two years later and, for some reason, the author has provided brief biographical details on five members of her entourage, of which, Claude Alexis gets the most coverage although he had the lowest ecclesiastical rank. They all had some connection or position at the Sens Cathedral despite all being domiciled at Versailles.

In it he is described as "clerc de chapelle ordinaire, chanoine de Sens depuis 1758, L'abbe de Saint-Jorre" and relates his ambition to become "chapelaine de quartier" which apparently was the next rank up in the hierarchy. This was thwarted by the untimely death of his employer.

The footnote goes on to quote part of a letter from Marie-Josephe to L'abbe Soldini, the latter being in charge of her religious household, explaining that she was not angry at Claude-Alexis for writing directly to a Cardinal de Luynes for such a position (presumably this violated strict protocol), and that the Cardinal had informed her that Claude-Alexis would be first in line for the next available position. Her death obviously ended this preference. Cardinal de Luynes was also the Archbishop of Sens.

This does explain one thing, which is how a lowly priest from rural Finistere (at the time a poverty stricken and backward part of France), became part of the establishment of La Dauphine, and who, but for the premature death of her husband would have become the Queen of France. L'abbe Soldini was, despite his Italian sounding name, a native of Saint-Malo and must have known Claude-Alexis in Brittany before the former moved to Versailles and achieved a high position at the Court of Louis XV. Then as now, those in positions of political power imported underlings who owed them loyalty and would do their bidding.

Soldini was famous in Saint-Malo at the time for having secured a piece of the "True Cross" from Rome, but others described him as "very mediocre and of suspect honesty".

What it does not explain is Claude-Alexis's title "L'abbe de Saint-Jorre". Any such title implies that that he held this benefice which would provide him with an income and

not necessarily require any duties. So it would appear that sometime after 1697 (GJ's wedding) that some event occurred that enabled both GJ to add the title "Sieur de Saint-Jorre" and provided a religious benefice for his son Claude Alexis.

Inferences:

a) As the last of 12 children, CAJ probably did not have a lot of options and so chose the priesthood even though this was an overcrowded profession at this time (c. 1735).

b) He had a mentor, L'abbe Soldini who got him a job at the Court in Versailles and thus into the employ of Madame la Dauphine. He may have been there before 1747, but he was certainly there by 1758.

He must have been reasonably well educated and possibly could read and write Italian if his poem was a translation instead of an original work. Again the Soldini connection may also have something to do with this ability in Italian.

c) His honorific "L'abbe de Saint-Jorre" raises more questions than it answers.

LIFE IN XVII AND XVIII CENTURY BRITTANY

Introduction:

It is difficult to find contemporary accounts of life as it would have been in rural Finistere and Morbihan (the departments in which Carhaix, Chateauneuf du Faou and Gourin are situated) during the period of GJ's married life in the area. Histories cover the main events; wars, plagues and other happenings that excited interest and were recorded by the writers of that era. Our ancestors obviously did very little that merited their attention. Specialized volumes by academics covering many aspects of Breton history over this period are available, often in exhaustive detail, but even these do not provide much feeling for what day to day life was for people of GJ's social class.

I have used two such volumes covering the period 1532 to 1789, the first, entitled "L'age d'or de la Bretagne 1532 - 1675" by Alain Croix and the second a companion volume "La Bretagne au XVIII siecle (1675 - 1789)" by Jean Queniart to provide a basis for what the economic and political system was, but unfortunately I have been unable to find anything like Gilles de Gouberville's diary of 7 years of his life in mid XVI century Normandy. What I did find was an account by Adolphus Trollope (brother of Anthony Trollope, a famous British author of the Victorian era) of two summers he spent with a French artist hiking through western Brittany in the 1830's. These were published in a book form in 1840. These often amusing notes of his travels and encounters suggest that not a lot had changed since Guilluame Joseph Jorre de Saint Jorre (GJJ) left L'Orient for Reunion 100 years before. Even better is the series of sketches made by his artist friend which are included in this account.

I have tried to avoid turning this section into a dry treatise of facts since most of these would have little or no affect on the life of a minor cog in the Breton administrative wheel.

Geography, Language and Population:

Brittany was divided into two halves, the eastern half, known as Haute Bretagne, was essentially French speaking, contained more than half the population and two of the three of the major urban centres (Rennes, and Nantes, both of which had over 40,000 in population). These were the administrative, educational and cultural centres of the Province.

The western half, Basse Bretagne, was almost a foreign country as far as the rest of France was concerned. The first language of most of its people was Breton, few of these were literate and most had minimal ability in French. It was poorer and more backward in most respects than its eastern half. St. Malo was the only town of any size (about 20,000 population). The port towns of Brest, L'Orient and St. Malo were islands of prosperity and cultural activity in an otherwise sea of stasis.

Our ancestors, who lived in the Gourin, Carhaix, Chateauneuf du Faou area were in the centre of this sea. It is almost certain that GJ and his children were reasonably fluent in Breton since it would have been the language in common daily use at the time and it would have been impossible for him to do his job without this knowledge.

The population of Brittany over the period was about 2 million or roughly 10% of the total population of France. This however fluctuated quite widely as famine, disease and epidemics swept through the land every 5 to 10 years. Its population increased rapidly towards the end of the XVII century, but went into steep decline in the final two decades of the Ancien Regime. The year in which GJJ left for Reunion (1740) was a particularly bad time in which, over a three year period, additional deaths removed about 100,000 from the population.

There was little net migration into Brittany, from either French or foreign sources. Most of the Bretons leaving their homeland went out to the French colonies in North America, the West Indes or the Indian Ocean. The few foreigners who came in did so for specialized reasons such as the mines or other skilled work for which there was no local expertise. Most of these were British, German or Dutch.

Social Organization :

Life in rural Brittany revolved around the Church and the Seigneurie, both of which narrowly circumscribed what the average Breton could do. Men married in their mid to late twenties and found partners within 20 kms. of their home. Women were usually a few years younger for their first marriage. A major problem was finding someone with whom they were not closely related. For those that were, the Church was prepared to issue waivers of consanguinity for a price. Most marriages did not last more than 10 years for the simple reason that one or other of the partners died within a decade of marriage. This was usually, but not always, the wife. The bereaved husband remarried quickly.

Most couples had about 5 children but one suspects this is an average of families like that of GJ who had over 10 and those that died within a few years of marriage. Infant mortality was high around 30% for the first year of life with another 20% succumbing before reaching adulthood. For abandoned babies taken in by religious institutions, the mortality was up to 90%.

Health care was rudimentary at best. The most common diseases were dysentery, typhus, typhoid and smallpox which swept through Brittany in a recurrent fashion,

spread by poor sanitation, squalor and ignorance of basic hygiene. Periodic epidemics of a more exotic nature such as plague arrived by ship at Breton ports and spread inland. The hospitals, which at the start of the period were no more than medieval alms houses, did increase in number and function and were supported by both the Church and State. Their efficacy in improving the health of their patients probably did not change much.

The health practitioners were doctors, surgeons and apothecaries, all of which were of variable education and quality. There were medical schools in Rennes and Nantes, but most obtained their education as apprentices to working physicians or surgeons, often on board French naval ships or with the army. Maternity care was largely in the hands of midwives, most of whom had no training other than experience. Their charges were low, but even so most peasants did not use their services.

The "nobility" in XVII century Brittany consisted of a thin crust of wealthy aristocrats with large land holdings underlain by a mass of relatively poor families who clung to the limited privileges of the noble class. In 1668, Colbert (Louis XIV principal minister) reformed the nobility thinning their ranks but at the turn of the century there were still some 4000 Breton families registered as such. They did however supply the Church and State with the employees essential for the control of the Province. The inheritance laws of the time gave the eldest son two-thirds of his father's estate; daughters, if they were lucky, got a dowry either for marriage or to enter a convent; younger sons had to try and get a job with the State or go into the Church. If a daughter married a non-noble, then they and their children lost any claim to nobility and were deemed to have returned to the peasant class.

The Seigneur controlled both the land and essential agrarian services such the mill, oven, and wine and cider presses. The peasants had to pay for the use of these services and also work a certain number of days each year for him without pay (la corvee), usually at the busy times in the agricultural year. The Seigneur also had the right to hunt, to keep pigeons and to his own seating in the parish church. On top of all this he was entitled to one-third of his tenants harvest regardless of how large or small this might be. An example of one peasant's economic state in 1675 is as follows.

A Jean Gallet worked about 4 hectares of land that produced about 100 livres of income. Of this 10% went to the Church, 5% to the Crown, the equivalent of another 10% to cover his seigneurial work obligation and a third of his crop to the Seigneur. This does not cover the indirect sales taxes he paid on alcohol, tobacco and taxed materials. It is not surprising that the imposition of additional taxes in 1675 finally sparked a peasant revolt.

The literacy was probably less then 10% in the population as a whole, higher in the towns than the country, but largely restricted to the very limited upper and middle classes. Female literacy was even lower. Schools were generally run by religious orders and the subjects considered to be of prime importance were religious in nature. For boys from towns such as Carhaix or Chateauneuf du Faou, secondary and post secondary education could only be had at schools or colleges in the larger towns such as St. Malo, Quimper, Rennes or Nantes. These would have been expensive for one such as GJ unless he had supplementary income from sources other than his job.

Political organization:

Brittany was not part of France until 1532; it became so in that year following the marriage of the Duchess of Brittany to the then French king. The only practical effect of this was that Bretons were exempt some taxes suffered by the rest of France and some minor degree of self government. The whole structure of government was in fact a means of levying and collecting taxes; "Les Etats" was a sort of unelected parliament that met every year as two way conduit between Brittany's power structure and the French Crown to decide how much would be raised in the next year and from what sources. The participants were from 40 principal Breton towns (of which Carhaix was one), clergy from the 9 bishoprics and an assortment of high nobles. It appeared to have been a major social event with excesses of eating and drinking on the public purse.

The basic tax was on each household, but there were also sales taxes on virtually everything that was sold in a traceable manner. Only the hated "gabelle" salt tax was not levied in Brittany. These taxes were highly regressive since they were paid mainly by the peasants and mercantile classes. By 1675 the total tax take for the Crown was about 5 million livres and it was estimated that roughly 20% of the average peasant income went to satisfy this demand. As mentioned earlier there were other demands on the average Breton's income from both local government and the church.

Subordinate to "Les Etats" was "Le Parlement". This was not a legislative body but a sort of court system. It was only used in major civil and criminal cases, ones that previously would have been tried in Paris. It met once a year for about a month either in Rennes, Vannes or Nantes. Beneath it were the inferior courts called "Presidiaux" which sat more often in the previously mentioned towns plus Quimper and Ploermel. Each of these courts had permanent employees paid for by the Crown.

Below these were the "Petites Juridictions Royale", of which there were a varying number covering the whole of Brittany. There were about 40 of these, which included Carhaix . These administrative districts were named Senechausses and included the surrounding countryside as well the principal town in each. They were in fact a form of local government as well a justice administration branch. Again there were permanent Crown paid employees for each of these entities head by the Senechal. GJ would have been one of these employees, unless he was in fact in the employ of "Matrise des eaux et forets", a separate Crown organization of a much narrower remit.

The positions in descending order of importance below the Senechal were Alloue, Bailli, Procureur, Notaire, Greffier, Huissier and Sergents. GJ had at various times the titles of Huissier and Greffier which indicates roughly what his position in society was. The latter two were part of the enforcement arm of the law and the Sergents had a reputation for brutality and were often attacked in the execution of their duties. Most crimes involved violence and drunkenness; penalties were equally harsh with capital punishment being the penalty for a wide variety of often trivial offenses.

In the towns, there was also a civil administration consisting of a mayor and councilors who were either appointed or elected by the local elite. What actually happened usually reflected the wishes of a small number of locally powerful individuals and had nothing to do with the broad wishes of the average citizen.

Virtually all of these positions whether in either legal or civil administrations were for sale. Their value fluctuated with the amount that could be extracted from the office as well as the nominal salary. One notable instance of the cost of an office being recorded was that of Sebastian Le Balp, who was one of the principal leaders of the Bonnets Rouge revolt of 1675. His father purchased him a position of Notaire for 900 livres in 1670, of which sum he was still indebted at his death in 1675.

Underlying all of these official government layers were the Breton nobility who owned most of the land. These were the Seigneurs of the siegneuries and who had a major impact in the life of the rural peasants since most of the latter owned no land and had to lease small plots from the land owner.

There were about 4000 seigneuries in Brittany, of which around 300 were owned by the Church. These legal structures were essentially left over from the feudal era and in which the local peasants were obligated to their Seigneur to provide labour ('la corvee"), a rent of part of their crops and a myriad of other minor conditions of life. Much of this was bitterly resented, the level of resentment being largely a function of how oppressively these obligations were applied.

Religion and the Church:

The authority of the Catholic church went well beyond religious matters and for the average peasant, it had more effect on his day to day life than any part of the secular administration. Brittany was divided into nine bishoprics; the bishops were nominally appointed by the Pope but the King could and did reject nominations he did not approve of. Most of the bishops were non-Breton, but some dioceses had Breton bishops such as Quimper with Charles du Liscoet (the brother of the infamous Yves) in the early 1600's.

Each diocese was divided into parishes that were sometimes further sub-divided into "treves". Each parish had a relatively elaborate personnel structure headed by the "Recteur" who may or may not have actually lived locally. In addition to the local parish clergy, there were numerous monasteries, convents and other religious institutions connected to the diocesan hierarchy. Despite the religious wars of the XVI century, the overwhelming majority of Bretons were Catholic and remained so through to the end of the Ancien Regime.

At the start of this period there were about 10,000 ordained priests in Brittany or about one per 200 of the population. Since there were some 1300 parishes in the Province there seem to have been too many priests for the places available. A mid XVI century reformation of the Catholic church to try and make the priesthood more educated and responsive to church control gradually reduced the number. Most bishoprics had a seminary of sorts, so it is likely that CAJ studied at either the one in St. Malo or Quimper. This education was not free, but if completed, it did provide a secure income once the priest became a Recteur of a parish.

The quality of these priests varied widely; some were presumably saintlike but others, to quote a 1700 opinion "were directed by debauched recteurs, veritable maniacs who terrorized their parishes". There was often friction between the parish priest and the local gentry, usually over land disputes or the exactions both sides took from the peasantry. An important function of these priests was to communicate the edicts of authority (both religious and secular) to their flock. This was typically done from the pulpit at Sunday mass when attendance was obligatory

Many religious offices were also bought and sold; their value being determined by the revenue that was associated with them. This revenue originated mostly from a 10% tithe that all peasant and town dwellers had to pay. Charges were also levied the services provided such as marriage, burials etc. The threat of excommunication presumably was enough to ensure payment.

The Church also was a large land holder, probably owning between 5 and 10% of the Province, most of which they rented out for others to work.

Industry:

The only industry in the area of inland Brittany around Carhaix were the lead/silver mines of Huelgoat and Poullaouen, both some 30 kms. to the north of this town. These probably had been worked intermittently since the Roman era but they shut down in 1533 as the flood of Spanish silver from the New World rendered them uneconomic. They were reactivated later in the XVII century, initially on a small scale by the local land owners. The major problem was that they were deep enough to suffer from periodic flooding. These mines were taken over in the XVIII century by investors from Paris who brought capital and new technology to them. One of the first British steam powered pumps imported into France was brought into use in 1740. Production peaked in 1779 when about 800 miners under German management produced 600 tons of lead and 2 tons of silver. At the time this was the second largest non-Crown employer in Brittany. Huge volumes of charcoal were required for both smelting and pumping and its consequent scarcity and high cost were responsible for the mines' decline. These mines were not liked by the local population since most of the benefits and profits left Brittany leaving pollution, denuded forests and low wage jobs for the miners. A XIX century photo attached below shows miners at work in one of these mines.

As the Greffier for the Huelgoat district, GJ would have had some contact with these mines from 1703 onwards.

Wars and Civil Strife:

With the end of the religious wars in 1598, there was remarkably little outside or even internal strife in Brittany until the Revolution in 1789. Compared to the rest of France, it was an island of calm. France's external wars had little impact beyond the occasional maritime raid by the British, Dutch or Spanish naval forces on Breton coastal towns. The only major revolt in the nearly two century period was the Bonnets Rouge rebellion of 1675, which, fortuitously at least in part, was centred around Carhaix/Gourin. This resulted in one of our ancestors being mentioned in historic records, namely the unfortunate Francois Milier for having his house attacked and his records burnt. More details of this revolt are commented on in its section.

Even this revolt had little impact on Breton life; from start to finish it took less than 6 months, it was brutally repressed and nothing came out of it that changed the lives of the peasant and working classes. There were other revolts, but in all cases they were small, isolated, disorganized and due to local causes triggered by famine and despair.

1675 Bonnets Rouge Revolt:

This account briefly touches on the underlying causes and its extent, but only looks

at the actual events that happened in and around Carhaix. GJ and his family were definitely not there at the time, but Beatrice Millier's family certainly was. GJ was a 15 year old boy living in Rouen and although he would have heard of this revolt, it would have had no effect on his life at the time.

Louis XIV became king of France in 1643 but took over direct rule of the nation as absolute monarch in 1661, using Colbert as his Minister of Finance. The latter was responsible to him for ever increasing sums of money to prosecute his foreign wars against Holland, Britain and Sweden. Brittany, in 1674, was relatively lightly taxed compared to the rest of France, so although a compromise taxed amount for Brittany was agreed by Les Etats in 1673, Colbert introduced three new taxes in 1674 without any advice to or agreement from the Bretons. These were on tobacco, on Papier Timbres (a stamp duty on legal transactions) and a tax on pewter vessels. Although only the first of these had any real impact on the poor, the popular perception was that this was the introduction of the hated "Gabelle" or tax on salt that the rest of France had to pay. Because the other two taxes did impact the artisan and petite noblesse, there was for once some common ground between the peasants and the next level up of society.

The revolt began in Rennes and Nantes in April 1675, followed by riots in Guingamp in May. The Governor of Brittany was the Duke of Chaulnes , a Frenchman to who m the Bretons had given the name of "Fat Pig". He contained these uprisings in June and had suppressed them by the end of the summer. Loss of life and property damage were comparatively minor.

The rural revolt did not start until early June with manifested itself as attacks on officials in the Quimper area resulting in a few deaths and injuries. These attacks continued to escalate with arson against property and possessions of the seigneurial class being added to the list of crimes of the Bonnets Rouge, the name by which these rural revolutionaries became to be known. From Chateaulin (near Quimper), the unrest spread north and east reaching Gourin, Landerneau, Carhaix and Poullaoeun by late June and early July.

Our ancestor's moment in history arrived on Sunday June 30 in Gourin when, after attending mass at the parish church (where GJ married some 22 years later), 300 armed men and women went to Francois Millier's house to sack it and burn all his papers. Having done so, they then moved on to the Manoir de Keribiguet looking for its aristocratic owner to harass or kill.

Since Francois was a tax collector, the objective of the attack on his house was to destroy his records that they presumably hoped would remove their future tax liabilities. Nothing is said of what happened to Francois or his family; Jacquette, his wife, was about aged 40 at the time and her 8th. child, Beatrice, was under 2 years old.

The peak of the revolt occurred in mid July when several thousand peasants loosely led by a defrocked notary named Sebastian Le Balp took control of the Chateau du Kergoet which was owned by the Marquis de Trevigny. They sacked the building killing several of the family retainers. Le Balp then proceeded to gather reinforcements from neighbouring villages and found at least several cannons. Some priests also joined their band. They then moved north to the Chateau du Tymeur near Poullaouen that was then the home of Marquise du Tymeur. This lady was married to a soldier with the title of Marquis de Montgaillard. From here, Le Balp's intention was to seize the port of Morlaix on the Channel coast, effect a junction with

the Dutch fleet and thus be able to stand up to the professional troops of de Chaulnes.

Montgaillard however tricked Le Balp into abandoning this enterprise, but was held prisoner by the latter in the chateau for several days. Eventually somehow he managed to kill Le Balp and avoid the wrath of the latters' followers. The rebellion collapsed shortly thereafter and de Chaulnes then swept through the area and savagely punished all who were or may have been implicated in the revolt. Years later penalties for the revolt were still being exacted from the unfortunate peasants. Estimates vary from hundreds to thousands of peasants hung, broken on the wheel or burnt. Montgaillard did not long survive his military success and was murdered later in 1675 by assassins in the pay of de Chaulnes for what seem like obscure reasons.

AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF BRETON LIFE IN THE EARLY XIX CENTURY

Adolphus Trollope, the older brother of Anthony Trollope, was 27 years old when he first visited Brittany in 1837 for brief tour. Two years later, accompanied by a 34 year old French artist named Auguste Hervieu, he spent the entire summer walking through part of Normandy and most of Brittany. At that time, when Victoria had just acceded to the British throne and the industrial revolution was well under way, Brittany, and in particular, rural western Brittany (Basse Bretagne, the western half of the Province) was still almost unchanged from a century or more earlier. Although steamships were starting to appear at Breton ports, all but the principal highways were little more than dirt tracks, the only public transport was in the form of slow, uncomfortable and erratic coaches. For this reason, Trollope and his companion decided to walk most of the way, using coaches only between principal towns. There were no railways.

His objective was to write about the last "untouched" group of Celtic survivors in Europe as he rightly supposed that, within a few decades, modern life would wipe away forever the rural culture of Brittany, homogenizing it with the rest of France. In this he succeeded, and his book, "A Summer in Brittany" was published in 1840. I have not attempted to paraphrase this book, using it only to illustrated what the life of a rural Breton was in 1839, and by extension, probably what it was like in 1739 or even 1639. A series of lithographs from the book made from Hervieus' drawings vividly illustrate just how different Brittany was from mainstream Europe at that time. These are attached to this account.

His route started in Normandy at Le Havre and then wandered through the Bessin (Falaise, Caen and Bayeux) to the Cotentin (St. Lo, Coutances, Granville and Mont St. Michel) before entering Haute Bretagne (the eastern half of the Province) near Dinan. None of this Normandy tour was very remarkable, but a few of his comments are worth noting. He reports that even in 1839, the English were already buying up French coastal property setting in motion a habit that continues to this day. Other Brits were setting up little colonies in inland towns mainly because it was much cheaper to live there than in England. Then as now, most locals did not like this as it raised their cost of living. After his visit to the Bayeux Tapestry, he wrote a scathing report as to how its keepers treated the 800 year old cloth like a roll of cheap textiles, and he forecasted that, if this abuse continued, it would not last very much

longer. He also reminisced on the bloody history of the area and hoped that this would not repeat itself any more. Little did he know that in 105 years time there would be another bout of bloodshed and destruction that was probably worse than all that had gone before as the D-Day landings swept across the Cotentin Peninsula.

His chosen route in Brittany seems to have been guided at least partially by his desire to see architectural and historical sites that had been reported by French authors with whom he was familiar, notably a M. de Fremenville who had written account of Breton antiquities in 1832. From Dinan they traveled SW though Collinee, Loudeac, La Cheze, Rohan and on to Pontivy before turning north to Mur, Corlay, Guingamp, St. Brieuc and Paimpol on the Channel coast. These travels took him to the end of Vol.I; Vol. II took them along the north coast through Morlaix, with a side trip down to Carhaix and Huelgoat and then on to Brest and Cap St. Mathieu before turning south to Quimper and Pont l'Abbe. The final leg of their trip was SW through L'Orient, Auray, Carnac and Vannes after which they returned by coach to Normandy and home via l'Havre.

While there are numerous interesting anecdotes and vivid descriptions of their travels, I will only comment on his general impressions of the Bretons and on his journeys in and around Carhaix where GJ had lived some 140 years before.

The Breton Character:

Trollpe's overall impression of the Celtic Bretons was their absolute foreignness and how totally unaffected they were by events since Brittany became part of France in 1532. The attached group of Hervieu's watercolours and sketches illustrate this far more than any words can describe. At that time in Basse Bretagne, the majority the population of rural areas were ethnic Bretons and most of these spoke little or no French. Most too had little or no education and all were devout Catholics in a priest ridden society. Their entire culture was intimately bound up with their religion and their preoccupation with preparing for the afterlife. To illustrate his astonishment, I quote: " This people, who for 300 years have constituted an important part of France, have not only preserved their language, character and habits that are totally different from any other part of the nation, but seem to have remained stationary and unchanged amid the onward progress around them". To him, it was like walking into a past century.

The second factor that impressed him was the pervasive extent of drunkenness amongst the Bretons. Not only did they drink to excess on festive occasions but on every occasion; whole families would be drunk together including quite small children. Cider was the drink of choice since there was no other that the average peasant could afford. All villages, down to the very smallest, had at least one "buchon" and often several where the only drink that could be had was a cider described as tasting of "muddy water and vinegar". His final acid comment on this Breton characteristic was that they were even worse than the British, and that, apart from religion, it was their only source of entertainment.

Ethnic Bretons were totally unmistakable; short, dark, swarthy with the men dressed in baggy breeches, colourful jackets, huge black hats and shoulder length hair and the women in gay coloured ankle length dresses and distinctive head coverings that were often particular to each village or area. Hygiene was not an important part of their culture; holy water played a more important part in their lives than the more conventional sort.

Housing:

In the larger towns they stayed at inns of variable, but usually low quality. However for the most part they found accommodation in what was the XIX century equivalent to a B&B, places with a few extra rooms and where meals were served to travelers. This enabled them to see how rural Bretons actually lived. A typical house consisted of a large living room with a fireplace. In it would be two or more "lit clos", four poster beds covered on the top and with sliding panels on the sides making it a small room within the room. One of these was used by the husband and wife with a cradle suspended from it if there was a baby; all children were put in the others. A large chest between the beds served as the seating arrangement. All their other possessions were hung from the ceiling. He did however comment that most beds were better the he would get at comparable inns in Britain.

In such places they were often only charged for the meals they ate and nothing for the room. Cleanliness and washing facilities were rudimentary at best although the only time they were bothered by bed bugs was at a hotel in one of the large towns.

Food:

His opinion of Breton food was low; most meals were cooked in an ocean of fat. However, the peasants were unfailingly friendly, inviting them in for meals, drinks of milk and cider. He also did not like the crepes which were an important item of the locals diet.

Religion:

His view of Breton Catholicism was that it preyed on the ignorance and superstition of the people; each town, village and hamlet had it own church and a priest who was barely more educated than his parishioners. They almost always had its own patron saint, most of whom were unknown to the Catholic Church at large. The peasantry were obsessed with purgatory and how to minimize their stay in that mythical place. High on their list was to have a son in the priesthood to issue constant prayers on their behalf. So too was to be buried in the churchyard close to the church. When this was full, coffins were disinterred, the skulls and some bones put in small boxes and hung on a building frame next to the church. One of Hervieu’s sketches illustrates this.

Priests were often used a doctor substitutes by sick Bretons since the former provided their prayers more cheaply and used "saints relics" as a non invasive form of medication and surgery. They nevertheless expected cash donations for these services. He reports one anecdote concerning a then recent cholera epidemic in Lannion in which a priest ordered an old woman to remove the foetus from a dying woman so that he could baptize it.

An illustration of this religiosity is an account of a "pardon" they attended near Morlaix. These pardons was a religious fetes and these seemed to occur somewhere in their vicinity every weekend during their travels. This particular one was at the village of St. Jean du Doigt and is representative of the seriousness with which the Bretons took their religion.

The finger in question was supposed to be that of St. John the Baptist, and it was not just any finger, but the forefinger of the right hand that John had pointed to Christ on the banks of the Jordan all those centuries ago. It had arrived in Brittany from

Normandy in 1437 under improbably miraculous circumstances and as a result the local clergy built a church to house it. Not withstanding the claim of Malta that it also had this very same finger, the Breton version since had acquired a reputation for curing diseases of the eye.

On the day of the Pardon, Trollope and Hevieu walked about 12 kms. from Morlaix to the church in a crowd of pilgrims that grew ever more dense as they reached their destination. The pilgrims were all dressed in their local finery, many of which appeared to have come from over 100 kms. away from the event. A large number of booths were set up in the grounds selling "all manner of Romish trumpery", a huge quantity of candles and food and drink.

The crowds first circulated around the church, many on their bare knees, praying, saying rosaries and donating alms to a ring of mendicants on the outside. These suffered from every imaginable form of deformity, disease and mutilation imaginable, all displayed to maximum effect. Trollope was horrified. The pilgrims, after making several of these external circuits, then entered the church and attempted to get to the alter rail, where the priest was applying the finger (contained in a small casket) to the eyes of the faithful. After this application, the pilgrims dropped a money offering into a trough that ran the length of the rail and then moved away. Such was the crowd that the priest was literally running up and down the line to satisfy the demand.

As night fell all participants formed into a procession to a bonfire on the hill above the village, after which they mostly returned to drink and dance into the small hours of the night. Trollope and Hervieu returned on foot to Morlaix.

Trollope in Carhaix/Huelgoat:

I have covered his stay in this are in somewhat more detail since it is an eyewitness account of the are in which GJ lived a century and half before. They had decided to take a week's side trip walking south from Morlaix to Huelgoet to visit the lead mine there, then move on to Carhaix before returning to their starting point via Mount St. Michel (the highest point in Brittany and not to be confused with the Normandy island of the same name), Pleyben, Sizun and Landivisiau.

They walked most of this distance over moorland tracks and sometimes just navigating across country by compass. He comments on the fact that it was a scene of desolation with no farms and only a few miserable villages. As they approached Huelgoat the scene remained the same but the hillsides were now strewn with immense rocks. At Huelgoat, they obtained two rooms in the only inn in town which although was quite dirty had the saving grace of clean sheets on the beds. They ordered a breakfast of steak and trout, but after watching being prepared were unable to eat much of it.

At dinner that night they met four mine employees including a German metallurgist and spent a drunken evening in their company. The following day they toured both the surface and underground workings of this mine and commented on the primitive nature of the work force. Production appeared to be similar to that of the preceding century at around 700 tonnes of lead but less than one tonne of silver. He did not say how many people were employed, but over 100 women were at work on surface picking rock from the ore with two shifts of underground miners each working 12 hours per day, seven days a week.This mine may have still been the largest industrial enterprise in Brittany's interior and probably had over 1000 employees.

However, it was now owned by Paris investors who apparently had outings to visit their investment in the summer complete with wives, children and various social gatherings.

The German metallurgist fed them a meal of bread, sausage and brandy before their underground trip. Their visit coincided with the shift change and he commented on the spectral appearance of the miners materializing out to the dusk in their drab garb, long flowing hair and solemn silent demeanor. The actual visit involved being lowered between levels in an open bucket and seeing stopes where both the lead ore and a silver rich vein were being mined. Other than getting dirty, they suffered no ill effects and made few comments on the actual mining operation.

At that time there was a lead smelter at Poullaouen some 10 kms. to the east but they decided not to visit it and instead walk on to Carhaix the following day. They planned to return the same day to Huelgoat, fearing that there would be no accommodation to be found in the former town.

Regrettably, he did not have a whole lot to report on Carhaix as it was then. What he did say was generally negative both about the town and the surrounding countryside. His description of the approach was that the road lay through bleak, uncultivated country, wild and dreary; the town was a relic of the Middle Ages with unpaved streets and populated by inhabitants living unchanged for centuries. To quote him: " .. a deep still pool in the ocean of life in which the storm of revolution has passed over without ruffling its surface." What he did talk about was its history and one (possibly the only?) of its famous sons, a Napoleonic soldier by the name of La Tour d'Auvergne who was born there in 1743. He also had some nice things to say about ancient houses with elaborate carved wooden exteriors.

On the following day they walked across country to Mont St. Michel , passing through a hamlet called Brennilis which consisted of a beautiful chapel in disrepair and a few miserable hovels. Wanting to see the inside of this chapel, they were directed to the keeper of the key, a woman who lived in a one roomed house in total squalor, one half of which was occupied by a cow and the other in which she lived with a small, sick child that was lying inside a drawer of a chest. This scene had a marked effect on him since he mentions several times later in the book. A side note on this location: an experimental nuclear reactor was built by EDF in 1962 in Brennlis which operated for about 18 years before being shut down and scheduled for dismantling at a cost of E 500 million.

The rest of their Carhaix side trip was uneventful. They made several attempts to buy church artifacts (which even then was illegal) but were unsuccessful, not because the priest and mayor involved had scruples about this, but because both of them feared the wrath of their parishioners. They attended another Pardon at Pleyben which was similar to that at St. Jean du Doigt but that the costumes of the peasants were even more colourful and distinctive. One of the attached plates (#10) show a prosperous young woman riding side saddle on a horse and a possible suitor on their way to this Pardon.

Their overall opinion of the Cornouaillais, the inhabitants of inland Finistere, was almost entirely negative, which he summarized as the greatest degree of barbarism, filth, ignorance, misery, superstition and prejudice imaginable. Elsewhere he did temper this opinion by saying that they were also kind, hospitable and helpful to strangers such as themselves, although the language gap sometimes made this hard to recognize.

The rest of their trip tended to hug the coast as they progressed around Finistere through Brest, south to Quimper, and then into Morbihan finishing in Vannes before returning to England via L'Havre.

The following ten Hervieu drawings convey more than any amount of writtenl description the true nature of XIX century life in Brittany.

Neolithic menhir near Brest

Plouarzel menhir today

Menhir is outside the village of Plouarzel and is over 12 m. tall. It has been Christianized by placing a cross on its top

The Huelgoat Silver Mine XIX Century

SUNDAY MASS AT QUIMPER CATHEDRAL

Rich old woman in a sedan chair with footman and a prosperous peasant couple standing outside the cathedral after attending Sunday Mass

Rich unmarried girl and a poor suitor en route to the Pardon at Pleyben

Street scene in Morlaix

Showing two peasants one rich and one poor with a beggar woman importuning both

Breton peasant in Sunday best clothes

A PEASANT BRIDE

A young Finistere peasant girl in her wedding finery

Breton inn kitchen at Saint Juvat

Market day at Collinee

Priest and parishioners at Corlay.

Priest is wearing "bragon bras" under his soutane

Peasants at graveside of relatives

Exhumed bones in boxes on chapel walls to make room in churchyard for more recent burials

CHAPTER III - MAURITIUS / REUNION

INTRODUCTION

The decision by Guillaume Joseph Jorre de St. Jorre (GJJ) to leave Brittany in 1740 was really only possible because of the existence of the French East Indian company, known at that time as the Compagnie des Indes. Due to this fact, it is necessary to give a fairly detailed account of its history to set the background for life in the Indian Ocean islands of Reunion and Mauritius under French rule in the XVIII century. GJJ was essentially an economic migrant who, like so many others, made the decision that however uncertain life was in those colonies, it appeared more attractive than staying at home in rural Finistere as one of the younger sons of impoverished minor gentry.

COMPAGNIE DES INDES

First steps:

The French arrived late on the scene of world maritime exploration. Following the initial voyages of discovery of the Spanish and Portuguese explorers at the end of the XV century, only the Dutch, Portuguese and English made serious efforts to trade in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Henri IV made the first attempt in 1603 with a Crown funded expedition to trade into India and the Far East. Several voyages were made but none was financially successful. The only real result was the establishment of a tenuous colony on the east shore of Madagascar called Fort Dauphin, which as events turned out, was a major detriment to subsequent efforts.

Compagnie des Indes Orientales:

In 1664, Colbert, Louis XIV's able finance minister, resurrected the enterprise but this time as a joint stock company of which the King held a 20% interest with the remainder held by the French aristocracy. This company, called Compagnie des Indes Orientales was granted a 50 year monopoly of French trade in the entire world excluding only Atlantic nations, and was instructed to take possession of Madagascar and adjoining islands, establish trading posts in India, conquer, colonize and religiously educate whatever other lands it could subdue.

Colbert was fully aware that France was woefully ill equipped for such a venture. At the time it had only 400 to 500 vessels capable of ocean travel as compared to Holland which had at least 20 times this number. His first action was to recruit experienced Dutch managers and buy material and ships from the same source. His strategy was first to re-establish and strengthen the Madagascar colony and then explore and trade into the east coast of Africa and the Persian Gulf.

Four ships, with about 500 crew and passengers, were assembled in Brest and sailed in March 1665. They arrived at Fort Dauphin in July 1665 to find only 60 survivors in desperate straights. Some of the ships went on to the Persian Gulf to trade, but ultimately only one made it back to France and it was captured by an English privateer off the Channel Islands in July 1666.

Undismayed by this dismal result, a second much larger expedition of 10 ships and 2000 men was planned under the command of Marquis de Mondevergue and left France in the spring of 1666 and after a voyage fraught with troubles arrived a year later , only to find once again the little colony at Fort Dauphin was on the verge of collapse. Three ships then proceeded to India where they were finally both able to trade for a valuable cargo and to successfully return to France. The venture staggered on with Mondevergue in charge from Fort Dauphin until 1669 when he was unfairly recalled in disgrace by Colbert, thus setting the precedent for the next 100 years in which, the few able leaders that France produced for its Indian Ocean enterprises were inevitably sacked, imprisoned or executed for their efforts.

In Dec. 1668, Louis XIV and Colbert had a reappraisal of the entire venture and concluded that out of the 19 vessels dispatched none had yet returned with anything saleable (the first actual vessel that did return was in Feb. 1669), and that the Madagascar colony was a mistake. All the money raised had been spent and the company was deeply in debt.

The next major fleet to be assembled was essentially a military expedition of 9 ships and 2600 men under the command of Blanquet de la Haye, an autocrat who soon merited the hatred of both his own men and the indigenous people he came in contact with. It left in March 1670 and arrived at Fort Dauphin in November of the same year. He evacuated the colony to Reunion, but because some of these colonists did not want to leave, and after waging war on the local population in a brutal manner, he then abandoned the settlement without adequate food, weapons or ammunition, thus setting the scene for the massacre of the remaining colonists in August 1674.

War on Holland was declared by Britain and France in 1672 and de la Haye spent the next three years in intermittent naval and land battles with the Dutch in India and Ceylon before returning to Reunion in 1674. Over this period, the company decided to create the port of Lorient as being more secure than any of the French Channel ports. It then became the focus for all French company operations in both building and equipping its fleets. By 1675, despite a few successful voyages and the payment of a few small dividends, the company was in debt and its capital compromised.

Efforts were made to fund individual ships from both the Crown and private traders resources, so operations staggered on in an unprofitable manner.

The Dutch war ended in 1678, but even this did not help much. After Colbert died, the company was recapitalized in 1685, largely by the Crown and although it had fair success for a few years, it still lost money on operations and increased its debt. By this time, it had two Indian trading posts, Swat on the west coast and Pondichery on the east coast, a way station on Reunion and a major port and shipbuilding complex at Lorient. It was dispatching 4 to 5 ships a year and most of these returned with merchantable cargoes.

All this changed in 1690 with the start of the War of the Augsbourg League in which France and allies were now fighting Holland and England, both of whom had stronger naval forces active in the Indian Ocean. Some ships were dispatched each year with mediocre results; several of these were captured by the Dutch and English, others carried largely "private" cargoes and much of this material was actually that seized by French privateers from enemy ships. Although the company made some money on all of this through its monopoly of sales in France, its debts slowly climbed, and

by the end of the war in 1697, it owed 5 million livres and had to borrow a further 1.5 million livres in 1698 to equip its annual fleet sailing.

Yet another war started in 1701 (the War of the Spanish Succession) which made things worse. Eventually, it was unable to borrow any more money and then started to both licence out its trading privileges to traders, most of whom operated out of St. Malo. It also sold off ships and equipment. Apparently many of these private ventures were successful making the St. Malo merchants very rich and at least contributing something to the company to retire its debts.

Compagnie Perpetuelle des Indes (the "Company"):

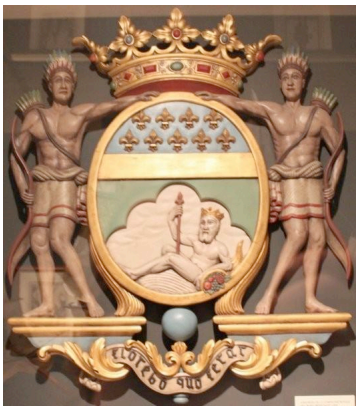
John Law was a Scotsman, who after fleeing a charge of murder in Britain (for killing a man in a duel), wound up in Paris and succeeded in persuading the French Crown to let him reorganize all of the French overseas trading companies into one entity called Compagnie Perpertuelle des Indes. Its intended function was supposed to quickly recoup the huge debts that France had incurred during the War of the Spanish Succession. After a few years of wild speculation, this collapsed in 1720, and, out of the remnants, a trading company, Compagnie des Indes, survived and actually went on to make operating profits.

