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### First Citizen of Baie d'Urfé



**The formation of the parish of St. Louis de Haut de L'île in 1686 marked the beginning of what is today the Town of Baie d'Urfé. L'Abbé d'Urfé was named it's first pastor. Our ancestor Jean de Lalonde was it's first citizen and churchwarden.**

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### François-Saturnin Lascaris d'Urfé

from "Baie d'Urfé, 1686-1986"  
by Eric Lalonde

Into this small community of settlers, soldiers, traders, and Indians, the Gentlemen of St-Sulpice sent François-Saturnin Lascaris d'Urfé, Marquis de Bauge. He was to serve in this outpost as missionary and cure of the Parish of Saint-Louis-du-Boul-de-l'île. A point of land, then a bay and eventually a town were to be named after him.

François was born in 1641 in the family castle, in the Forez region of France. He was one of nine children born to Charles-Emmanuel, Marquis d'Urfé and de Bauge, a Marshall of the King's arms. Through his great-grandmother, Renéé de Savoie-Lascaris, François was related to the illustrious Greek house of Lascaris, which had once occupied the throne on Constantinople.

The d'Urfé's originated in the Loire region in France and their 14th Century castle was a classical one, with moats, drawbridges, turrets, and ramparts. It was called "Les Cornes d'Urfé" and its ruins still remain. It was abandoned around 1500 A.D. and a member of the family Claude d'Urfé, designed the present chateau "simplicity and grace".

The d'Urfé family developed military leaders, diplomats, priests, poets, and writers. In fact, in France the name d'Urfé is best known for the author Honore d'Urfé who wrote a famous novel, "L'Astree", in the 17th Century. Other towns in France still carry the d'Urfé name, as does ours.

Of the nine children of Charles-Emmanuel, Marquis d'Urfé, two became nuns and three became priests. François was admitted to the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris on April 1st, 1660. He was ordained in 1665 and served in France until the autumn of 1668 when he came to Canada with five other priests. His first post took him to the Quinte or Kente mission on the Bay of Quinte, at what is now Consecon, just west of Kingston, Ontario.

This mission was 300 miles from the French colony of Quebec. The journey took 26 days, traveling by canoe, coping with the rapids at Lachine and the Long-Sault, which alone took four days to pass. They were carrying supplies for the mission.

The Abbé d'Urfé traveled with his cousin and colleague, l'Abbé François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fenelon. On arrival at Quinte, they were welcomed with a feast of fried pumpkins! The purpose of the mission was to save the souls of the Indians, teaching them prayers and the Gospel.

Although the Indians were Iroquois they were friendly, being in their own territory without strong tribal rivalries in this time of peace. They received the missionaries gladly but nevertheless did not give up their ancestral customs. Throughout his work the Abbé d'Urfé tried to win the Indians to Christianity through kindness and humility. He had to overcome superstition. For instance, the Indians feared that baptism would kill the babies. The Abbé d'Urfé even took care of twin babies when he realized that, their mother having died, the custom dictated that the babies be buried too. His mission took him far out into the wilderness and on one occasion he was lost for three days and survived on tree fungus. He was not strong physically and was not a swimmer. Yet, he undertook hazardous tasks and difficult canoe trips, since the missionaries had to move about frequently to

accompany the Indians on hunting expeditions.

The Abbé d'Urfé's second mission was to Gentilly (La Presentation-Dorval) in 1675. At the beginning of it he returned to France briefly with his cousin Fenelon to protest the actions of Governor Frontenac. He went back to France again in 1678 and was made Dean of Le Puy Cathedral. This was an easy post, a reward for past service, but he resigned from it and requested a return to Canada and a hazardous post. In 1685 he returned to Canada as an advisor to Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier. Among his luggage was a silver cup which was to become of importance some 275 years later to our community which bears his name.

Several proposals were made to him to devote himself to preaching, or to go beyond the Great Lakes as "apostolic vicar to the Illinois", but the one he accepted was that of Cure of the Parish of St-Louis-du-Bout-de-l'île de Montreal. He, as Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier wrote, ". . .who wished to be among those who serve a parish, now conducts one of the most exposed to danger, with much zeal and eagerness".

The purpose of the mission was to minister to the habitants and to teach the Indians who were Hurons and Algonquins. It is believed the Abbé d'Urfé helped with the continuing work as the land was cleared, the first cross planted, and church, parish house and other buildings were constructed. He brought together a large number of Indians whom he taught and converted. As befitted the cure, he kept proper church records of life in this parish, of births, marriages, and deaths.

## Parish of St-Louis - the First Records

A detailed research of these records was conducted by Thomas R. Lee in the 1950s, and he quoted his findings in his booklet "A History of the Town of Baie d'Urfé".

He wrote:

"Looking at the Baie d'Urfé of today, it is difficult to realize that once dense forest covered the area, friendly Indians camped on the lake shore and unfriendly Indians slaughtered Baie d'Urfé's first residents down where The Coop now stands.

