

# The Cloutier Matriarch



## Xaintes Du Pont (1596-1680)

Xaintes Dupont was born about 1596, in the small community of Feings, St. Jean Parish, Mortagne, Perche, France; the daughter of Paul Michel Du Pont and Perrine De Mortagne. She was first married to Michel Lermusier, but was widowed soon after.

She then married Zacharie Cloutier on July 13, 1616, in St. Jean-Bapiste Parish and they would become one of the earliest settlers of the colony of New France.



## Her Cloutier Family

Zacharie Cloutier was born on February 2, 1589, in St. Jean, Perche, France; the son of Denis Cloutier and Renee Briere. His mother died on May 1, 1608, and his father then married Jeanne Rahir-Gaultier on November 3 of the same year.

A carpenter by trade, Zacharie's interest in the 'New World' began early. When Henry De Montmorency purchased the colony from his brother-in-law, Prince De Conde, in 1619; he began to recruit labourers to assist Champlain in "inhabiting, clearing, cultivating and planting" New France; and when the *St. Etienne* arrived at Tadoussac on July 7, 1619; included on the passenger list of the 80 colonists, were the names of Zacharie and his father Denis. Xaintes remained at home with their two-year-old son, Zacharie Jr..

Most of this group did not remain in Kebec long, and the Cloutiers were no exception. However, when several years later Robert Giffard was recruiting tradesmen for his new sieigneurie at Beauport, Zacherie and Xaintes decided to give it another try. In the aftermath of the Religious Wars, destruction was everywhere, and many young men knew that they could be called into military service at any time, and at the whim of the leaders.

They had also just undergone a bit of unpleasantness with regards to settling the estate of Zacharie's recently deceased father. On March 2, 1633; the notary Mathurin Roussel wrote the following in the records of Mortagne.

*"...Zacharie Cloutier, carpenter, resident of Mortagne, Midsummer's Day parish, and Jacques Cloutier, his brother, rope-maker....Zacharie Cloutier being eldest son of Denis Cloutier...promises that the proceedings will be more pleasant and he will help to ratify for the heirs of Renee Briere, their mother, claims against Jeanne Gaultier, his (Denis) wife in second marriage..."*

Obviously the two families were at odds over settling his father's estate, and Zacharie was asked to assume the role of peacemaker.



## On to New France

On March 14, 1634; Xainte's husband signed a contract with Robert Giffard, that was joint with Jean Guyon, stipulating that Giffard would pay their passage plus food and lodging in Canada for each of the men, plus one family member; for a period of three years, commencing the day they arrived in the colony (June 24, 1634). At the end of a two year period they would be allowed to send for the rest of their family at the expense of Giffard.

Understandably, both Xaintes and Guyon's wife, Mathurine Robin, were not thrilled with these arrangements, so the contract had to be renegotiated. The ladies won out and when the two families arrived in New France, all of their young children were with them.

They were promised livestock, so that they could begin farming right away; and one thousand arpents of land to build a home. In addition they were given the right to hunt, fish and trade with the local people. Since it could be several years before their farms would be self-sufficient, they depended on the produce from the Hurons.

In exchange, the men promised their labour, and the first order of business for the carpenter Cloutier and mason, Guyon; was the construction of a manorhouse for the seigneur of Beauport, a parish church and Fort Saint-Louis in Quebec.

Zacharie and Jean Guyon had planned to serve out their term and then join their property to create their own feudal system, as Lords of 2000 arpents of property (approx. 2500 acres), where they would settle their own families and friends to create a small community.

But they quickly saw an opportunity to double their holdings, due to a clerical error by the notary Roussel. Seems that instead of writing down 2000 arpents of land in total, he recorded the contract as 2000 arpents each, and both Zacharie and Jean hoped to cash in on the blunder. The dispute would go on for years, and eventually the two men refused to do anymore work for Giffard until he honoured the contract as written.

On December 18, 1636, Giffard obtained a judgment against them concerning the work still owed to him, and all concerned were at an impasse. On December 10, 1637; after boundary disputes occurred with other tenants, Governor Montmagny looked into the situation, but it would not be until May 4, 1642, that he rendered his decision in favour of the seigneur; and Cloutier and Guyon received only 1000 arpents each.