By 1723, it was regularly sending out 10 to 12 ships per year from Lorient to its trading ports in India (Pondichery, Calicut and Hoogly) and to China at the international port of Canton, using first Reunion, and after 1735, Mauritius, as way stations for the repair, re-supply and recovery of its ships and their crews.

The Company also controlled the French slave trading operations out of Sierra Leone and Senegal and had a diminishing role in the operation of France's Louisiana colony. The latter that ended in 1731.

By 1740, its Far East trade was considerable, although still only half that of British East India Company. There was increasing rivalry between the these competing companies within India, with both sides pursuing an active role in Indian politics to the extent that a private war between Compagnie des Indes and the East India Company and their respective local allies started in 1751. This became general in 1756 with the outbreak of the 7 Years War. When this ended in 1763 with the French defeat in India, its fortunes declined, and by 1770, during which year it lost its monopoly trading privileges, the Compagnie des Indes was effectively dead.

Louis Colbert



Compagnie des Indes Orientales
Coat of Arms

Mahe de la Bourdonnais

Pierre Poivre

Company Operations

For about 45 years from the early 1720's, the Company was very active and even profitable. It consolidated its French operations for both shipping and sales in Lorient which became a company town where most of its ships were built and repaired. Over this period, it constructed around 300 ships of which a third were large ocean going craft of 600 to 1500 tons displacement. These vessels rarely lasted more than 10 years, and since the average round trip time was 20 months, most made only four or five trips before being scrapped or sunk. The model on the following page shows a typical ocean going company ship from this period. It would be about 400 to 500 tons displacement with 20 cannons.

Manpower:

This was divided into commercial, marine and military employees. The first group was surprisingly small, totaling no more than about 300 in administrative staff with 100 in India and China, 50 on Reunion and Mauritius with the balance in France. This elite group entered service at age 18 and spent several years in Paris or Lorient before being sent out to the East. The marine group again had an officer corps of about 300, with up to 10 times that number of sailors. The military group was around 1500 officers and men with often large native armies being recruited in India to supplement this.

What year GJJ entered the employ of the company is not known but he would have been about 28 when he left Lorient in 1739/1740 employed as a "Notaire". He could

have been already a company employee for 7 years, but on the other hand, he may have learned his trade at home in Finistere and been recruited to fill a vacancy.

As mentioned earlier, many of the ships were built at Lorient, but some were also ordered from northern European ports in Germany, Holland and Britain. Crew sizes ranged from 120 to 300 for 600 to 1500 ton ships, giving the Company a requirement of 1000 to 2000 sailors per year. Almost all of these came from Brittany and some of them were "volunteers" who chose service on a Company ship as an alternative to being drafted into the French Navy. Wages were less than in privately owned vessels, but each crew member had the right to bring some trade goods (in both directions) which could double their wage.

The officer corps were an elite group since they needed both sailing and commercial skills. Most also came from Brittany and often from seafaring families, starting their career as young as age 9 as a "mousse" before moving up the ladder to Ensign, 2nd. Lieutenant, Lieutenant, 2nd. Captain and Captain, usually reaching that rank by about age 40. Most retired or were dead by age 55.

Their wages were also low by private standards but they were entitled to substantial trading privileges which could quadruple their income. There was widespread abuse of this privilege, some of which was caught and punished.

Voyages:

The ships passages were determined by prevailing winds. They left France in November to March, swung west by Brazil before turning south around Cape of Good Hope to pick up the SW monsoon (April to July) to take them across the Indian Ocean to India or China, stopping for about a month in Reunion or Mauritius whose whole function was to repair or refit the ships and bring the crew back to a semblance of health since by then scurvy would have appeared. They then sailed on India or China.

Lorient Waterfront

Lorient / Port Royal Harbour

The Harbour from Port Royal

The return voyage was again determined by the Indian Ocean monsoon, in this direction being the NE monsoon which blew from December to March. It was considered critical to round the Cape of Good Hope by May to avoid the worst of the Southern Hemisphere winter and to be in France in time for the company's annual sale in October. Overlaying this overall timetable was the threat of hurricanes in the southern Indian Ocean whose season ran from November to April. Ships which could not make this window often simply stayed in Mauritius until July or August.

Conditions on board were primitive at best. The ships carried rations for about 18 months. The food was almost entirely flour, grain, salt meat, beans, wine and brandy. A sailor's daily ration was 2 lbs. of bread, ½ lb. salt meat, ¼ lb. beans and a pint of wine. There were two classes of ration, the captain's table which had more variety and that for everyone else. The sick were given some extra rations and medicinal food that may or may not have had any benefit. Whether GJJ made the captain's table on his outward voyage would be interesting to find out.

The outward voyages in cramped, crowded, damp and dirty conditions were not only breeding grounds for disease but also for animosity between the passengers. The latter often blossomed into feuds that long outlasted the voyages themselves.

The average mortality for a round trip voyage was 15% of which most was due to sickness or accident, the principal diseases being yellow fever, smallpox, typhus,

dysentery and scurvy. Less than 2% of these deaths were from combat. Most accidents were related to ship wreck; around 7% of all company vessels were lost this way, often on entering or leaving port or waiting outside for entry.

Piracy and Privateers:

The "golden age" of piracy was in the Caribbean during the XVII century, but by the end of that century, the actions by the navies of the major European powers had made this trade unrewarding for pirates. Those who had avoided capture and execution then moved to the Indian Ocean which was considered to be a less hazardous place to operate. The early part of the XVIII century saw the effective end of straight piracy which probably terminated with the execution of La Buse (his actual name was Olivier Levasseur) in Reunion in 1730. We actually have a genetic inheritance of German or more likely Dutch pirate blood, donated by Marie Anne Calvert, GJJ's wife. This lady's grandfather, Heinrich Wilan was a reformed pirate who came ashore in Reunion in the late XVII century, married a women from Madagascar named Jeanne Royer.

Privateering however continued throughout this century and into the next, ending only with Napoleon's final defeat in 1815. The almost continual wars between European powers ensured that there were legal as well as illegal ships plying the Indian Ocean preying on whatever traffic of the opposing nations they could find and adding yet another hazard to the employees of the company in traveling to and from their place of work. The marriage of one of JFM I' s daughters (Marie Corantine

Model of XVIII Century Compagnie des Indes Ship

Olivette Jorre de St. Jorre) to a renowned privateer Jean Francois Houdoul, who operated out of the Seychelles from 1795 to 1803, provides one of the few instances in which, if only in a minor way, one of our relatives actually entered the history books.

Nature of Company Trade:

The cargoes shipped out of France were mainly cloth of various types but some 50% of all cargo space was used by stores of food and drink for both the voyage out and the return. A significant part of the trading economics was the arbitrage of gold and silver between France and the Far East; in China the value ratio was 1:5 whereas in Europe it was 1:12. Thus outgoing ships picked up silver coins in Portugal for which trade goods were bought at a favourable rate in India and China. This imbalance was a direct result of the vast amounts of silver that flooded into Spain from Mexico, Peru and Bolivia from the XVI century onwards.

In the Far East, the primary materials traded were spices (mainly pepper and cinnamon), coffee, tea, drugs, fabrics (mainly silk and cotton), fine china and porcelain plus "curiosities". After 1720, coffee was grown on Reunion and provided the only direct source of cargo from the two islands for France. Some of the material included in the curiosities group were shells and exotic woods that were used directly in the African slave trade.

Once landed in Lorient, the incoming cargoes were subject to a web of bureaucratic processing since some of these competed with French domestic products and all were subject to a variety of taxes. Annual sales took place every October and buyers from France and Switzerland flooded into the town for the two week sales period. Most of the material purchased was then trans-shipped to elsewhere in France or Europe. There was at the time a lively tea smuggling industry into Britain where most of the tea entering France eventually wound up. The period of company sales in Lorient was the high point of the town's social season.

From 1725 through to about 1760 the trade was generally profitable for the Company, but overall economic returns did not exceed 5% during this period. As the century wore on it became less so as competition between European traders drove up trade goods prices in the Far East and the over-supply of the same materials in Europe drove down the prices for which they could be sold.

As the 1760's wore on, the Company's economics became progressively worse until 1769 when it was put into bankruptcy and its assets and possessions were taken over by the French Crown. As Reunion had almost been abandoned by the Company when it moved its administration to Mauritius in 1735, the state of this island was in poor shape. A poignant report made by an inspector sent out from France at the time stated that the colony had been ignored for 20 years and it had neither hospitals, barracks, ships or fortifications, just some abandoned cannons without shot or powder and an administration fallen into ruin.

Life in Lorient:

Although GJJ may have simply just passed through Lorient in 1739 or 1740, it is more likely that he was a Company employee in some clerical function for a number of years before he was sent out to Reunion. It is therefore of interest as to what life was like in that town over the period 1730 to 1740. This also coincided with a period of rapid growth for Lorient from a shanty town supporting Company operations

across the bay in Port Louis, to its centre of world activities. It reached its maximum size around the end of the 1750's when its population was over 18,000.

It was from the start a company town with all positions of any importance being appointed by company management. Most of the building was of poor quality and little attention was paid to the basics requirements of water and sanitation. It made provision for its actual operations but left all private structures to fend for themselves. Unsurprisingly, epidemics of various diseases were common.

It was a working class town, predominately Breton in origin with over 60% of company employees being involved in the construction or repair of ships. In 1737, there were 3000 on the payroll, but the majority of these were day labourers paid from L 15 to 35 per month. Although it was described as a "second Carthage", it was not wealthy, with most of the wealth that passed through was going on to elsewhere. After 1770, private traders were allowed to operate in and out of Lorient which resulted in some of these people becoming very wealthy. This produced a corresponding increase in the wealth of the town.

The Company and the French Navy provided their own medical services and had hospitals for their sick and injured. This probably was not much of a benefit given the state of medical knowledge at the time.

The social life enjoyed by the inhabitants depended on what social class they were from. There were up to 300 bars in the town at which the working class played cards and bowls and of course got drunk before going on to one of the many brothels that were also available. On Sundays there were bull fights and dances. There must also have been many churches but general accounts of the time do not make much mention of these.

The upper classes either entertained in their houses or went to billiard establishments that catered to them. Theatre came to Lorient in the mid XVIII century but there were usually only enough patrons during the October sales season to make it worthwhile for the visiting stage companies to put on plays or events. A theatre was finally built in 1780 as the level of prosperity increased.

The town was generally lawless with robberies and murders being frequent despite harsh penalties.

THE VOYAGE OUT

Looking at the period 1739 to 1740 there are five ships that GJJ could have been on. These are:

Amphitrite	(600 tons, 30 guns, Captain: Bertrand des Chesnay)
Duc d'Anjou	(500 tons, 24 guns, Captain: Louis du Dezert)
Griffon	(400 tons, 20 guns, Captain: Jacoble Roux de Touffreville)
Hercule	(650 tons, 28 guns, Captain: Louis Aubin du Plessis)
Heron	(410 tons, 22 guns, Captain: Jean d'Arquistade)

As the first two appear to have been scrapped in 1739, the former in Lorient in July and the latter in Mauritius in the same month of that year, it appears that he probably traveled in one of the latter three ships. The *Griffon* and the *Hercule* both

left Lorient in April 1740 with the *Heron* following behind them in July of the same year. Assuming that he was already working in Lorient, he would have been assigned a berth on one of these three vessels. If he was lucky it would have been the *Hercule*. In 1739, this ship had been built and commissioned in Lorient and was sailing on its first voyage to the Indian Ocean. Its future was not so happy as it was captured by the Dutch 5 years later.

The other two boats, the *Griffon* and the *Heron* were German built, both constructed in Hamburg in 1731 and were thus almost 10 years old and nearing the end of their useful life. The *Griffon* was in fact scrapped in Mauritius in February 1741 after its fourth and last voyage. The *Heron* lasted at least one more voyage before it too was captured by the British in 1745 near Louisbourg in Canada. Both were older, smaller and probably less safe and less comfortable than the *Hercule*, so I am assuming that it was on this boat that GJJ embarked in March or April 1740, never to return again to France.

I briefly researched the three captains of these ships; each of them seemed to have been relatively affluent. De Touffreville receives the most attention from history. He married in 1733, and was in command of a slave ship *(La Valeur*, 360 tons) on a slaving voyage from Guinea to Haiti in 1738/1739 carrying 500 slaves of which 470 survived and producing a gross profit of 500,000 livres. This ship returned to Lorient in August 1739 so his captaincy of the *Griffon* must have been his next command.

Du Plessis gets little mention; he bought an expensive country estate in 1745, and then died in 1767, leaving a widow with a 300 livre state pension that she was still drawing in 1790.

Jean d'Arquistade's only claim to fame was that either his father or brother, a Rene d'Arquistade, was Mayor of Nantes for several years in the 1740's.

Although it is unlikely that any accounts exist of what his actual voyage was like, it probably was no different from that of a later famous French author named Bernadin de Saint Pierre who made the same voyage 28 years later in 1768 and wrote about it in an eloquent manner in his book "Journey to Mauritius" that was published in 1773. As this is an eye witness account by a talented writer I have given it a few paragraphs of its own.

Journey to Mauritius of Bernadin de Saint Pierre:

Bernadin was an interesting character who had a background in some ways similar to GJJ. He was born in 1737 to an impoverished family in Le Havre, Normandy. They had aspirations to being nobility but no proof of this connection. Their "de Saint Pierre" surname suffix was probably as genuine or bogus as our "de Saint Jorre".

At the age of 12 as a "mousse", he journeyed to Martinique with an uncle who was a ship's captain trading out of Le Havre. He did however receive a good education and graduated from a prestigious military college (L'Ecole des Ponts et Chaussees) in 1760 and joined the French Army as an Ingenieur du Roi. What he did over the next 5 years was to travel extensively in Europe moving from France to Malta, Amsterdam, Russia, Poland, Germany, Austria before winding up penniless in Paris in 1765. Exactly what his job was in these travels is not clear, but at least for part of the time he was a mercenary spy for the Poles against the Russians.

In Paris, he used what contacts and influence he had to try and secure a position from which he could build a career and wealth, the holy grail in mid XVIII century France. He was not very successful at this in that it took him until 1767 to obtain a job as a military engineer to accompany the Count de Maudave to re-establish the colony at Fort Dauphin in Madagascar. This incidentally, like all other French attempts at colonizing this island, was a dismal failure. However, since Bernadin jumped ship in Mauritius, that outcome is of no concern to this narrative.

He arrived in Lorient in bitter weather on Jan. 4, 1768, unimpressed by everything he had seen in Brittany; his comment on Basse Bretagne was that here nature seemed stunted; everything, trees, men and animals were smaller than elsewhere. His opinion of Lorient was somewhat better, at least concerning the Company buildings which, although still only partly finished after decades of construction, met with his approval.

He was allocated passage on the *Marquis de Castries*, a 700 ton, 24 gun company vessel Lorient built in 1765 and had successfully completed one voyage to India and was now ready to sail with two other company ships, the *Digue* and the *Conde*.

The *Marquis de Castries* carried a crew of 146 men and 15 passengers with the latter being were lodged in a gun room used to store artillery supplies. The officers' quarters and captain's cabin were on the deck above. The cargo was military supplies for India. Bernadin merited both the "Captain's Table" treatment and a curtained off alcove in the Great Cabin as his sleeping quarters; it is unlikely that all the other passengers were so lucky.

They finally set sail on March 3, 1768. He kept a log throughout the voyage, commenting on everything he saw. There was a significant numbers of livestock on board, cattle, fowl, and bizarrely, sparrows and canaries for importation into India. To complete the menagerie was Bernadin's pet dog. Two days out, they were hit by a violent storm which carried away one of the ship's boats and an officer and three men. It also killed much of the livestock and made all the passengers violently sick.

Within 10 days they were restricted one bottle of water and two meals per day, the meals consisting of salt meat and dry vegetables. They continued on past the Canary Islands towards the Equator. The increasing heat resulted added to the discomfort of everyone on short water rations and resulted in the explosion of multiple champagne bottles carried by the ships' officers as trade goods for their own account. This destroyed Bernadin's attempt at growing lettuce and cress on wet moss which until then had been going well.

He was interested in the nature and morals of the ships crew and presented them in a generally favourable light, recognizing what appalling conditions they lived and worked in. He was not impressed by their drunkenness which was chronic or their superstitious beliefs. Apparently a common practice was for 7 or 8 sailors to pool their daily wine ration and take turns for one of their number to drink it all and thus get totally drunk.

On April 13, they crossed the Equator, and by this time, scurvy had already started to appear among the crew which indicated that these unfortunates probably had not recovered from scurvy on a previous voyage. Heat and lack of water remained serious problems but they were not becalmed for any length of time. By May 26 they had reached the latitude of Cape of Good Hope and after turning east and were hit by a violent storm that almost knocked them down.

The rounding of the Cape was a tense time and elaborate preparations were made for it. Things went well until June 26 when they were hit by a major storm which smashed the windows of the Great Cabin sending a flood of water down into Bernadin's sleeping area and breaking loose a huge chest containing yet more champagne bottles. Total pandemonium ensued with the rogue chest sliding backwards and forwards with the waves, threatening to crush all within its path amid a mixture of broken glass, wood and salt. No sooner had this been secured than the ship was hit by an electrical storm and the main mast struck by lightning, destroying sails and rigging and weakening the mast itself. The ship was now out of control being swept onwards broadside to the waves amid huge seas. The storm continued unabated for another two days but by June 24 it had calmed sufficiently that they could effect repairs and continue on. During the storm, an unfortunate woman (there was apparently at least one on board) gave birth to a child, surely a horrendous experience.

By this time scurvy was well established in the crew and several deaths had occurred. The crew was now shorthanded and the captain started to use both servants and passengers to supplement the remaining active crew members. By July 13 as they approached Mauritius over 80 of the crew and passengers were sick and incapable of work. They finally made Port Louis harbour on July 14 after being at sea for 133 days without touching land and with no re-supply of food or water other than fish that they had caught. Their death toll from accidents and disease was 11, which was actually about average for that journey in that era.

Bernadin recovered quickly from scurvy on a diet of fresh vegetables having refused the usual treatment of turtle soup since he did not like its taste.

As Bernadin spent his entire two years away from France in Mauritius, and as he was there in the year of GJJ's arrival in that island in 1770, I will return to his account in the Mauritius chapter for his views on society.

REUNION

History:

The island was first visited in the early XVI century by Portuguese sailors who intermittently visited it over the next century without claiming it or establishing any permanent settlement. France eventually formally took possession of the island in 1642, but initially used it only as a sort of penal outpost for French mutineers from their colony in Madagascar who were essentially left there to sink or swim on their own. When they returned several years later, they were surprised to find these mutineers thriving. Despite this, the latter were evacuated back to France leaving the island empty for another20 years.

Colonization actually started in 1665 with a group of 20 settlers from France. Up until 1714, it served only as a way station for Company ships, and not a very good one at that since it lacked a suitable harbour. Over the period 1665 to 1714 there were only a total of a little over 500 immigrants (including slaves) dropped off by passing ships and by 1713 the population had only reached 1100 of which about half were slaves.

All this changed with the introduction of coffee as a cash crop in 1715. After a slow start with imported plants from Yemen, indigenous coffee varieties were discovered

and production ramped up, resulting in both increases in French immigrants and a major increase in the slave population. By 1735 the population had risen to 8300 (of which 80% were slaves), and 30 years later it had tripled again to 25,000 (85% slaves). Finally a profitable cash crop had been found and by 1740, Reunion alone could supply the entire French market. The inevitable result of this was overproduction which in turn caused prices started to drop. An edict was issued in 1742 banning the increase in coffee plantations and effectively marking the end of the coffee boom. Although production continued for the rest of the century it was no longer as profitable. It was supplanted by sugar in the XIX century.