Records in d'Urfé's own hand indicate the terror, bloodshed and destruction which wracked the area at the time. "Eight entries tell of the burial on Caron Point of eight men (two soldiers and six habitants) killed by the Iroquois during the period Sept. 21 to Oct. 18 1687, five of them on Sept. 30.

"The first victim was Jean Vincent farmhand employed by M. de Blainville who on Sept. 21 1687 "was found beaten to death during the battle against the Iroquois". The five slain Sept. 30 included **Jean de La Londe dit l'Esperance** Baie d'Urfé's first citizen; Pierre Boyneau dit La Jeunesse; Pierre Pertuys another of de Blainville's farmhands; Henry Fromageau and Pierre Pettitteau also employees of de Blainville.

"All were buried "near the site chosen for the building of the Church of St. Louis de Haut de l'île de Montreal".

"Then on Oct. 18 two soldiers of M. du Cruzel were slain by the Iroquois. They were Jean Baptiste le Sueur dit La Hogue about 21 and Pierre Camus dit la Feuillade of the same age. Their burial witnessed by d'Urfé and fellow soldiers of the deceased was "near the site chosen for the cemetery near the parish church of St. Louis de Haut de L'île de Montreal".

d'Urfé himself had a narrow escape from death while out in the lake in a canoe en route to meet some friendly Indians. "He was driven back by a band of 30 Iroquois armed with rifles who unloaded their guns in his direction reads a contemporary account "but God who protects those who struggle in His name did not wish that he should be harmed".

While no indisputable signs of this historic mission remains today, the sites of the early chapel and cemetery were thought pretty well established in 1865 during excavation for a cellar at the tip of Caron Point named after a former resident on the point Antoine Caron a farmer. This was on land originally owned by **de La Londe** and set aside for construction of a church. A former cure M Bourgeault, who studied the matter of sites thoroughly is quoted with respect to this particular excavation: ". . .the bones of 23 persons of different physique were discovered . . . one bore a pretty brass crucifix mounted in ebony. . . on another was found a tin spoon black pearls and a small

crucifix, and a brass medal in perfect state of conservation. Other finds included the bones of a child, a finger bone bearing a brass ring "and a tomahawk almost free from rust and which would still last an Indian for life." These bones were thought to include those of Christian Indians whom d'Urfé taught. The present whereabouts of the various items are not known, but what are thought to be the foundations of the chapel are still faintly visible on the property of the late Group Capt. Roy H. Foss.

"The same d'Urfé register which recorded these violent deaths also records the first marriages, births and baptisms in the area. Some 13 pages of the register, a treasure of the Montreal archives are signed "F. d'Urfé, Cure- and cover the period November 1686 to November, 1687 the first event recorded being a wedding the last the burial of a miller who apparently died a natural death. The fact that there are no further entries with respect to d'Urfé's parish is considered as indicating that increasing Iroquois activity in the area forced d'Urfé and members of his flock to withdraw to more protected quarters. War had been declared against the Iroquois in May 1687 and it was only two years later that the infamous massacre at Lachine took place possibly involving some of the Baie d'Urfé habitants who had fled there earlier for safety.

The first entry in d'Urfé's register is the marriage on Nov. 29, 1686, of Jean Baptiste Celoron, Esquire, Sieur de Blainville, lieutenant of a detachment of the navy and Helene Picotte de Belestre, widow of M. de Brucey, lieutenant in the infantry and one of the first landholders in the area. This was undoubtedly the first marriage performed in what is now Baie d'Urfé, and d'Urfé records that the vicar-general, M Dollier de Casson, had ruled out the necessity of the three bans being read. d'Urfé conducted the service.

He then records the death on Feb. 22, 1687, of Claude de la Mothe dit le Marquis de Sourdy, and his burial the next day on Pointe St Louis (Caron Point). Next comes the baptism on March 1, of the first child born in the area: Marie Madeleine, daughter of Jean Thillard and Marie Madeleine Barbon. d'Urfé says the child was previously baptized at home, but was then baptized by him in church. He notes that the child's godmother was **Marie Madeleine Lalonde, daughter of Jean de la Londe**, first settler in Baie d'Urfé and also first church warden. d'Urfé records that the godmother, wife of M. Guillaume Daoust, was unable to sign her name when so requested.

The same woman was godmother to Marguerite le Moyne (one of the great names in the story of New France), daughter of Nicolas de Moyne and Marguerite Jasselin, whom d'Urfé baptized on April 23. d'Urfé notes that the child's father couldn't sign his own name. d'Urfé, incidentally, refers to himself as "priest of the parish of St Louis. There are witnesses' signatures on most of the entries, many of the names being familiar ones on the west end of the island today, borne by descendants of those early settlers.

"The last entry records the death and burial, Nov. 17-18, 1687, of Louis Jets, miller, age about 24, who was employed by M. le Ber, the man given permission to build a fort and mill " at the end of the island . (Both of these still stand, at least in Senneville). Jean le Ber, merchant, and Paul le Moyne, Esquire, were witnesses together with d'Urfé."

Many of the existing records also bear the signature of Cybard Courreau, a friend and neighbour of everyone in the community and a "surgeon". He came from a French family with a long line of doctors.