But it was still not over. On July 2, 1646; Giffard once again sued Guyon and Cloutier for refusing to render him "faith and homage" as required between a vassal and seigneur, and once again the Governor stepped in and ordered the men to comply. Two weeks later they retaliated by refusing to present their inventory (*aveu et denombrement*) as required from all landowners in a seigneurie, and on August 20; the Governor once again reprimanded them; but their relationship with Giffard, would be strained for some time.

Meanwhile, Cloutier and Guyon did take possession of their fiefs in February, 1637; which they had drawn up as *Buisson* and *Cloutierie*, and now called themselves, *Sieur Du Buisson* and *Sieur De La Cloutiere*. Xainte's husband could not read or write, and signed his name with an 'X'

In 1641, a map drawn up by engineer-surveyor Jean Bourdon, shows the layout of their lands "from Kebec to Cap Tourmente", which included the territory from the river at Fetit Pre to the river at Chiens, later known as Chateau-Richer. On May 29, 1644, notary Guillaume Tronquet recorded that "*Giffard, Sieur de Beauport visited the Buisson River in company with Jean Guyon, Zacharie Cloutier, Adrien Du Chesne, Jean Bourdon and Abraham Martin*", and that he gave them the land "*from this river up to the first point, running*

*along the length of the Saint Lawrence river."* It had been a long time coming but it would appear that their peace had finally been made.

The Cloutier family now lived on Cote de la Montagne in the town of Quebec and Zacharie was described as a *bourgeois seigneur working as a master-carpenter*. In addition to his fief, he had also purchased a lot in the lower town of Quebec, between those of Pascal Le Maistre and his life-long friend, Jean Guyon.

On December 20, 1670; he sold his fief to his brother-in-law, Nicholas Du Pont, and moved to his land at Chateau-Richer. On January 19, 1668; Xaintes and Zacharie held a family meeting, before the notary Michel Filion, to settle matters regarding their estate and the following year placed all their affairs in the hands of their eldest son Zacharie. Perhaps the difficulties that arose with Denis Clouthier's estate, made them wish to avoid a similar situation with their own children.

Zacharie died on November 17; 1677, at the age of 87 and Xaintes July 14, 1680; at the age of 85. They are both buried at Chateau-Richer.



## The Next Generation

Zacharie - born August 16, 1617; married Madeleine-Barbe Emard on April 4, 1648 at Saint-Barthelemi in La Rochelle, France. She was the daughter of Jean Emard Marie Bineau of Niort in Poitou, France. They had 8 children, 5 boys and 3 girls, all of whom married neighbors. Zacharie died February 3, 1708 and Barbe May 28, 1708. They are buried at Chateau-Richer.

Jean - born May 13, 1620, became a carpenter like his father. He married Marie Martin on January 21, 1648 at Quebec. She was the daughter of Abraham Martin and Marguerite Langlois. Jean and Marie had 14 children, 10 of whom were girls. Jean died on October 16, 1690 and Marie on April 26, 1699. His descendants kept the ancestral home for nearly three centuries.

Anne - born on January 19, 1626, she married brick maker Robert Drouin in 1637. They had six children, two of which died in infancy. Anne died on February 4, 1648. Robert remarried in 1649 to widow Marie Chapelier who was not accepted by the Cloutiers and as a result, Zacharie and Xainte raised their grand daughters, Genevieve and Jeanne Drouin, as their own.

Charles - born May 3, 1629, was not interested in farming, so he too became a carpenter. On April 20, 1659 he married Louise Morin, the daughter of Noel Morin and Helene Desportes. Charles and Louise had 13 children, 6 boys and 7 girls. Charles died on June 5, 1709 and Louise on April 29, 1713.

Louise - born on March 18, 1632; married Francois Marguerie, Sieur de La Haye, at age fourteen. He was one of the most colorful men of early New France. A guide and interpreter of Native languages, he lived and worked among the tribes and even survived capture and imprisonment by the Iroquois. They were married on October 26, 1645 and went to live at Trois-Rivieres. Shortly after he was drowned in a canoe accident. Childless and widowed at seventeen, Louise returned to Quebec where, five months later, on November 10, 1648, she married the tailor Jean Mignault dit Chatillon: They had 14 children. Mignault died about 1680 and in 1689 Louise married for a third time to the saddlemaker Jean-Pierre Mataux. They were childless. Louise died on January 22, 1699 at age 68.



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