Arrival in Reunion:

The *Hercule* probably arrived at St. Denis in August 1740, without any major traumas that could have resulted in some historical reference. Many of the ships' logs of that period are preserved in various archives but there does not seem to be any registry that enables this to be traced. At that time, the population was around 10,000 of which about 75% were slaves. As St. Denis had no real harbour, the transfer from ship to shore via boats or a bizarre looking crane system (La Pont Volant) would have been the final hazard in a long hazardous voyage. This contraption was destroyed by a cyclone in 1751, rebuilt and then re-destroyed in the same manner 9 years later. By this time the Reunion's importance had been eclipsed by Mauritius and it was not replaced. It appears that passengers would climb a steep ladder from the ship to the gantry and then walk to shore. I have not seen any account of how it was used.

It is not clear exactly when GJJ arrived in Reunion but he was definitely there in February 20, 1741 when the Reunion Council nominated him to be Garde Magasin, Notaire and Greffier of Ste. Suzanne, a settlement to the east of St. Denis, the latter being at that time at that time the principal town of Reunion. In this notice, he is described as being an employee of the Company, but no mention is made of what his then function was. At this time at age 29, he was still unmarried so it must be assumed that he had sufficient work experience as a notary in France that he could function without further training or much supervision. He presumably lived in Ste. Suzanne, since St. Denis would not have been close enough to his work place to commute.

Life in Reunion:

The following year an order was sent out from France (in August 1742) ordering the removal of GJJ from his position and his replacement by the son of a Sieur de Villarmoy, a gentleman who had died at St. Denis in February 1741 and who, as Conseiller to the CSIB (Conseil Superior de l'Ile de Bourbon), had presumably had more influence with the Company Directors than the unfortunate GJJ. However, nothing came of this since GGJ continued in this position until 1745, possibly because, although de Villarmoy had 7 children, the oldest of these could not have older than 17, making it difficult for local authorities to promote a youth to a responsible position.

Much of the following information comes from a 760 page recent publication of the history of notaries in Reunion which goes into agonizing detail about the profession from its earliest days; it does not read like a novel.

His next recorded event was his marriage to Marie Anne Calvert on June 4, 1743 in Ste. Suzanne. Marie Anne was locally born to French parents who do not seem to

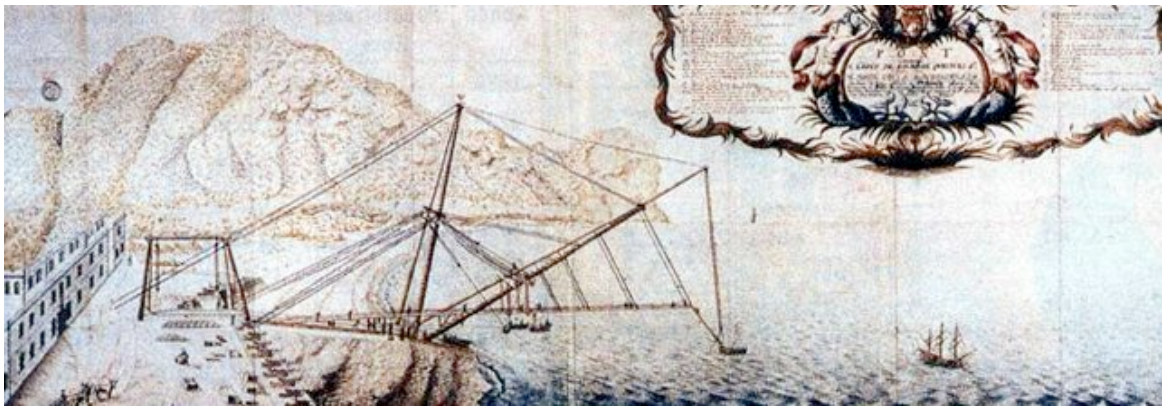
have had any prominence in the colony. Her mother, Anne Marie Dumesgnil, was the grand daughter of one of the very earliest settlers and was already a second or possibly third generation "Creole". Her maternal grandfather was Heinrich Wilman, a Dutch/German ex-pirate, who had died just two years before this marriage.

Her father, Jacques Jean Calvert had been born in 1702 in St. Malo, arrived in Reunion around 1720 and appears to have been a tonnelier (barrel maker) by trade, basically a carpenter who specialized in making barrels. This was, at the time, a trade that was as essential for maritime operations as ship building, since all water carried by ships had to be contained in barrels. He had married an Anne Marie Dumesgnil in 1725 and had 5 children, of which Marie Anne was the second, and who being born in 1728, was only 15 years old at the time she married GJJ in 1743.

Jean Jacques was for a time an officer in the local militia and also worked for the local government in some capacity. Like most of the working class immigrants of that era, subsistence farming was his main occupation.

The interesting thing about GJJ marriage to Marie Anne is that the bride's family provided a dowry of a piece of land worth 3000 livres. plus a cash payment of an additional 1000 livres payable in 50 livre annual installments, whereas GJJ did not have to provide anything. This suggests that, in some sense or other, he had more to offer than she did either in terms of social position or future prospects. There seems to have been a prejudice against "creoles", at least in the marriage market, probably arising from the uncertain ancestry of creole parents and the likelihood of there being African or Asiatic blood in their genealogy. Heinrich Wilan’s wife was a Madagascar native and may have had suspect parentage.

Other marriage contracts around that time for other members of the notarial staff typically had larger sums involved and often with the groom as well as the bride contributing assets to the marriage. The piece of land was located at Bras Panon some 5 kms. east of Ste. Suzanne. It was undeveloped but he probably built a house and may have lived there eventually.



La Pont Volant de Saînt Denîs

By comparison, the annual pay rates for GJJ's level of government employees over the period 1725 to 1755 were in the 700 to 900 livre range plus an allowance of 1/2 to 1 barrel of wine and brandy. This does not seem to have materially increased over a three decade period.

His official employment came to an end in Nov. 1745 when he was either fired or resigned. This was not, however, the end of his government pay cheque since his name is on a petition sent to the Company in Sept. 1766 complaining about a reduction in pay, in which they pointed out that the petitioners could no longer live on the wages they were paid. By this time the Company and the colony was on its last legs, so it is unlikely that anyone paid any attention to this plea.

A further period of government employ occurred in Dec. 1767 in the wake of the Company's final collapse when he was recruited to be an assistant to a M. Duval, the Greffier of Ste. Suzanne or St. Denis. This appointment mentioned that as he had not worked in this function (as a notary?) for more than 20 years, he should not be given tasks beyond his ability.

There were three children from this marriage:

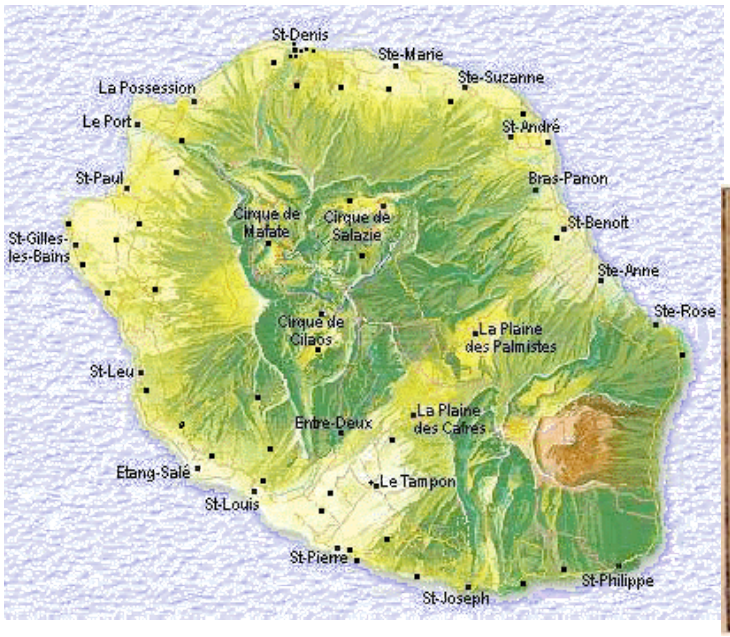
Jean Jacques Joseph	1745 to 1771 (died unmarried in St. Denis)
Marie Marguerite Beatrix	1747 to 1786
Jean Francois Marie (JFM I)	1758 to 1797?

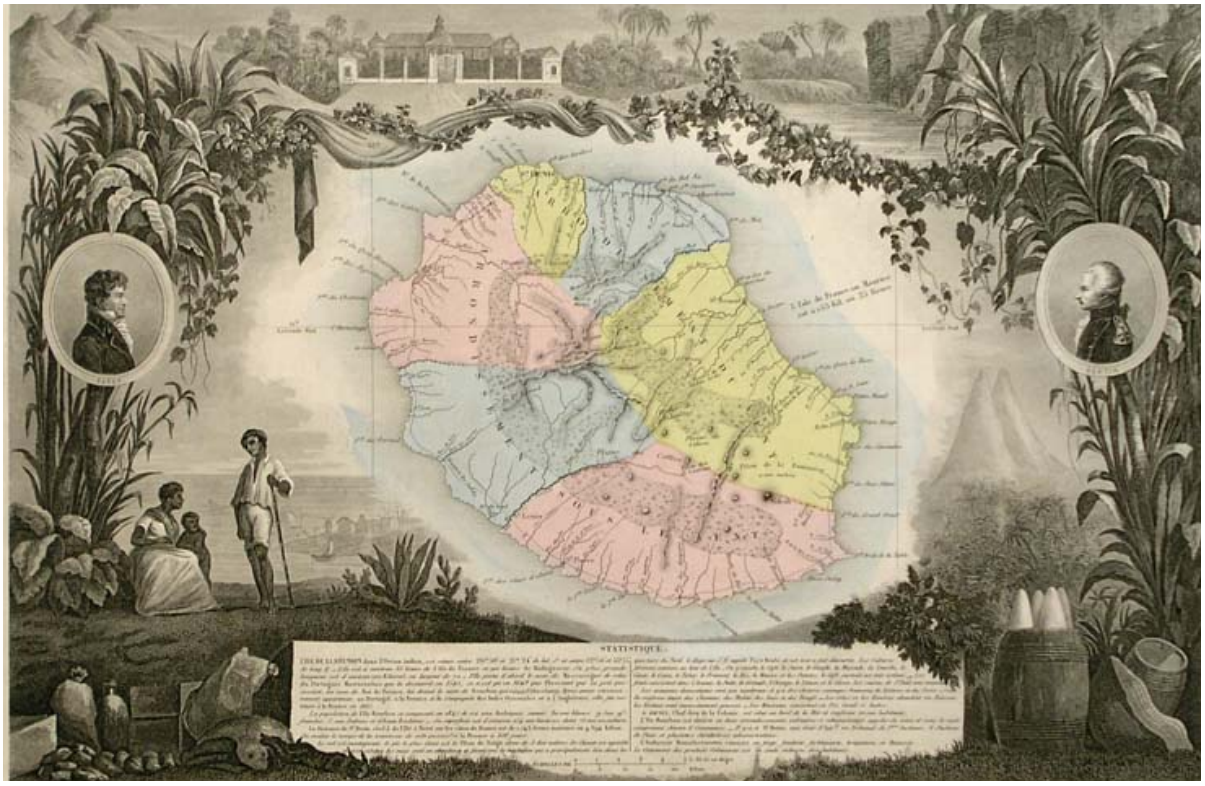
Marie Marguerite Beatrix married and had 6 children, of whom 5 survived to adulthood and all of whom apparently stayed on in Reunion; Jean Jacques Joseph did not leave any progeny.

What GJJ did after he left direct government employ is not known. It is probable that he simply farmed as did most of the immigrants. By this time, the coffee boom was essentially over so it is unlikely that that this played a role in his farming activities. In any event, his Bras Panon farm was probably too low in elevation (below 1000m.) to be good growing terrain. Two other brief notices of his existence are recorded; in 1747 he sold a parcel of land to the cure of Ste. Suzanne and in 1755 he was involved in a boundary dispute with a Clement Naze. None of this suggests he played any prominent role in the life of the community.

His decision to leave for Mauritius in 1770 at the age of 58 indicates that he saw no future or prospects for betterment given the collapse of the Company and the consolidation of French maritime economic activities in Mauritius. Although there is no specific information on land grants from the Crown in Mauritius this may have been an incentive to move.

I have looked for accounts of daily life in mid XVIII century Reunion without much success, probably because no one at the time considered it worth recording. A few things we can be sure of is that he would have owned at least a few slaves since even the most poverty stricken French immigrant at that time considered it necessary to have at least one slave. If he lived on an even semi isolated farm they would have been in constant fear of attack by the "maroons" (runaway slaves who preyed on settlers and were periodically chased and killed by the local militias). As the Reunion terrain was much wilder and more rugged than that of Mauritius, these hunt and destroy missions were less effective than on the latter island.

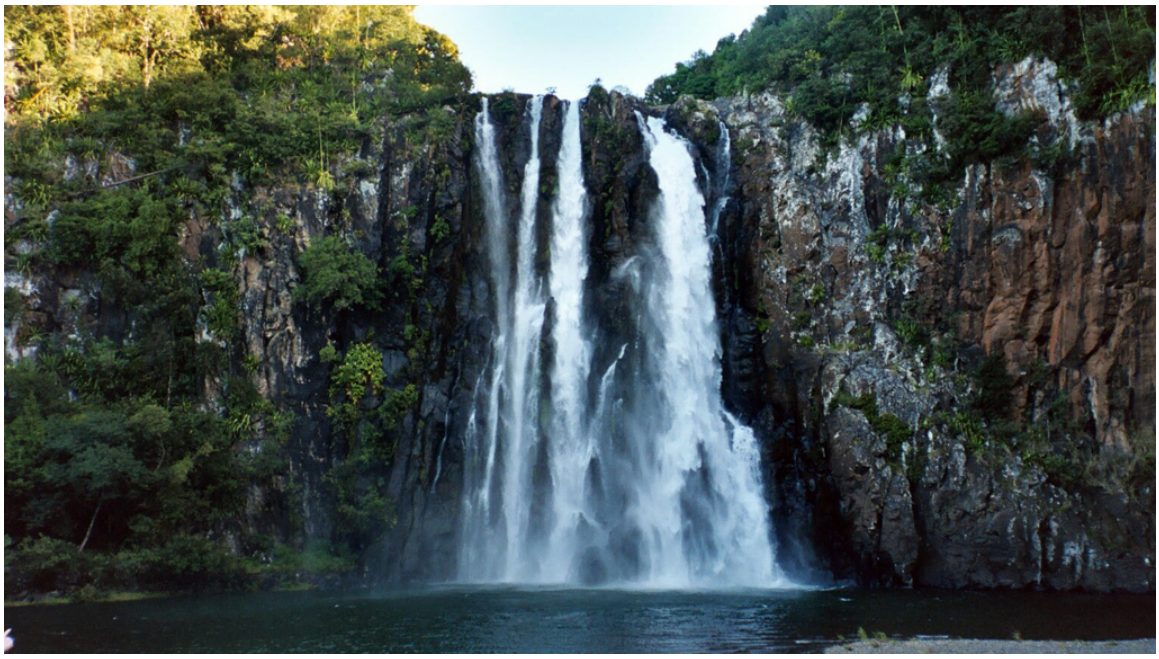




Early Maps of Reunion

In any event, some time in mid 1770, he, his wife and youngest son (JFM I) boarded the ship *La Garonne* and set sail for Mauritius, leaving his other two children behind on Reunion. It is unlikely that he ever saw them again. His oldest son died less than a year later, and his daughter already married, but at the time childless, outlived both her parents and died in Reunion in 1786.

I have also been unable to find any paintings or pictures from Ste. Suzanne earlier



than the XX century so, for want of anything better, I have included a photo of the only natural feature that distinguishes the area namely the "Niagara Falls" of Reunion.

MAURITIUS

Historical background:

Its early history is similar to that of Reunion; first discovered by the Portuguese, settled briefly by the Dutch, abandoned by them in 1712 and then finally claimed by France in 1721 as an adjunct to Reunion. It was not until La Bourdonnais became Governor in 1735 that a real effort was made to turn the island into France's principal staging post in the southern Indian Ocean. It of course had the overwhelming advantage of two secure natural harbours whereas Reunion did not have any. Rather fanciful early Dutch impressions of both the islands map and local fauna appear on the next page together with an actual map showing the location of the principal towns.

La Bourdonnais not only carried out a remarkable number of civil and military construction projects but also moved the centre of Company operations to Mauritius, reformed many of the ways the Company did business and at the same time, carried military operations in India against the British and their Indian allies. The end result

of all this hyperactivity was to generate a lot of enemies on the French side that ultimately resulted in his recall to France on assorted charges. This resulted in his imprisonment in the Bastille for three years, but after which, he was tried and acquitted on all counts. He unfortunately died shortly after being released from prison.

By the time GJJ arrived in Mauritius in 1770, it was the centre of French operations, the Company was defunct and it was run as a French Crown colony with its population and importance now greater than that of Reunion. It (and Reunion, Rodrigues and the Seychelles) were now all run jointly from Mauritius by a military Governor and an Intendant. The latter was effectively a civil governor, and as usual, in the case of such split responsibilities without well defined boundaries, it was a source of endless strife.

Before GJJ arrived, Dumas (an autocratic soldier) was Governor and Pierre Poivre (an able administrator) was Intendant, and as both were locked in a battle for supremacy, the colony's population was divided into two feuding camps. In 1769 Dumas had been recalled and replaced by a M. Desroches, a more temperate individual who worked with Poivre for the general betterment of the colony over the period 1769 to 1772.

GJJ's Life in Mauritius:

As in Reunion, GJJ left few traces that impacted his world. Luckily, there are some other first hand accounts of which, Bernadin de Saint Pierre's two year stay on that island (1768 to 1770) almost coincides with GJJ's arrival. In fact, they may have actually been together on Mauritius for a few months before the former left to return to France via Reunion. Consequently, before recounting what is known about GJJ's life (and that of his child JFM I) on Mauritius, I have included an extensive section on de Saint Pierre's travels and views of life at that time and place in order to set the scene of the society in which our ancestor would live for the rest of his life.

GJJ arrived in Mauritius in the latter half of 1770 on board a French naval ship *La Garonne* with his wife Marie Anne Calvert and his 12 year old son JFM I. He presumably had some slaves and household effects although there are no documents confirming this or what he did on arrival at Port Louis. Port Louis at the time, although greatly improved by La Bourdonnais, was no centre of civilization; hot, overrun by imported pests and with little to make life pleasant. A XIX century painting on the next page suggests what it may have been like in GJJ’s time.

Bernadin de Saint Pierre's Account of Life in Mauritius

Bernadin should have proceeded on to Madagascar to do the job he had been hired for, but since he had quarreled with the Count de Maudave, he jumped ship and proceeded to get himself hired in some sort of engineering / construction related work by the Intendant, Pierre Poivre. Exactly what this was or what he got paid is vague although he does refer to

himself as a stone mason and he did spend about a month circumnavigating the island (mostly of foot) to report on how Mauritius could be fortified against marine invasion by the English. A portrait made around 1790 when he was a prosperous author shows him in his rich man's finery.

First impressions:

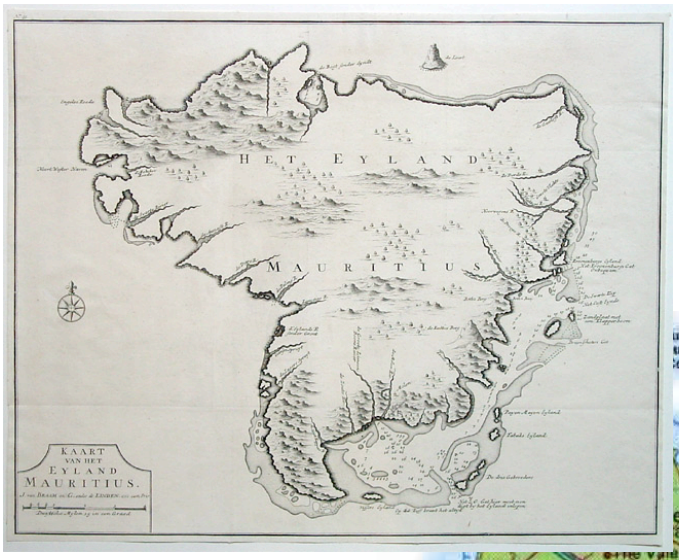
After he recovered from the rigours of the voyage, he reported to the Chief Engineer of the colony who provided him with a slave and arranged a place for him to stay in Port Louis and provided work on some construction project. He gives a very jaundiced account of life in Port Louis, describing it as being in the worst part of the island, covered in rocks with no green plants, poorly built single story wooden houses with unpaved streets that turned into mud with rain. He fires his slave for stealing from him and has him replaced by a more reliable one named Cote.