When **Jean de la Londe** was killed on September 30th, 1687, he left three children: Madeleine, 15, Jean-Baptiste, 12, and Guillaume, 3. His son Jean had died as an infant. Madeleine had married Guillaume D'Aoust the year before, when she was only 14 years old. Guillaume D'Aoust was an old family acquaintance, a neighbour, a church "chanteur", and a "tailleur" by profession.

From 1687 until 1703 there is no trace or record of the parish of St-Louis. It would appear that the former inhabitants were living either at Ville-Marie or Lachine, although there are certain indications that our locality had not been completely abandoned.

Marie Baban, **Jean de la Londe's** widow, remarried on the 26th of January 1688. Her new husband was Pierre Tabault also recently widowed and the father of four children.

Abbé Armand Yon, in his 'A victim of Frontenac', says that d'Urfé obviously barely escaped with his own life during the massacre of Baie d'Urfé but nevertheless returned to bury the dead. He quotes in part, a letter from the Superior of the Sulpician order, Tronson in Paris, France, to Dollier de Casson, in Ville Marie: "d'Urfé, by taking such risks as you have explained, has shown that he has a brave heart it must indeed have been God's will that he should be sent to serve this isolated post, for he is

not so strong by nature.

The Abbé d'Urfé returned to France in 1688 where he founded the Hotel-Dieu Hospital at Bauge (now Bage-le Chatel). He died in 1701 and was buried in the vaults of the Hotel-Dieu, where an inscription recalls the dignity of his life and his unflinching charity. An oration delivered at his tomb the following year referred to his work in distant St-Louis.

### **Revival of the Area**

The 18th Century in New France was ushered in with peace and optimism, as treaties had been signed by all parties concerned, including the Iroquois. Gradually, many of the people who had tried earlier to settle in outposts such as Bout de l'île, but had been driven back in fear for their lives, returned to the land granted to them by the Semmary of St-Sulpice. A certain number of new settlers and traders also joined them in the area.

There is little written record of the life within our boundaries from late 1687 until December 1703. The registers of St-Louis were then reopened, signed by M. de Breslay as curé of the Parish. It is believed that a few years after this reawakening, a stone church was built in the area. It was decided to locate it nearer to the Fort of M. LeBer at Senneville should some protection be needed. The church was therefore built opposite the rapids in the fief Bellevue (very close to the present site).

As a result Pointe St-Louis (now Caron Point) was no longer the centre of the religious life of the Parish. However, the site of the previous chapel and its bordering bay were given the name of d'Urfé in honour of the first curé of the Parish. Pointe d'Urfé is shown in a Suipicican map of 1702, and a map prepared in 1761 shows "Bay d'Urfé". This relocation of the church and the existence of the rapids which required a portage, made the new site a natural centre of activity. Nevertheless, whether the church was located at Pointe St-Louis or further away near the rapids, the fact remains that the history of the development of Bout de l'île as a whole is very much part of the history of our Town.

From 1703 the church registers at Ste-Anne show family names which have been part of our history and still exist in our vicinity today. Among them are: Brunet, D'Aoust, **la Londe**, Larente, Magdeleine, Perrier, Pilon, Rivet, Robillard, Sauve, St-Denis, and Vallee.

**Jean de la Londe's** three children went on living in the area. His son Jean-Baptiste signed a contract on September 2nd, 1696, to go west as a voyageur. On February 3rd, 1698, he married Marguerite Masta at Montreal and they had one son. Three years later he married Jeanne Gervais and they had eight children.

**Guillaume de la Londe** married at Ste-Anne-du-Bout-de-l'île on April 27th, 1710. His bride, Marie Madeleine Allen, was one of the English colonial children carried off during a raid by the French and Indians on Deerfield, Massachusetts, in 1704. She was raised as a French Catholic in the home of Jean Guenet at Bellevue. Guillaume and Marie Madeleine had ten children. (13 by my records E.L.) Guillaume also went west as a voyageur.

**Madeleine de la Londe** married Guillaume D'Aoust in 1686. They had nine children and records show that three of their daughters married three brothers of the Pilon family, and a son married a Pilon girl. Antoine Pilon, the father, was one of the pioneers associated with the history and development of the Lakeshore area.

The progression throughout the years of legal documents such as wills, deeds and donations show how family relationships developed along the generations. Details of property succession and obligations involve both material objects and personal concerns. Wordly possessions include more than property, land, buildings, and cattle. There are references to:

". . .two beds, a cot, one "paillasse", a straw mattress with bed clothes, one armoire, table, chairs . . . a mirror, plates, a cauldron, a duck, six fat chickens at Christmas . . . one measure of salt, candles, striped cotton for shirts, three veltes of good rum, two veltes of good wine. . . and French shoes. . ."

Older children were expected to feed and clothe their elders and also their younger siblings... Aging parents were to be properly housed and given free use of the house, including the attic and cellar!... In the event of sickness, a doctor was to be called as required and in case of death full ritual arrangements were to be made . . . Younger children were to be provided with adequate clothing and strong shoes, with neatly coiffed hair for Sundays, and their education was to be given proper consideration.