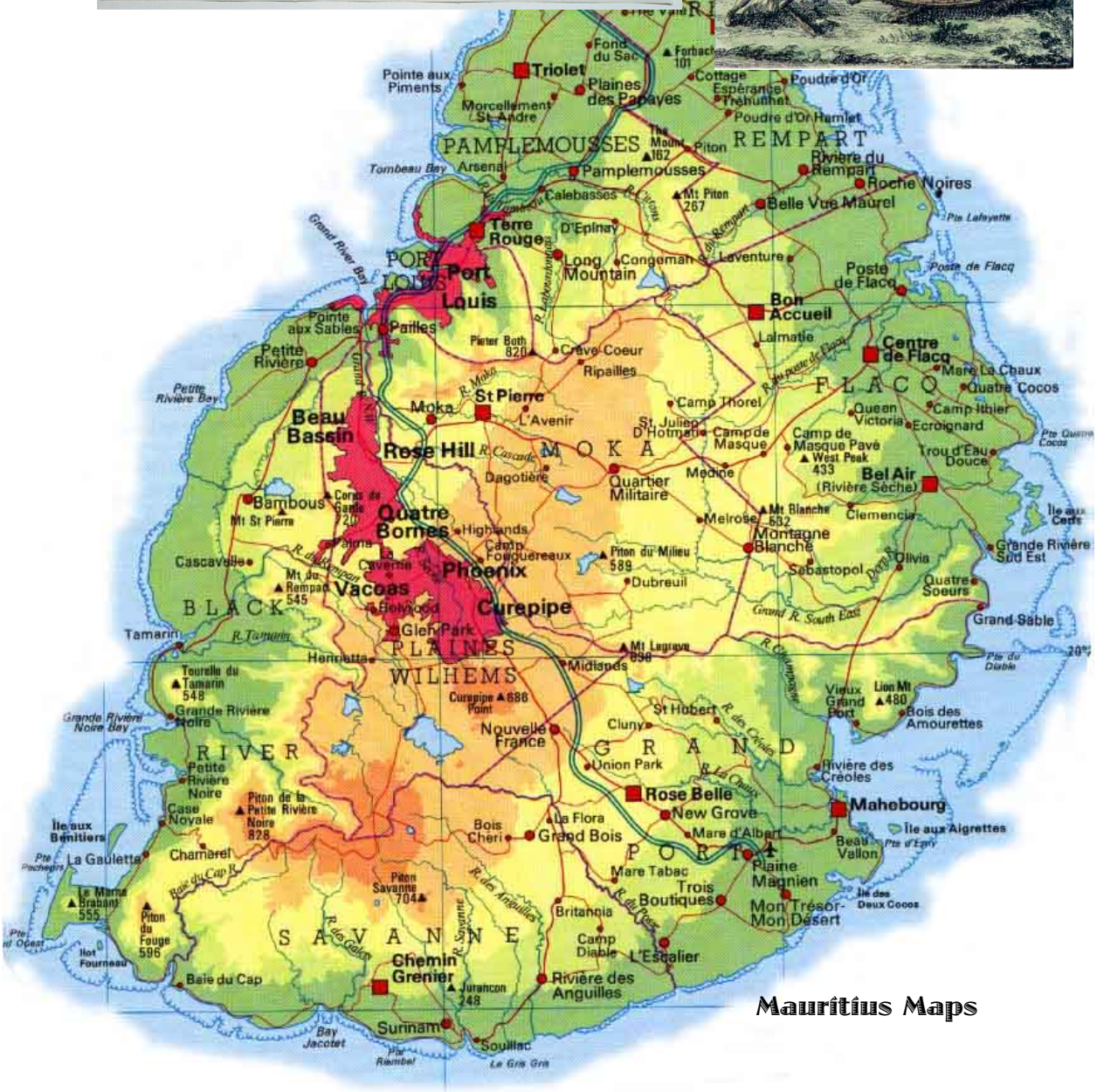
He believed that the Europeans had brought more evil to the island than had existed in nature and is dismissive about all he sees. Imported animals such as rats ("as numerous as ants"), mice, monkeys, deer and grasshoppers have overrun the entire island, destroying crops and making life hell. Gnats, flies and sundry other insects also come in for criticism. He experienced at least two cyclones during his stay and lists their impressive destruction of the ill built houses. The only saving grace of these cyclones was that they destroy a significant number of these pests, which however, rebounded in numbers fairly quickly.

When he gets to the inhabitants, he finds few of them to like or admire. The Company employees are singled out as particularly evil; living like Venetian nobles with aristocratic manners and financiers spirits, controlling all jobs and profiteering through the development and resale of land. Army officers, sailors and merchants are considered either evil, lazy or both, fulfilling no productive purpose other than their own enrichment. The final salvo was for the "scoundrels" that the war in India had thrown up and had deposited on these shores.

The takeover of the colony (from the Company) in 1765/1767 was supposed to improve matters, but resulted in a new influx of "favourites from Paris" who had neither culture or ability and wanted only to get rich quickly and go back to France. Discord reigned in all classes. Everything was expensive; everything was dull and only the large landowners were rich on their profits of selling to the other inhabitants.

Few men married due mainly to the easy availability of black women and the lack of whites of suitable status. He commented that it was rare to find a marriageable women with a dowry of 10,000 livres. Most people of class lived on plantations and only came into Port Louis for balls (one wonders where these were held) and carried therein litters by four slaves both during the season and at Easter. He estimated





Mauritius Maps

there were about 400 plantations on the island, but of these there were only 100 whose owners were "persons of quality". He considered women had better morals than the men, but the children were brought up without education and married early, some apparently as young as 11.

He admired the achievements of La Bourdonnais and liked the Intendant Pierre Poivre plus a few others, but these were few and far between. He was appalled by the way slavery affected everything in Mauritian society. At the time, there were about 20,000 slaves under the control of some 4,000 whites, and though in theory the formers treatment was regulated under the Code Noir, in practice no one paid any attention to it and most slaves were treated with brutality that was supposed to cow them into submission. Punishments were draconian, runaways (the maroons) were hunted down and shot with their heads being brought back for display. The slaves were fed on maize and manioc plus scraps from their masters' tables. Whipping and mutilation were common for even minor infractions and often for no reason at all.

Despite all this, many did run away and lived in bands in the wilder parts of the island leaving the plantation owners in permanent fear of their lives. Small military posts were scatter around the island to control the maroons and periodic search and destroy missions were undertaken with the eager participation of the local land owners. However, the problem never really went away until the final abolition of slavery in the XIX century. He saw that slavery not only was cruel and inhumane to the slaves, but it also debased and corrupted the slave owners themselves and could never be the basis for a peaceful and harmonious society.

His Island Tour:

In August and September 1769, after being on the island for a little over a year he decided to tour the island on foot circling it in a counterclockwise direction staying largely on the coast, essentially going from plantation to plantation. However, since he recognized that there would be gaps in this source of accommodation, he took food and the means to camp in case he had need to. This resulted in a load of about 200 lbs. that in turn required him to acquire another slave (in addition to Cote) to carry it. This new man he named Duval after a friend and correspondent in France. Slaves were arbitrarily given name changes by their masters when they changed ownership.

So in mid August, Bernadin, Cote and Duval plus the former's dog set off, with the unfortunate slaves carrying roughly 100 lbs. apiece and Bernadin carrying a shotgun, two pistols and sabre to fight off the maroons. His typical day was to walk close to or on the shore from plantation to plantation with one of his slaves carrying him across the rivers' mouths they encountered. Occasionally there were actual paths, but for the most part, the planters relied on boats for communication with the ports around the coast. The quality of the plantations varied from large, prosperous and well organized to mere shacks in the wilderness. In contrast to his almost universal criticism of the population of Port Louis, he appears to have genuinely liked most of his hosts and was grateful for their hospitality. He progressed along the south coast commenting on all he saw. An event that horrified him was an encounter with a group of black police who were chasing maroons and were dragging back an unfortunate woman who they forced to carry the severed head of her male companion.

He eventually reached Vieux Grand Port that was the original Dutch settlement and port of the island and around which there were more plantations and a small settlement where he rested at a priest's house for several days. He continued up the east coast and on to Poste de Flacq, the site of a small military detachment at the mouth of the Flacq River where he stayed for the night. He commented on the number of plantations and that this area was one of the most cultivated on the island, the source of most of locally grown rice. This, of course, was where GJJ eventually wound up with his plantation.

His coastal tour ended at Riviere du Remparts where after staying the night, he returned to Port Louis via Pamplemousses on a borrowed horse (his trusty slaves no doubt trotting beside him). His comment on the land around Pamplemousses was that 30 years of farming had exhausted it. He also commented on the recently completed Pamplemousses church as being the only monument on the island being worthy of note. This is where one of our ancestors Jean Polyphile Armel Despilly J de Saint J (otherwise listed as JPAD) got married in October 1871 over 100 years later.

The Rest Of His Stay:

He returned to Port Louis in mid September 1769, but did not leave Mauritius until December 1770 when he was given permission to return to France. This probably arose when Desroches took over the Governor's position from Dumas in late 1769. His account stops over this year and does not resume until his voyage home starts.

He does however provide some general musings about the conduct of his fellow countrymen away from France and on the institution of slavery. He considered ambition for wealth, position, fame etc. the worst of vices since it lead to others of which he considered totally reprehensible despite it being the whole basis for the society in which he was living. He commented on the wretched morality of the slave owners and how they lived in constant fear of these possessions. He was also scathing about the Catholic Church's support for the institution and its hypocrisy in converting slaves to Christianity so that they would have a better afterlife however brutal and bad their current one may seem.

His final act was to free Duval (the slave he actually owned) and offered buy Cote's freedom from the Crown if he would come with him to France. Cote supposedly declined this offer as he did not want to leave his woman in Port Louis.

He offered some solutions to the islands' problems, but did not expect to see much improvement in the future. He saw that the colony obtained its crockery from China, clothes from India, cattle and slaves from Madagascar, food from the Cape, money from Portugal and Spain and only administration and drink from France. The French administration paid for everything with paper money which no one wanted and soon changed into Spanish silver piastres if they could.

With little regret, he boarded the *Indien* in November 1770 and sailed for home via Reunion, the Cape, Ascension Island and eventually arrived in France in early June 1771.

GJJ's Life in Mauritius (Continued):

Comparatively little is known about GJJ's life in Mauritius. He must have landed In Port Louis some time in late 1770 on the *La Garonne* before the latter was sunk in the cyclone that struck Reunion and Mauritius in Dec. 1770. His plan must have been

to go farming, probably for sugar which was coming into economic vogue at that time. He either had enough money to buy a place or was expecting to get a land grant. Either way it would have been logical to start in Port Louis since that was then (and still is) the administrative centre of the island.

Property Acquisition:

The first indication of his presence is a land title grant in the Quartier du Flacq to him from the Governor (des Roches) and the Intendant (Pierre Poivre) dated October 22, 1771 that was roughly a year after his arrival. He may well have been on this land well before this date, but whether it was a grant or a purchase from others is not known. Its extent was about 260 acres and appears to be roughly rectangular in shape, about 1.5 kms. long by 0.75 kms. wide, with neighbours on three sides but none on the southern boundary. The names of these people were Etienne Fauce, Pauly, Lehire and de Nothe, none of whom appear to have made any other impact on the history of Mauritius.

The next mention is in another land title grant (or property transfer) which is dated October 20, 1774. This appears to be a transfer of roughly half of GJJ's property from the first transaction to his son JFM I. The documents cited in this transfer are:

a) the original 1771 land transfer,
b) land surveys dated Jan. 25 1773 and Jan. 27, 1774,
c) a certificate from the military commander of the Quartier de Flacq dated (?), and
d) statements from the neighbours that the boundaries are correct dated May 30 and June 14, 1774.

JFM I got the northern half and GJJ kept the remainder to the south. There is no indication in these documents as to where this property was in the Quartier de Flacq, but in the marriage contract of JFM I it is identified as being in or near Quatre Cocos, near but not on the coast, north of Trou d'Eau Douce and SE of Centre de Flacq. At the time of this property transfer JFM I would have been 16 years old.

Marriage of JFM I:

His bride was a Marie Pitel, the daughter of a Breton ex-Company employee Olivier Servan Pitel who had come out to Mauritius in 1750 on the company ship *L'Auguste* and married a creole named Marie Noelle Genu four years later. This couple had 9 children, of which Marie Pitel was the fifth, born in December 1760. Olivier Pitel's title as a company employee was director of wood cutting which does not sound too grand but may have had more to to with ship building than the production of firewood. At the time of his daughter's marriage, he was 43 years old and, since the Company was no longer in existence, he presumably worked for the Crown in some capacity that may have been the continuation of his wood cutting role. Olivier Pitel was born in Brittany in 1731, and by 1774, was residing in Port Bourbon.

He appears on both the 1766 and 1788 censuses and must have died after the latter date. The 1788 census indicated that he was moderately prosperous with almost 800 acres of land, 21 slaves and 33 cattle or horses. Much of the land was probably not cleared or productive, as far more than 21 slaves would have been needed to work a property of this size. In any event, when the happy couple were married at the church of St. Julien, Quartier de Flacq on November 7, 1774, the blushing bride was only 13 with the groom being a much more mature 16. These early marriages were

common in that era when life expectancy was short and suitable marriage partners were few and far between.

There were 12 witnesses to the Acte de Mariage document, most of which were either Pitel's or Genu's although there was one additional St. Jorre with an initial C. This was probably GJJ's wife, Marie Anne Calvert. Normally wives signed such documents with their maiden name, but she did not do so in this case. Of considerable interest is the marriage contract. This was executed on the day after the land transfer to JFM I which was obviously part of the marriage arrangement. This document provides a lot of information about these people and the society around them. Loustau is identified as the Notary who had drawn up these documents and the parents of the couple who are entering into this contract are more closely described. JFM I is described as normally resident in the Quartier de Flacq and as a Volunteer in the Militia company of Chevalier de Ternay. Olivier Pitel is identified only as an employee of the King and a resident of Port Bourbon (or as it is sometimes called Grand Port). This was the old Dutch settlement at the harbour in the SE of the island.

A list of the witnesses (in addition to the bride and grooms' parents) is given which is of interest. These are:

Louis de Launay	Sous Garde Magasin, Ministry of Marine
Marie de Launay	Wife of Louis
Morel Duboil	Employee of the King
Francois Genu	First Assistant of the Office of Engineers
Vincente de Livon Genu	Wife of Francois
Ignace Brunel	Lieut. of the Judge Royal
Calvert St. Jorre	Marie Anne Calvert

JFM I's signature appears to be that of someone who does not write a lot.

Morel Duboil subsequently emigrated to the Seychelles, probably a few months before JFM I's arrival there in 1790 and where the two almost immediately clashed over various issues. In the end, this resulted in the former being arrested and shipped back to Mauritius where he died in exile a few years later. Morel Duboil's saga will be reviewed in some detail later in the Seychelles chapter. The cast of characters indicates that this was not a society wedding but a more middle class affair. Morel Duboil spent at least 16 years in Mauritius, of which 7 were in Quartier de Flacq.

The core of the contract was that JFM I's parents were to supply the couple with 20,000 livres over a 7 year period, of which, the values a female negro slave named Claire already owned by JFM I, and those of two other slaves named Lilas (a negro from Madagascar) and Francoise (a negress from Reunion) that were to be given to the couple (as a wedding present?) plus the value of the Flacq property were to be deducted. The agreed value of all of these was L4,000, which presumable left L16,000 left to pay.

It does identify where the property to be gifted was located, namely at a place called Quatres Cocos (four coconut palms) in the Quartier de Flacq, and reiterates that the transfer will not take place until the marriage is celebrated. Most of the document is "boiler plate" wording about dealing with prior and subsequent debts, sharing of assets, conditions under which the dowry is returned and similar matters. The really interesting thing is that the bride, who after all is usually the one who has to produce

a dowry, does not have to contribute anything. This suggests that JFM I had a lower social position than the Pitel's and therefore had to make a bigger contribution to the marriage than the bride's parents. Quatre Cocos today is a small and otherwise uninteresting village.

Not much of note happened in the Quartier de Flacq during this period except of one notable murder mystery when in 1774 someone murdered a family of five and burnt the house down. The husband was at the time away in Port Louis and thus survived. Eventually a soldier by the name of Sansquartier was arrested, tortured to name accomplices and then executed in the customary and horrible method of the time. There was apparently doubt that he had in fact committed the crime, but justice then consisted of making sure that someone paid the penalty, even if it was not necessarily the actual criminal.

GJJ's Death:

GJJ makes his final appearance in the record with his death in 1778. There were three deaths in his household within the space of 10 days in July 1778. First to go was his wife Marie Anne Calvert who died age 50 at 5 am in the morning of July 17, followed the next day an adult slave named Dimanche, with GJJ succumbing to whatever was killing them 9 days later on July 27 at the age of 66. These death registrations were witnessed by Nageon de l'Etang and a priest Collin. GJJ is shown as being a resident of Riviere des Remparts which is the quartier immediately north of Flacq, so it must be assumed he was no longer living next to his son in Quatre Cocos. Nageon de l'Etang was one of the three immigrant families that sailed with JFM I to the Seychelles 12 years later in 1790.

It is almost certain that some sort of epidemic or poisoned food took these three people from one household out; GJJ did not sign his wife's death certificate which suggests he was already sick and possibly dying. In any event, by August 1778, JFM I at age 19, with his 16 year old bride and one child, was now an orphan. JFM I was probably buried in the cemetery of the St. Julien church in Flacq although he could have been buried on his plantation, a not uncommon custom at the time.

As the sole surviving son, JFM I would have inherited his father's Flacq /Riviere des Remparts properties and presumably continued to operate them until he left for the Seychelles in 1790.

JFM I in Mauritius:

His next documented appearance in Mauritius occurs in the 1788 census 10 years after the death of his parents. The one page that is available, contains the names of 5 families and a very limited amount of information about them. That relating to JFM I is as follows:

Names:	JFM I	(Age	29)
	Marie Pitel	(	25)
	JFM II	(	3)
	Marie Josephe	(	11)
	Marie Corentine	(	9)
	Francoise Beatrice	(	1)

(Note the sexist convention of listing the male children first regardless of age.)

Arrival in Mauritius : 1770 by the vessel *La Garonne* from Reunion.

Slaves:	Adult males	7	
	Adult females	5	
	Child males	2	
	Child females	2	
Livestock:	Horses	4	
	Pigs	12	
Acreage:	Total Arpents	155	(about 130 acres)
	Developed Arpents	20	(about 17 acres)

This of course gives no real information about his position in society except that he is not wealthy but, on the other hand, he is not poverty stricken either. His land holding is not much larger than that he was gifted by his father 16 years before, and given that only 13% of it has been developed, it can hardly be the source of a large income. Large property owners at the time had up to several hundred slaves, so his 12 adults (several of whom would have been household slaves) are hardly the basis for large agricultural production.

The next source of information about JFM I comes from the letters and documents of Morel Duboil, the witness at his wedding, that were written after both JFM I and the former had emigrated to the Seychelles.

The Morel Duboil Affair:

First, a little background on where this information came from. Morel Duboil appears to have been a neighbour or at least an acquaintance of GJJ and JFM I in Flacq. In the mid 1780's, the Mauritius authorities were trying to encourage emigration to the Seychelles in order to populate it and prevent it being seized by the British. It is not clear when Morel Duboil landed there, but it was probably a little before JFM I arrived there with his family on the good ship *La Saone* in April or May 1790. The problem between the two families may have been to do with either money or the land grant that JFM I received in Feb. 1787. If this had already been occupied by Morel Duboil and presumably had been partially developed at some cost, then a causus belli would have been established.

In 1790, Morel Duboil made accusations, or at least broadcast innuendos about JFM I and the crimes he supposedly committed in Mauritius some years before. It is these "crimes" that I will describe here before going into more detail in the Seychelles chapter.

The first of these is the assault and possible murder of a M. Maisonrouge, for which JFM I was put in prison in Grand Port by Major Collet (of the National Guard) on the order of Commandant Connamour (of Quartier de Flacq?). Apparently he got off this charge by making "humble pleadings". Either before or after this event, he was caught in the act of shooting a M. Kerjean's cow, arrested by a M. Lefeve, commandant of Riviere de Remparts and jailed for a month. Duboil sarcastically remarks that JFM I's excuse for this act (that he thought it was a stag) may have

been valid if the unfortunate cow had been brown, but it was black. In order to stop being prosecuted, JFM I sold a black male slave named Dimanche and paid M. Kerjean off. This Dimanche may or may not have been the slave who died a day after Marie Anne Calvert in 1778. If it was, he must have sold him to his father prior to July 1778 for the slave to die in GJJ's possession in that month.

Some of this suggests that much of this took place before GJJ died in 1778. I have been unable to find out anything about these "crimes" from other sources but it was obvious that Morel Duboil believed that such events had taken place although he may have put a slant on things that could have been accidents. Either way, he eventually lost the legal tussle in the Seychelles and was banished to Mauritius where he died a few years later. Madame Morel Duboil stayed on in the Seychelles with the rest of her family and eventually one of her children married one of JFM I's sons.

Departure for the Seychelles:

All my information on this is contained in a letter from the Intendant of Mauritius (M. Dupuy) to the Commandant of the Seychelles (M. Malavois) dated April 10, 1790. This fortunately goes into some detail about who the passengers are and what their functions are to be in the Seychelles. The ship could not have left earlier than the letter date so it presumably would not have arrived in the Seychelles before early May 1790.

The ship on which they sailed was a private trading vessel (probably quite small) called the *La Saone*, captained by a sailor named Herisson. This ship had been chartered by the Crown to take three Mauritius families, their slaves and goods and possessions to the Seychelles, together with other supplies for the government employees in that colony. The interesting thing about these families was that the wives were all sisters, daughters of Olivier Pitel.

They were:	
Nageon de l'Etang	The new Garde Magasin of the Seychelles
Mathurin Louise Pitel	(age 36)
Children: Probably five	
Jean Joseph Connan	The new Surgeon of the Seychelles
Elizabeth Pitel	(age 25)
Children: Probably three	
JFM I	Private citizen
Marie Pitel	(age 29)
Children:	
Marie Josephe	(age 13)
Marie Corantine Olivette	(age 11)
Jean Francois Marie (JFM II)	(age 5)
Francoise Beatrice	(age 3)

The total complement of white settlers was 18 and they were accompanied by 36 slaves. Thus with the ship's crew, there were probably about 70 or 80 people on board a relative cockleshell of a boat bound for a new life in a tiny colony while the structure of France was collapsing into revolution. One hopes that the three sisters got on well together and formed a mutual support group.

In his letter, Dupuy extols the virtues of the new settlers to Malavois, but at the same time, makes sure that the debts each has incurred for the costs of passage are recorded and that these will be reclaimed by the Crown from the harvests of each over the first few harvests from their new plantations. The Crown employees get most of their passages paid, but JFM I is to be charged the full amount. The payment was to made in foodstuffs, the value of which was to be calculated at fixed prices. One wonders if these debts were ever settled.

British Conquest:

In 1810, 20 years after JFM I left for the Seychelles, all three French Indian Ocean colonies were finally conquered by the British. Reunion fell first in May 1810 which was followed by Mauritius several months later, but not before the French had their only major Indian Ocean naval victory of the Napoleonic wars. In August 1810, roughly equal squadrons of belligerent warships met in the harbour of Grand Port and fought for almost two days before most of the British force were sunk or surrendered leaving the French triumphant at least for a few months more. The British invaded Mauritius with a force of 10,000 troops in November, and the outnumbered French had no option but to surrender.

Battle of Grand Port

Three French Frigates after the Battle of Grand Port

Mauritius Naval Museum

Two artists impressions of this battle are shown on the preceding pages together with a photo of a house in Grand Port which existed at that time and to which many of the wounded from the battle were afterwards taken to recover or die. This house could conceivably been occupied by Olivier Pitel as it was a French government residence.

No account of Mauritius is complete without some mention of the poor late and lamented Dodos. These unfortunate flightless birds were long since extinct before GJJ set foot on the island but one of their winged and similarly threatened avian cousins, the pink pigeon still ekes out a borderline existence on the Ile aux Aigrettes. a rat free sanctuary off the Grand Port harbour in which a handful of breeding pairs still struggle to survive. Paintings of these birds appear below. The left hand one

The Dodo

The Pink Pigeon

labelled “Dronte” was actually painted in XVII century by Dutch artist from a live bird. Our late cousin, Felix Maurel, was the President of the society responsible for their preservation.

Chapter IV - THE SEYCHELLES

Introduction

In order to provide the background for our ancestors three or four generation sojourn on the Seychelles, it is necessary to provide both the historical and cultural situation of the Seychelles itself before going on to describe what we actually know about their lives there. I have included an extensive description of slavery as it was practiced in the Indian Ocean islands at the time, since without this, it is difficult to understand what that culture was like.

Seychelles History

Discovery:

The Seychelles, situated as they are over 1000 kms. from the nearest inhabited land and being navigation hazards in the primitive age of sail, did not truly get "discovered" until the beginning of the XVII century. They had probably been visited by Arab sailors earlier and seen by Portuguese navigators in the XVI century, but the first written account and first definitive location was made by the English ships *Ascension* and *Good Hope* in January 1609.

For the next 130 years no one paid much attention to these islands, and it was only when Sieur de la Bourdonnais sent two expeditions to explore the archipelago in 1742 and 1744 that the French woke up to their strategic importance. Although this provided some information about the location, number and resources of the islands, these visits did not claim them for France. This oversight was corrected in 1756 when the frigate *Le Cerf* under the command of Nicolas Morphey placed a "stone of possession" on the Isle Mahe. No immediate attempt was made to actually settle the islands; they were however used as a source of timber, food (tortoises and turtles) and as a stopover for French ships in need. The political and military powers in France and Mauritius became increasingly nervous that the British would see the same strategic picture and might move to occupy them. In the late 1760's Mauritius made plans to colonize the archipelago.

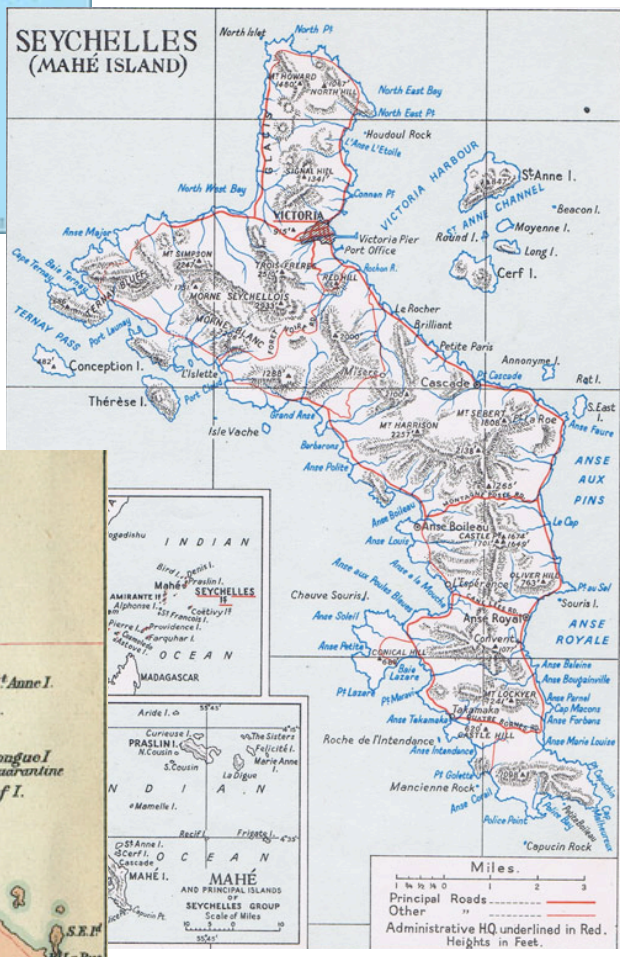
The maps on the previous page show both the island group and geographic details of Mahe from government maps dated 1910 and 1947.

Settlement:

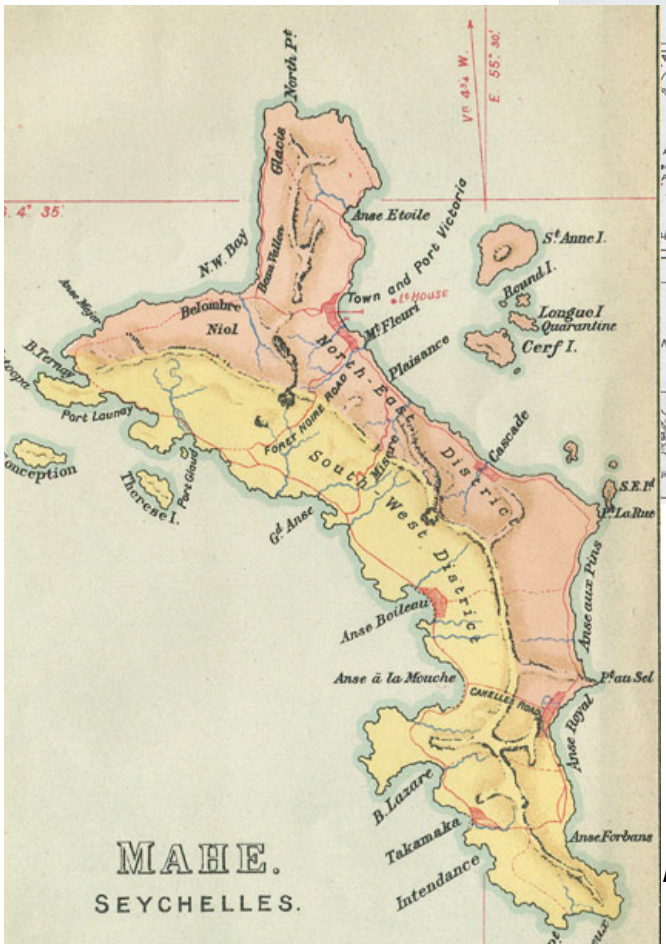
Finally in 1770, a small settlement was established on Ste. Anne island just off the east coast of Mahe and shortly thereafter on Mahe itself. The initial impetus was to establish a spice plantation using cinnamon, clove, nutmeg and pepper plants smuggled out of the Dutch East Indies by Pierre Poivre (the then Intendant of Mauritius) in a Crown owned plantation on Mahe.

The principal player in the early days of the colony was a promoter named Brayer du Barre, who attempted to create an empire for himself starting with a group of settlers on Ste. Anne under the command of a Major Delaunay. There were in fact very few settlers during this 20 year period prior to the arrival of JFM I in 1790, but

Seychelles Group



Mahe Island 1947



Mahe Island 1910

those that were there not only feuded amongst themselves but also were busy despoiling the islands by selling whatever they could of its natural resources to passing ships. The Commandants of this period had little or no means of enforcing the laws of the parent colony of Mauritius and consequently society was basically lawless. In 1771, Pierre Poivre decided that a Crown owned spice plantation was a worthwhile experiment and chose a Mauritius militia officer named Antoine Gillot as its creator.

Initially Gillot had been instructed to allow Delaunay to operate the spice plantation, but his new orders were to operate it on his own with no contact or assistance from the Brayer du Barre settlement on Ste. Anne. On board the *Neccessaire,* which sailed from Mauritius in July 1772 with Gillot and his spice plants, was Hangard, an ex-soldier who from lowly beginnings had made money by slaving and speculating in property. He had persuaded Poivre through Gillot to allow him to emigrate to the Seychelles and now planned to add to his fortune in this new venue.

The scene was now set for strife, disorder and failure which duly came to pass over the next few years. Finally, Mauritius decided to evacuate the Brayer du Barre settlement and bring back the Crown slaves that had been sent to work on the spice plantation. Gillot however decide to remain behind working the spice plantation, as did a few of the earlier settlers. By 1773, there was no farming taking place and the remaining inhabitants lived off tortoises, fish and what ever else they could find or catch. In 1776 du Barre finally went to the Seychelles to take charge of what remained of his investment, but was no more successful in this than his previous remote efforts from Mauritius had been. In 1777 he was either dismissed or left voluntarily for India where he died shortly after arrival.

Effective Mauritian Control:

In November 1778, with France again at war with Britain in the War of American Independence, M. de Ternay, the Intendant in Mauritius, decided to establish unambiguous Crown control of the colony, and sent Lieutenant Charles de Romainville with 15 soldiers, a surgeon and some tradesmen to bring it to order and establish the means of denying the islands to the British. Gillot continued his marginal existence, quarreling with virtually everyone until his position was terminated in 1779. The spice plantation did not long outlast him as it was burnt down (by mistake to prevent it falling into the hands of the British) in 1780. The invading ship that occasioned this action was in fact French but flying a British flag as a precaution.

Under de Romainville, a man of action, some progress was made in establishing buildings, some infrastructure and a semblance of the rule of law. Unfortunately he was recalled to Mauritius in 1781 for ill health and replaced by an indolent new commandant, Berthelot de La Coste. He did not last long and in 1783 was replaced by Gillot, possibly the worst possible choice since by then he was hated and despised by virtually all of the settlers. He seemed incapable of controlling his own soldiers and slaves, and as also suffering from haemorrhoids, he spent most of his time in bed writing complaining letters to his superiors in Mauritius. His principal source of complaints were against three settlers, namely Hangard, Quienet and Lambert by then the three richest and most influential civilians in the colony. They were not his only target as he had no good words to say about anyone in the Seychelles.

Eventually, in 1786 a Jean-Baptiste de Malavois was sent from Mauritius to investigate the situation, review the land grants and reform the administration of the

colony. Malavois was a military engineer who had been in charge of road construction in Mauritius and was both a competent administrator and a thoughtful and intelligent man. By 1787, Gillot was dismissed from his position and returned to Mauritius leaving Malavois as Commandant. He made a series of new rules and regulations, placed a M. Caradec in command and returned to Mauritius. However, by late 1788 he was back with his family in the Seychelles as Commandant. His task in this position was not easy as his superiors in Mauritius gave him little in the way of material or financial support. By 1789, the French Revolution gathered speed and the unrest spread to Frances' Indian Ocean colonies with unsettling results. The major fear was of slave uprisings but the respect (or fear) the settlers had for the Crown administration slowly ebbed away as the National Assembly in Paris decreed that the colonies should elect their own representative assemblies.

JFM I's Arrival

Land grants in the Seychelles were being made to Mauritius planters in 1786 and 1787 . Documents show JFM I received a grant of 60 arpents in the NE section of Mahe in February of that year. Nageon, Morel and Lambert also received land grants but theirs were larger. Grants were also made to others such as Hangard but these would have been concerning the property that these individuals had already taken and cleared.

JFM I and his family arrived from Mauritius on *La Soane* in May 1790. Where he lived initially is unknown, but newly arrived settlers usually built crude shacks until they were sufficiently established to build proper houses. His original land grant was in the NE quadrant of Mahe, which was not where he eventually built his home at La Plaine on the SE shore of the island.

With the drift in affairs occasioned by the French Revolution, in June 1790, Malavois called a meeting of the principal settlers to decide how the colony of Seychelles should be governed in future. At this time, JFM I could have only been there for about a month. It is interesting to note who attended this meeting to discuss a decree sent to him by the new Mauritius Assembly. Those at the meeting were:

Hangard, Quienet, Lebeuze, D'Offay, Lambert, Audibert, Morel Duboil and the three new arrivals, Nageon, Conan and JFM I.

There were in fact only two absentees, which indicates just how small the population was. A rough estimate of the total population was about 30 to 50 free (French, Indian and Malagasy) and about 200 slaves. All of these people were actively involved in the Morel Duboil affair that erupted only two months later. This group decided that they wanted independence of Mauritius, if not of France, but this ambition never came to pass. Various commissioners from France visited the Seychelles over 1791/1792 and reestablished the authority of Mauritius. Malavois resigned as Commandant and stayed on as a settler. After several brief interludes with temporary commandants, an army officer named Queau de Quinssy was appointed in August 1793 to that position and in which he remained until the Seychelles was ceded to Britain in 1815 at the end of the Napoleonic wars.

Quinssy was the ideal man for this position and time. He successfully steered the colony through the wars with the British over most of the next 20 years, preserving and enhancing a level of prosperity they had previously not experienced. . He had

little help from Mauritius, no troops and few weapons. He tried to form a militia from the local free population but concluded this would not furnish more than about 20 ill trained and ineffective soldiers. His diplomatic skills were put to the test in May 1794 when a squadron of British Navy ships arrived at Mahe and demanded supplies. Quinssy negotiated a surrender which was temporary in nature and spared the colony any serious harm, the principal loss being Francois Houdoul's ship the *Olivette*. The latter ship was named after his fiancée, Marie Corantine Olivette Jorre de St. Jorre, with whom he was married about a month later in June 1794. This process of periodic surrender to British ships soon became effective neutrality whereby the Seychelles were essentially open to both sides of the conflict. On the few occasions when both British and French vessels arrived at the same time, they fought, usually with the French losing. Seychelles based ships sailed under a "Seychelles Capitulation" flag and as such were protected from British capture.

The British Era:

The British invaded Reunion and Mauritius in 1810 and established military control of these islands. They further established control of the Seychelles in April 1811 after a visiting British ship left a naval lieutenant named Sullivan as Commandant, though without any military backup and with only government slaves as support. He was replaced in 1812 by an Army officer who in turn was replaced in 1815 by a civilian named Madge, described by one contemporary source as, "deceitful, vindictive and completely lacking in judgment". He used his position shamelessly for self enrichment and became a major landowner holding 200 slaves and engaging indirectly in the slave trade that it was his job to suppress. Nevertheless, he held this job for 11 years until his retirement in 1826.

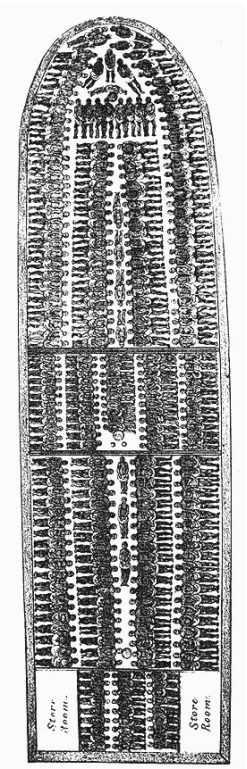
Slavery in the French Indian Ocean Islands

For the first 100 years of our ancestors stay on these islands the overwhelming determinant of life was slavery and the slave trade, together with its aftermath following final abolition by the British in 1835 and thirteen years later by the French (on Reunion) in 1848.

Slavery was considered by virtually everyone in the XVII and XVIII centuries as a normal part of life and indispensable for the economic exploitation of tropical lands. Even thinking people who deplored it as a cruel and barbaric institution seldom had any alternative to offer, and in fact, frequently owned slaves themselves. The French had codified slavery into law with the Code Noire, promulgated in 1685 and then amended in 1723. This was supposedly to protect the slaves but it included draconian punishments for trivial offenses and prohibited any slave from testifying in court against his master. This was later to be a major problem for the British in their attempt to control slaving in these islands from the time they conquered them in 1810.

After the French Revolution in 1789, edicts from Paris theoretically ended slavery, but as far as these islands were concerned, these edicts were effectively ignored, and in 1802, Napoleon reinstated slavery as a legal activity. The British banned slave trading (but not the use of slaves already in captivity) in 1807, reinforced this prohibition in 1811, but did not finally end slavery in all its forms until 1835. The British capture of Reunion in July 1810 and Mauritius in December of the same year (which included the Seychelles) resulted in them now controlling an economy run by

African Slave Shipment Depot



Slave Deck Plan
1836 Slave Ship

Slave Scene, Reunion

Slave Scene, Mauritius
XVIII Century

Arab Slave Dhow Captured by
HMS Daphne 1868

relatively few whites and coloureds controlling over 80,000 slaves. The terms of the capitulation essentially enshrined the existing French laws, amongst which was the Code Noire. It further recognized that slaves were the legitimate part of their owners' assets. It did not however allow the continued importation of new slaves, and thus started a cat and mouse game between the French slavers and the British Crown that the former almost always won.

There were two origins of slaves, namely Madagascar and Mozambique and both had their particular characteristics. The former were essentially Asian, or at least non-African in origin and their immediate source was prisoners taken in wars between local Malagasy rulers. The latter were Africans seized for the most part by Arab slavers in the interior and brought down to slaving ports from Mozambique in the south up to Zanzibar in the north. Both were extremely cheap to buy at the slaving ports and could be sold in the islands at mark ups from 1000 to 2000% after deducting all expenses. Thus even though slavers were frequently apprehended by the British Navy or caught unloading their cargo in Mauritius and Reunion, the penalties were minor. Usually the fines went unpaid, the ship could be bought back and the seized slaves were "apprenticed", often to the planter who would have bought them in the first place. This form of apprenticeship usually was either unpaid or paid at a very low rate. The court condemnation process was almost always challenged and such challenges were usually successful, resulting in no fines, with the ship, but not the seized slaves, being returned to its owners.

The whole process turned into a kind of sick game; the British Navy received prize money for the seized ship, or the civil police received bonuses for seizing newly landed slaves from their new owners. These seizures were then taken to court where the charges against the slaver or slave owner were frequently dismissed on technicalities since the courts were largely in the hands of Creole judges and prosecutors (note that Creole in this context means locally born and does not necessarily mean non-white). If any slaves had been involved in providing information that resulted in the action, they were invariably returned to their owner and usually severely punished. Thus everyone won except the poor long suffering slaves. Slave ship mortality was typically around 25%. Over a 12 year period ending in 1825, 90 ships were arrested and prosecuted, of which only 23 were condemned with 2600 associated slaves liberated into "apprenticeship".

The fiction was that the slave ships were employed in the transportation of "bullocks" from Madagascar. Some of these were fitted out in Mauritius shipyards with the cargo decks no higher than 3 to 4 feet, their ultimate use being transparently obvious for slave transport. The reason all of this happened was initially due to the British governors complicity with the Creoles who effectively controlled the justice system. The first of these was a Scot, Sir Robert Farquhar who ruled Mauritius and the Seychelles for 13 years from their capture in 1810 until 1823, and Colonel Keating who served the same function in Reunion from 1810 until it was returned to France in 1814. Both of these men appear to have assimilated the mindsets of the Grand Blancs and further speculated in land (if awarding themselves land grants can be considered speculation) and indirectly in the ownership of slaves. Several of their subordinates tried repeatedly to apply British law as it was written, but their fate was usually to be recalled to Britain to answer charges of corruption or an excess of zeal in carrying out their duties.

The British also created the position (in both colonies) of "Slave Protector", who was naturally British. It is unclear how effective these people were, but at least their records provide an insight to some of the treatment to which slaves were subjected

and provided some restraint on the worst abuses. JFM II merits at least one report indicating abuse of a female house slave which resulted in her running away and her mother (who was also a slave) filing an official complaint. Again there does not seem to have been any penalty or sanctions against him.

Keating was so enamoured of life in Reunion he returned there as a landowner after his retirement from the British military. It was not uncommon for British officials to marry into Creole families and this led inevitably to them siding with the local idea that the status quo could not be changed, there was no alternative to slavery as it was practiced, and any attempt at a more humanitarian treatment of slaves would result in mass uprisings and the slaughter of all the white population. These same officials all had commercial ventures on the side and Farquhar even had the temerity to name a trading (read slaving) ship he owned the *Walter Farquhar* after his son. Throughout this initial period of British rule, the agricultural face of these islands changed with the increasing demand for sugar from Europe. Crops such as coffee, cotton, spices and grains became less profitable and sugar production rose steadily as did the demand for slaves. At the time it was estimated that the average field slave had a life expectancy of 10 years, and although the fiction was that slaves would reproduce themselves, no one really believed that new importation of slaves was not necessary. So what happened was that the slave trade actually increased under British rule. Also factoring into slave economics was "marronage", or slaves taking off to live rough in all three islands. At any given time about 10% of Mauritian and Reunion slaves would be maroons and subject to periodic sweeps from local militias who were entitled to shoot them without any consideration if they did not immediately surrender.

The overriding fear of all settlers over the entire period of slavery was that these maroons would organize, steal arms and massacre the entire body of settlers. In fact over the entire colonial period there was only one slave revolt at St. Leu on Reunion in November 1811 in which 2 or 3 whites were killed by slaves. This revolt was quickly put down by British troops (the island was at that time a British possession), with about 20 slaves killed or wounded and another 130 put on trial and 25 of these condemned to death.

Exactly how many new slaves were brought into the three island colonies over the period 1810 to 1835 is not known but it probably was in the order of 100,000 or more than were there when Britain assumed control in 1810. The slave population at emancipation in 1835 of Mauritius for which compensation was paid (about £31 per head) was 67,000. At this time, there were about the same number still in servitude in Reunion. In the Seychelles, there were 3,000 slaves in 1810, a number that had increased to 7,000 by 1815.

As the sugar industry's economics changed in the 1820's, slaves could be used more profitably in Mauritius than in the Seychelles and a new process developed shipping existing slaves from the former to the latter. This was regulated by the British under fairly stringent conditions, which of course the Grand Blancs immediately tried to circumvent. JFM II was involved in this trade and was charged at least on one occasion with illegalities. Some fascinating observations come from dry-as-dust contemporary British accounts of this trade, amongst which was that almost all to the slaves were under 5 feet tall. One wonders how these malnourished tiny people could possibly do much useful work in the harsh conditions of the cane fields of Mauritius.

Slavery officially ended in 1835, but in the Seychelles, it took until 1838 before every last one was effectively free. These ex-slaves typically existed as sharecroppers on small land plots owned by their ex-masters. This system was termed "la moitie" which allowed the ex-slave a small plot of land in return for 3 days unpaid work a week. Those who did not go for this system had to provide entirely for themselves in the way of food, shelter and clothing. They could also work for their ex-masters for very small wages but virtually none of them took this route. The net result of all of this was the planters had no labour force and consequently plantation production decreased drastically pushing the Seychelles into an extended economic depression.

It did not end the influx of slaves, since Arab traders continued to export slaves from Africa to the Middle East and South America. Britain continued to interdict this trade and in 1861 started to release slaves captured from Arab dhows in the Seychelles. This procedure continued until 1874 by which time over 2500 freed slaves captured by the Royal Navy were been landed in Mahe. They were not repatriated to their African place of origin since if they had been, they would either have been killed or re-enslaved. Although their lot was probably improved (over what would have happened to them in slavery), the Seychelles "apprenticeship" system was for the most part only marginally better. The newly released Africans were sold to planters for their "processing cost" (around £1 sterling each) and were to be provided housing, food, clothing and other necessities plus a small wage in return for 6 days per week work for a three to five year contract. They were often short changed on all of this since the planters typically considered the processing cost as being analogous to the purchase price of a slave. They were protected to a certain extent by British law but access to this protection was by no means easy or even handed. Unsurprisingly at the end of their apprenticeship, none of them signed up for a second term.

This new source of plantation labour did result in an increase in prosperity for the Seychelles planters which, coupled with a switch to coconut and vanilla crops, enabled an increasing amount of cash to be generated by the colony. When this source of labour dried up after 1875, the planters petitioned the British government for the Royal Navy to resume landing captured slaves in the Seychelles. This was not successful.

Seychelles ex-slaves led a very marginal existence; the alcoholic oblivion they practiced in their former state did not change with emancipation. Their function was largely replaced by indentured Indian labour in Mauritius that started in 1828 well before slavery had ceased. This was not allowed in the Seychelles with the result that there was no real labour force available for the planters. The Mauritius Indian indenture system had a lot in common with the slavery that it succeeded but it was undoubtedly less vicious, if not much more humane.

JFM I's Family Tree

I have outlined the family tree from JFM I down through four generations to my father (LGJ) in order to avoid confusion. I have expanded their individual lives later in the narrative where additional information exists, but for the most part, after JFM I passed away, they seem to have lived quiet uneventful lives.

In addition to the four children with whom JFM I's family arrived in 1790, two additional girls were born in the Seychelles. These were:

Francoise Euphrasie	1792
Marie Corantine Dorothee (or Marie Perinne Felix?)	1795.

JFM I died after the latter year; the exact date and cause of his death is not known. As JFM II was his only surviving son, he must have inherited the entire land holding of his father.

There is a mysterious additional "son" named Barthelemy Raymonde Jorre de St. Jorre who appears in the Seychelles birth records with a date of birth of May 9, 1805. The question arises as to just who his parents were. He could not be the son of JFM I since, regardless of when his death was, Marie Pitel was definitely a widow in 1803 and JFM II did not get married to his 12 year old bride Marie Catherine Himbert until February 4, 1813. The most probable explanation for this "son" is that he was in fact the initially illegitimate son of the 13 year old Francoise Euphrasie who subsequently (10 days later) married Barthelemy Raimond Houdoul, who was presumably a relative (brother?) of the famed corsair. This child then would then have become the legitimate son of Houdoul and would have been renamed accordingly thus "disappearing" from genealogical sight. Obviously, if this analysis is correct, the custom of naming the son exactly the same as the father in this age must have been the fashion.

JFM II married in 1813 at the age of 28. His child bride, the 12 year old Catherine HImbert, had her first child within three years, at the ripe old age of 15. This (girl boy or twins?)was the first of 14 children, most of whom survived to adulthood and of which 5 were boys. The second child, born in 1817, was Andre Despilly (ADJ) who in turn appears to have inherited the plantation in a complete form despite the other male heirs. ADJ was trained as a lawyer/notary, although whether or not he left the island to obtain this knowledge is not known. According to my father (LGJ), who knew ADJ quite well (he was 9 years old when his grandfather died in April 1899), the latter despised the legal profession and never practiced law in the Seychelles. It is an interesting, if unimportant fact, that a conversation between someone born in 1817 with their grandson in the late XIX century can survive in someone else's memory (mine) through into the XXI century. This begs the question as to where he received a legal or notarial education since he married at age 19 and the only possible place he could have got it was in Mauritius. As he subsequently became a clerk of the Magistrates Court in the late 1840's, it suggests that this legal skill set may not have been too deep.

For the record, JFM II's children were:

Marie Dorothee Ernestine	1816
Marie Dorothee Ernest	1816
Andre Despilly (ADJ)	1817 to 1899
Gilles Marie Henri	1818
Marie Catherine Idalie	1819
Zelomere	1820 to 1888
Louise Henriette	1822 to 1864
Alphonsine	1824
Louis Dex	???? to 1901
Jean Francois	1825 to 1882
Zelia	1827
Francoise Blanche	1830
Fanellie	1831
William	1832
Eliore	1835

Les Garcons

Les Filles

The first two were presumably fraternal twins.

ADJ in turn married a slightly older bride, Therese Marie Rose Morel Duboil in August 1836 when she was 23 and he a mere 19 years old. This Morel Duboil was none other than the granddaughter of the Jean Baptiste Morel Duboil that JFM I and the other "Grand Blancs" of that era had so unceremoniously drummed out of the colony in 1790. This couples production of children was quite muted for the age, being only five of which three were boys. The oldest, Jean Polyphile Armel Despilly (JPAD) - where did they dream up these names? - was born in 1842 and again appears to have inherited the estate in an unbroken form.

Again for the record, ADJ's children were:

Marie Francoise Leontine	1838
Marie Catherine	1840
Jean Polyphile Armel Despilly (JPAD)	1842
Charles Dorset Marcel	1845
Noel Edouard Osmin	1847 to 1921

JPAD, my grandfather, did not seem to have any ambitions other than being a Grand Blanc of the Seychelles. He married an 18 year old Mauritian girl named Marie Antoinette Fleurot in October 1871 at the church in Pamplemousses, Mauritius, but they returned to the Seychelles to start having children in 1872. Marie Rose Felicie was the first and an almost continuous stream of babies came thereafter until the last of the 16, Joseph Abel, of 16 was born in 1894. My father (LGJ) was the fourth last of this tribe, and appeared on October 21, 1889. The full list appears below:

Marie Rose Felicie	1872 to 1929
Marie Andrine Eudoxie	1874 to 1924
Marie Simone Amelie	????
Marie Marceline Emilie	1875
Jean Louis (Francois?) Andre	1876 to 1931
Marie Catherine Rosine	1878
Julien Marcel	1880
Jean Francois Laurent	1882 to 1882
William Benjamin Edmond	1888
Louis Despilly Antoine	1884
Louis Mahe Emile	1885
Marie Noelle Alice	1886 to 1960
Louis George (LGJ)	1889 to 1965
Marie Felix Henri	1891
Marie Francoise Leonie	1892
Joseph Abel	1894

The 15 surviving offspring and their mother Marie Antoinette Fleurot were captured together in two photos taken at La Plaine in 1909 about 5 years after their father JPAD had died. This was probably the last time that the entire family was together. LGJ is the young man on the extreme right of the upper picture.

None of these three generations of children appear to have made any impact on the serene surface of Indian Ocean island society or have left any traces other than genealogical in world history. I consequently have not elaborated on their names other than those that are on the direct line of descendence. The one exception to this is of course JFM I’s daughter Marie Corantine Olivette.

Our Family Corsair, Jean Francois Houdoul

Jean Francois Houdoul

One of the few lasting (in a historical sense) connections our family has with the saga of the Seychelles colonization is through the marriage of Marie Corantine Olivette to the French corsair, Jean Francois Houdoul in June 1794. French corsairs in the late XVIII and early XIX centuries were the rock stars of that era. As legalized gentlemen pirates, for a comparatively small investment and in climate of almost continuous French/British warfare, they could not only obtain significant riches but also become national heroes and romantic historical figures. The pre-eminent corsair of this era was Robert Surcouf, but Houdoul still had a high visibility career and, despite setbacks in the loss of ships and imprisonment in Calcutta for several years, finished his days on the Seychelles as one of its leading citizens.

He was born in 1765 in Ciotat in Provence, the working class son of a butcher and left for the Indian Ocean at the age of 24 as an experienced sailor. He probably went to sea as a "mousse" in his early teens, since on his arrival in Mauritius on the *Scipion* in 1789, he appeared to have been a ship's officer. He sailed on slaving voyages for the next three years before assuming command of *Les Deux Soeurs* and then the *Succes*, both slavers operating between Mauritius, the Seychelles and Madagascar, possibly as part owner of these vessels.

By early 1794, he had his own ship the *Olivette*, named after his fiancée Marie Corantine Olivette J de St. J. It is not clear whether this was intended to be a slaver or a corsair, but it is likely that it was the former. At the start of his ship owning career he had the misfortune to the trapped in the Mahe harbour by a strong British naval force on May 16, 1794 and hence lost his ship before his buccaneering career had even started. He nevertheless got married to his 16 year old sweetheart the following month, and, on returning to Mauritius, signed up to sail on the corsair vessel *Enterprise* and later on the *Pichegrue*. He was already involved in slaving in 1794 in conjunction with JFM I as part owners of the *Sans Culottes*. He was still at this trade in 1823 as part owner of *the Courier de Seychelles*.

In May 1797, he finally got command of his own ship, the *Apollon*, in which he had a half interest, and in which he achieved significant success. By the end of the year he had captured 7 British ships with a supposed value of Fr 700 million and brought all this back to Mauritius. He sold his interest to another corsair and appears to have been in temporary retirement until in 1799 he purchased and equipped a new boat *L'Uni* from another corsair named Francois Lememe. Coincidentally, this was year in which his first child was born. This ship, with its crew of 200 men and 32 cannons sailed under Houdoul's command in May 1800 and took three prizes before disaster

struck in August when he and his ship were captured in the Bay of Bengal by *HMS Arrogant.*

He was taken to Calcutta and held there in prison for two years until the Treaty of Amiens was signed in 1802 ending (temporarily) hostilities between France and Britain. Following his release, he returned to the Seychelles and although he continued to sail, it is not clear if remained an active corsair. By 1805, he had definitely given up this activity but built and sailed a number of small trading vessels that operated under the Seychelles "capitulation flag". These almost certainly were at least part time slavers.

At least two of his ships were definitely slavers; *La Favorite* carried 22 slave cargoes between 1803 and 1808 and the *Courier de Seychelles* at least one in 1823.
He probably sailed on the former but may have been past such an active life by the mid 1820's. He built several large houses and was a major landowner both on Mahe and Silhouette. Olivette went on to have a total of 11 children the last of which was born in 1822. Houdoul died in January 1835 at the age of 70 from a heart attack, one of the richest and most respected of the Seychelles Grand Blancs.

Life in XVIII and XIX Century Seychelles

JFM I's Generation:

His brief life as a Seychellois Grand Blanc is better documented than either his son's or grandson's lives, mainly because there were very few other whites on the island and also due to the turmoil created by the French Revolution. His first appearance in the record has already been mentioned in the historical section above as being chosen as a member of the Seychelles General Assembly (SGA) in June 1790, just after his arrival from Mauritius. Barely two months, later he was involved in the Morel Duboil affair in which he was probably the target for character assassination, but the cause could have been something else that may have related to land or money. The following is a brief description of what happened.

The Morel Duboil Affair:

Jean Baptiste Morel Duboil was 50 years old when he arrived in the Seychelles shortly before JFM I. The son of a Garde Magasin who had worked in both Mauritius and Reunion, he married Marie Rose Carvalho (a lady of Portuguese origin who appeared to have been born in China) in 1770 and farmed in the former island before emigrating to the Seychelles in 1789 or 1790 with his wife, two adult daughters and a teenage son. They had lived in eastern Mauritius for at least 16 years, and had known JFM I and his family for all of this time. The enmity between these families must have started well before their arrival in the Seychelles although at one time they could have been friends.

Morel Duboil was involved in some physical confrontation with both Hangard and JFM I shortly after the latter's arrival in the Seychelles, and then the former must have left for Mauritius to try and obtain recompense against them. There is a suggestion that the whole affair started with insults against Morel's two daughters by JFM I (he apparently called them cows), which was followed by widely circulated letters making

allegations of JFM I's crimes (murder and shooting a cow) in Flacq, Mauritius some years before.

In September there was a hostile exchange of letters between Madame Morel and Audibert a member of the Seychelles Assembly. In her letter, she elaborates on JFM I's Mauritius crimes. These include details of the attack on the poor 72 years old M. Maisonrouge; he was beaten from behind on a public road and left for dead. The next set of documents starts in October after Morel has returned from Mauritius when he is summoned to appear before the Seychelles Assembly. This he declines to do, and the following day, Nageon in the authority of the SGA, sends a "guard" in a boat with a letter demanding that both Morel and his wife return in it to face charges of slander arising from Mde. Morel's letter to Audibert. This again he refuses to do, and in it mentions that JFM I had tried to appropriate either his or someone else's' assets.

Nageon's response to this is to send an armed detachment of six "soldiers" and nine slaves to arrest him and to bring him back by force if necessary. After being arrested and brought back to the SGA, Morel Duboil wrote a brief note deploring the effect this action would have on both his slaves and those of others in the community. This arrest was duly made and on the following day, the SGA tried him and found him guilty of being a slanderer and sentenced him to banishment from the colony. The actual judgment document is dated December 1790 which probably was after Morel's trial and possibly after he was deported. It consisted of 14 articles which went on at great length and in repetitive form, but the essence was:

* Morel has slandered JFM I.
* There was no proof of any validity to his accusations about JFM I's supposed crimes in Mauritius.
* His presence in the Seychelles could not be tolerated.
* His punishment was to be permanent exile from the Seychelles and that of his wife was to be 8 days in prison.

When he was shipped off to Mauritius is not known exactly but it was no later than January 1791. He wrote a vitriolic letter to the Mauritius Prosecutor General later that year summarizing everything that had happened but also adding further details about JFM I's crimes but unfortunately not adding dates as to when they were supposed to have occurred.

He never returned to the Seychelles and must have died in Mauritius fairly soon afterwards. His wife and children lived on in the Seychelles, with the son (Jean-Baptiste Marcellin Morel) who would later marry the youngest of JFM I's daughters in 1808 who appeared to either be called Marie Corantine Dorothee or Marie Perinne Felix. This girl would have only been 13 or 14 at the time of her marriage. So presumably the family quarrel was patched up by then.

JFM I's Demise:

Oddly enough his passing is not recorded, but since his last daughter was born in 1795, it cannot have been earlier than 1794 and could have been as late as 1797. Marie Pitel out lived him by over 20 years dying in 1818 after having remarried. She had limited contact with history in that in 1803 she wanted to marry one of the Jacobin deportees (Antoine Boniface) who were rounded up in the wake of an attempt on Napoleon's life in Paris on Christmas Eve 1800 and subsequently exiled to

the Seychelles. There was so much local opposition to this match, that she gave in and three years later in May 1806 married a local planter Francois Gaspard Roysard. There is some conflicting information about her death, since British slave records show "Veuve Jorre" owning 4 slaves on Mahe as late as 1826. Other than that, she was involved in a law suit with her son-in-law Citoyen Juanne (husband of Francoise Beatrice, JFM I's fourth child). What this was about appears to be money, but I could not be bothered to wade through 8 pages of repetitive and densely written French prose to find out.

JFM II's Life and Times:

As a child, he must have been witness to all of the alarms and excursions that the Seychelles went through during the Napoleonic wars. Following the assassination attempt on Napoleon in Paris on Christmas Eve 1800, a large number of suspects (some of which were entirely innocent) were rounded up and, those who were not executed, were condemned to banishment from France. Of these 70 were destined to go to the Seychelles in two separate ships, 38 in the *Fleche* and another 32 on the *Chiffone*, both of which sailed from France in the winter of 1801. The *Chiffone* arrived first in July 1801 to the alarm and dismay of the Seychellois who saw the deportees as blood stained wretches responsible for the worst atrocities of the Paris Terror, who would soon foment a slave revolt resulting in the settlers' deaths. Nevertheless they were landed and distributed amongst the settlers and the *Chiffone* underwent extensive repairs. Just as she was about ready to sail, a British warship, the *Sybille* entered Mahe harbour and engaged the *Chiffone* in battle which the latter lost after a short but bloody fight.

On September 4 the *Sybille* and its prize left for India, and the following day, the much delayed *Fleche* entered the harbour with a British ship, the *Victor* in hot pursuit. The *Fleche* arrived first and quickly disembarked the deportees and prepared for battle. The following day, with both ships in the harbour they fought for over 2 hours until the *Fleche*, on fire and sinking, was abandoned by her crew. Since all this drama played out over about a month, it is possible that JFM II, who lived only a couple of hours (by boat) south of the harbour and being 16 years old at the time, was witness to much of it.

The net result of the deportees presence was strong resistance from the settlers. This brought about the further onward transportation of 33 of the "worst" characters to the island of Anjouan where most of them perished through disease. Fate was kinder to some whom remained. The Widow St. Jorre (Marie Pitel) took in an Antoine Boniface as tutor to her teenage children and later tried to marry him. Boniface had been the concierge at the Temple prison during the Terror and may have been a dubious character. Due to opposition from the settlers as a whole this wedding never took place.

As already mentioned JFM II was married to a Catherine Himbert in 1813. He would have been in his early teens when his father died and 21 when his mother remarried 1806, so it is likely that his main focus during this period was first learning how to run La Plaine and then actually running it. His mother moved into Mahe Town (Victoria now) around the time of his marriage. British slave records indicate that in 1818 he had 47 slaves at his plantation in the southern district of Mahe. This number varied between 53 and 4 with the latter occurring in 1826. About this time the sugar boom in Mauritius was under way and a higher return could be had by moving them to that island. He participated in this trade and was charged at least once with illegal slave exports from the Seychelles. The British would licence slave movements

between islands, but at the point of import careful descriptions of each slave (height, colour, markings, names etc.) and number on the export documents had to match the incoming bodies. If they did not, then these could be confiscated and the exporter fined. It was in these records that the small size of almost all these slaves appears. Most of them were under 5 feet tall. It is possible that the measurements were made in some archaic French measurement, but the records were kept by the British.

It is interesting to note that a number of other landowners had well over 100 slaves and a few had as many as 250. Obviously JFM II was not one of the major economic players of the time. His last appearance on the Seychelles scene was in 1825 when his name appears on a petition sent to the Mauritius governor requesting that Queau de Quinssy be retired from his position as Juge de Paix (a position he had held since 1810) as he was too old to carry out its functions.

During the period of 1811 to 1835 from the start of British control until the abolition of slavery, the Seychelles underwent a sort of boom that peaked in the late 1820's. It was mainly based on cotton which had become the main cash crop of the island. JFM II surfaces in the record in 1826 when he bought a number of illegally landed young slaves and tried to pass them off as the children of existing slaves. It is unlikely that he suffered any real penalty for this infraction that was going on all the time. The number of slaves in the colony rose steadily and may have peaked around 1820 at about 7000 or 90% of the islands population, an imbalance that caused renewed fears of slave revolts. In 1822, a reinforcement of 17 armed policemen was sent from Mauritius to increase security. Another reference to his family arises in 1835 from a report by the Protector of Slaves concerning excessive punishment against a teenage slave named Elisa Bonte whom Marie Catherine Himbert (JFM II's wife) had caught asleep on her bed one Sunday. For this the slave was both beaten, deprived of sleep and inflicted with the "zenga" (being forced to hold a weight above her head for long periods of time). Elisa did not wait around for more punishment but took off with another slave named Isadore. Again the outcome of this is not known but it is unlikely to have had any significant consequences for JFM II's family.

Andre Despilly
Jorre de St. Jorre

By the 1820's the rough frontier subsistence economy was giving way to a more settled existence, with stores and other sources of supplies being available, a small shipbuilding industry starting up, other artisans setting up shop and several small schools opening in Victoria. Most of the residences on the islands were within a 100 m. of the sea and communications were largely by sea as there were no real roads, just tracks that were not useable by wheeled traffic. Most food was locally grown, for protein, pigs,

domestic fowl and fish from the sea, usually caught by a family slave dedicated to this activity, had to suffice.

The cotton boom did not last long. Increased production in the US drove the price down by 75% and in 1827 the total value of Seychelles exports had fallen by 90%, dragging down the value of everything including slaves with it. This resulted in an exodus of settlers and by 1835 , half of the population had left for Mauritius, Reunion or India. Sugar was tried as a replacement but because the British had decreed that all imports and exports of the Seychelles had to pass through Mauritius, then a very large sugar producer with concomitant low prices, this was not economic. For a fairly brief period, the Seychelles became a base for European and US whalers but this was short lived and provided little lasting benefit for the inhabitants.

When JFM II died is not known but since his 15 th. child was born in 1835, it could not have been earlier than 1834. His passing probably coincided with the final end of slavery in 1835. Compensation paid by the British to the owners may have injected some money into the economy but this was probably offset by the disinclination of the now ex-slaves to do much in the way of work for their previous masters. By all accounts, Mahe in the 1830's was a poor looking sleepy place where little of any note happened.

ADJ's Life and Times:

ADJ was born in 1817 and was probably about 18 to 20 when his father died in the mid 1830's. If he had formal training as a lawyer or notary, he must have received this in Mauritius since it seems unlikely that he would have made the journey to France given the depressed state of the Seychelles at the time. In any event he married Therese Marie Rose Morel Duboil in August 1836 at the age of 19 (she was 23), they went on to have 5 children, of which JPAD was the third born in 1842.

Charles Mylius, the British civil commissioner from 1839 commented "everything spoke of decay"; signs of depression were everywhere both in Victoria, out in the plantations and in the abandoned shipyards. The ex-slaves when they worked at all, did the minimal amount to grow some food and most lived as sharecroppers on the estates at which they had previously been slaves. There were some signs of progress, in terms of churches, schools and the odd "literary society" but the overall tone was one of stasis. The colony did have a medical health officer and several private doctors, but the former complained bitterly that he had neither basic medical supplies or facilities or even a useable boat in which to visit other islands or even other parts of Mahe, most of which was only accessible by boat.

Not a whole lot is known about Andre Despilly life other than what has been already described under JFM I's family tree. He seems to have some qualification as a lawyer or a notary public and may or may not have worked at these professions in the Seychelles or Mauritius. In 1852 he was apparently the clerk of the Magistrates Court in Victoria. The magistrate, an Anglo-Indian by the name of Charles Molloy Campbell, was involved in a turtle harvesting trip of a boat named the *Courier* on which one of the crew had been killed. At first this appeared to have been an accident, but it later transpired that it may have been murder. Campbell initially dismissed this as false, but he was overruled by the Civil Commissioner Dashwood Ricketts who accused him of perverting justice. He further accused him of blackmailing his clerk (ADJ) over "a delicate family matter". The net result of all of this was Campbell's suspension and subsequent disappearance from the colony. How long ADJ was in this position or whether it was his main source of income is not known. There is some confusion

Jean Armel Polyphile Despilly Jorre de St. Jorre and Marie Antoinette Fleurot

about this Campbell as to whether his name was James or Charles and whether he came to the Seychelles from Mauritius or India. There was a mixed race lawyer named Charles Molloy Campbell who practiced in Mauritius from 1841 until at least 1865 who probably fits the description.

In one account the blackmail attempt of Campbell concerned a daughter (probably Marie Francoise Leontine) of ADJ who attempted to get rid of her illegitimate child shortly after birth by bribing her old nurse to do this deed. The objective of this purported blackmail was to sack ADJ and get him to leave without fuss or complaint. It obviously did not work. Looking at comparative pay scales for the era, the position of Clerk to the Magistrates Court was not highly paid.

His name appears on several petitions sent by the "Grand Blancs" to Mauritius over the years, most of which pertain to issues that had economic impact on the planters income. It also appears as a member of the local Masonic Lodge in 1871 in which he is clearly identified as a Notary Public. He also provides us with the first image of any of our ancestors. This photo was probably taken around 1865 when he was about 50 years old. Thereafter photo documentation becomes more intense.

His wife died in 1876 at the age of 63 and he remarried 3 years later to a Breton woman named Marie Herminie de Leissegues. She was presumably a younger woman, possibly with extravagant tastes. Two years later in 1881, ADJ was being sued by a local merchant named Fieuzal for ₨500 in bills she had run up after he

had informed the latter that he would not be responsible for his wifes' debts. The court found in ADJ's favour and the case was dismissed with costs.

An interesting anecdote about this marriage comes down to us from a conversation my brother John had with our aunt (Leonie) in 1968. He was asking her about a "pavilion" that had been built on the La Plaine estate in the Victorian era some distance from the main house. This had been built by ADJ shortly after this second marriage and was due to his intense disappointment on his wedding night. His new youthful looking bride turned out to have a wig, false teeth and a number of other "bodily aids to beauty". As a result, he tried to kick her out of the house, but as she refused to leave and, as apparently divorce was not an option, he built the pavilion and moved out into it where he stayed, possibly until his death in 1899 at the ripe old age of 82.

JPAD's Life and Times:

JPAD was born on Sept. 14, 1842, the first boy of the five children of ADJ and Therese Marie Morel Duboil. Essentially nothing is known about him until he married an 18 year old Marie Antoinette Fleurot in Mauritius in October 1871 when he was 29. Thereafter, the children rolled out almost on an annual basis until the last Joseph Abel was born in 1894 for a grand total of 7 girls and 10 boys. Most of these survived to adulthood, of which my father was number 14, born on October 21, 1889.

One small glimpse of him is a record in the Mauritius Register for 1850 on Seychelles schools shows two Jorres (in a class of 13 boys, the entire school enrollment) by the names of S. Jorre and D. St Jorre. This was a Catholic fee paying school run by a M. Lefevre and predated the arrival of the Catholic Christian and Marist brothers. These two boys were almost certainly JPAD, aged 8 at the time and his younger brother Charles Dorset Marcel who would have been 5 or 6. The former was charged Rs 1.50 per month and the latter was free; fees were apparently assessed on both age and ability to pay. All of this suggests that JPAD had a very poor education since the short lived Christian Brothers school did not come into being until the mid 1850's and the better Marist Brothers school did not start until 1860.

He may have signed a petition by local landowners to the Governor of Mauritius in 1882 requesting that the limited authority granted to the Seychelles 10 years before be rescinded (due to the increased property taxes levied at that time). This person could have been either ADJ or JPAD; either way the relief sought was not granted.

Apart from this, he does not appear in any record that I can find, so I have simply related the historical passing of his life time in the Seychelles over the remains of the XIX century.

Religion finally arrived with Charles Mylius in 1839. This British Civil Commissioner was an ardent Anglican who was appalled that there was no church of any description on any of the islands in the archipelago. This in itself is strange since Roman Catholic churches and missionaries typically sprang up soon after French or Spanish colonization of tropical lands. He commented that the inhabitants" were born, married and died without any Christian rites". He cured this by setting up a Protestant chapel in which he preached on Sundays. He also shut down billiard rooms and other profane commercial establishments on the Sabbath to the displeasure of the Seychellois. This was a battle he eventually lost.

A Catholic priest by the name of Des Avranches eventually arrived in 1851 and baptized hundreds, but because of active opposition from the then Civil Commissioner (Keates) was refused permission to stay. The former subsequently appealed to the Pope with the result that, in 1853 two Capuchin priests were sent, the first permanent priests in the colony's 83 year history. Thereafter the Catholic establishment's growth was rapid with churches and chapels being built on all the main islands and well run Catholic schools for both boys and girls started. The former was operated initially by the Christian Brothers and subsequently by the Marist Brothers; the sisters of St. Joseph ran the girls school, which by all accounts provided a good education for them. My father spent his entire school career at the former, graduating in 1907 or 1908. I believe that he traveled by boat from La Plaine to Victoria, stayed there during the week either at the school or in a family "town house" and then returned to the plantation the same way at the weekend.

This situation remained stable until 1911 when an English language secondary school (King's College) was set up by the colonial administration with the express purpose of weaning the propertied classes away from French education. While this was not very successful in terms of numbers, at least several children of the Grand Blancs did attend including at least one Jorre de St. Jorre. It was probable that some of them had at last realized the way for advancement for their children outside of the colony was through the British and not the French educational system.

Communication with the outside world finally became more secure when steam ships started to call in 1857 with regular scheduled service starting several years later. The one and only natural disaster ever to hit the islands occurred in October 1862 when a tropical cyclone, veered way to the north of the usual path and struck Mahe for three days with intense rain and winds creating a huge landslide that wiped out half of Victoria and wreaked destruction on much of the colony's coconut palms. The death toll was around 80 but many of those missing were never found. Surprisingly, by the mid 1860's the population bounced back from this setback, possibly because it coincided with increased whaling activity, the addition of the released slaves augmenting the labour force and even some new white immigrants from France. The population had recovered to 7500 by this time from a low it reached of 5500 in 1840. The removal in 1876 of the requirement that all trade had to pass through Mauritius further enhanced the economic revival.

Unfortunately, my father (LGJ) did not give us much information about either of his parents. A couple of anecdotes that came down from him to us, was that, as a child, he was severely castigated by JPAD for mixing water with wine at evening meals. The second was that on Saturday nights when some of the servants/estate workers, who apparently lived in the basement of the main house, got drunk and noisy, he would stamp on the floor to shut them up. Not much of a legacy to determine any inkling of what he was actually like.

Several other schools had been started earlier, initially run by charities for ex-slaves or by local educated people of French origin. The former were free but the latter charged fees and were largely patronized by the planters' children. Since all of these schools were in Victoria, those families in outlying districts still used tutors at home to educate their children. If JPAD's brood is anything to go by his home school class may have been as large as any of the early Victoria schools.

The islands remained economically depressed through the 1840s and 1850s; Government buildings decayed for want of both money and labour to maintain them. The ex-slaves worked only when they wanted to and that was not very often. Irate

landowners implored the administration to arrest their errant servants who would take off for a day and not return for weeks.

By all accounts by mid century the planter class as a whole had become impoverished due to their lacking a cash crop. Whereas they could subsist easily on what their lands and the sea produced, they had little money for anything else. A small but growing merchant class took their place in the economy.

Still, the locals seemed to enjoy life; a visiting ship's captain commented that the principal amusements of the population were "smoking, visiting, dancing and playing dominoes". Visiting ships were also a source of activity and commerce. At this time the Seychelles was being used as a whaling base for repair and re-supply, but this decreased as the local whale population was rapidly depleted.

Visitors to the colony frequently commented on the ease of living and the indolent nature of the inhabitants. Petty crime was widespread and the town jail usually full to overflowing with the locked up criminals largely used as labour on government construction projects. The jail was expanded to house 130 inmates in 1870.

Thus the colony rolled through the late Victorian and Edwardian decades without anything really changing; world shaking events barely impinged on these sleepy islands, and even those that did such as World War I had little lasting effect although the battalion of Seychellois that saw service in Africa was decimated by disease. There was a steady trickle of emigration from the archipelago since there was no chance of any tertiary education or training locally and poor prospects of a career. LGJ's departure in 1909 was his only choice for a younger son of a large family with limited land and assets who wanted more out of life than genteel poverty in a British colonial backwater.

Epilogue

The Childhood of LGJ:

By all accounts my father had reasonably happy childhood given the moral and social climate of the late Victorian era in one of the most remote and possibly the sleepiest of all British colonies. The tides of conquest, wars and expansion of the Empire basically passed them by and would continue to do so until World War I started in 1914. Occasionally, troublesome and rebellious native leaders from other British colonies were banished to the Seychelles since this was virtually the only real value the Colonial Office placed on these islands. By the late XIX century, the Seychelles was as French and Catholic as it had ever been, and apart from the tropical location, my father probably would not have appeared much different than if he had been raised in Metropolitan France. He was primarily French and spoke English with a noticeable French accent. His entire school career was at the Victoria Catholic school (St. Louis College) run by the Marist Brothers, and as the old Jesuit saying goes, "give me the child and I will mould the man", it certainly worked on him; he was a believing if not practicing Catholic until his death in 1965.

It is interesting that his many brothers and sisters took different paths in their lives, some staying within the Francophone orbit, going to or marrying into families in Mauritius or Madagascar, while others, such as my father and his older brother Edmond moved to Britain and Canada respectively for education and work. Very few

Louis George de St Jorre

Grace Rose Islip

of them stayed in the Seychelles and the few that did either ran the family plantation or were married others who owned or managed similar plantations. The trades, commerce or the normal professions (such as law or medicine) did not seem to rate as choices.

LGJ in Scotland:

LGJ was somewhat different in that he embarked on a technological career by leaving the Seychelles around 1909 for a 4 or 5 year apprenticeship at a Glasgow shipyard with the aim of becoming a Marine Engineer. He duly accomplished this aim, which given the incredible contrast between a small and sleepy tropical Edwardian British colony and a Clydeside industrial suburb at the height of "dark satanic mills" phase of British imperialism, says much for his determination. It must have been difficult for him to either understand the Scottish brogue all around him or for them to understand his French accented English. Nevertheless, he persevered and duly earned his Third Engineer's ticket and got a job with the P&O Line either in 1913 or 1914, just in time for the World War I.

He obviously did not develop any lasting ties with Scotland since for the rest of his life, when not on ships, he lived in and around London.

The Rest of his Life:

After completing his training he joined the P&O Line, and worked for them steadily until he quit the sea around 1929 when he obtained a shore job in London. The only part of this period that stands out is his war time experience of being torpedoed on July 26, 1917 by a German submarine (the UC 27) in the Mediterranean off Cape Serrat, Tunisia. His ship was the SS Mooltan, which was carrying over 550 passengers and crew and being escorted by two Japanese destroyers (which country was then an ally of Britain). By all accounts, it was a relatively benign sinking, with only two fatalities and not much survival drama. The survivors were taken to Egypt (I can remember LGJ telling me that he was on a destroyer) where the Mooltan's crew waited for another ship to take them on to a new assignment.

The UC 27 was commanded by a Lt. Gerhard Schultz who, by most measures, was a successful U-boat commander. The Mooltan was the largest of the 45 Allied ships he sunk during his captaincy of this submarine over 1917. Both he and the UC 27 survived the war. His successor to the command of this boat was Wilhelm Canaris, who later went on to be the Chief of German Intelligence in WW II. The latter was arrested by the Gestapo and executed in April 1945.

Thereafter LGJ shuttled back and forth between Britain, the Far East and Australia until he left the sea roughly at the start of the Depression. He married my mother, Grace Rose Islip in 1934 or 1935, which was followed by the birth of my brother John in February 1936 and myself in June 1937. The marriage did not long outlast my advent, with separation and divorce proceedings starting before World War II and being completed shortly after the war ended. He married my step mother Edith Ross in 1947 and lived with her until his death in 1965 from a stroke. Their 1930’s era portraits appear on the previous page.