



Carte de la Seigneurie de Lauzon en 1709 (Wikipédia)

Our Levasseur ancestors: Laurent Levasseur

by: Joceline Levasseur

In the 17th century, many Normans sailed to New France. Among them was Laurent Levasseur, the ancestor of the greatest number of American Levasseurs. He was the son of Jean Levasseur and Marguerite Maheu, and was born around 1648, most likely in Bois-Guillaume¹ in Normandy.

Arrival

Laurent Levasseur was first mentioned in colony records during the 1666 Census. He stated that he was eighteen years of age and was an "employee"² of Guillemette Hébert, widow of Guillaume Couillard and daughter of an earlier Canadian colonist, Louis Hébert. Laurent probably took the initiative to work the land and go eel fishing. We cannot find any trace of Laurent Levasseur from the 1667 Census. That may indicate that his "employment of 36 months" was finished and he was therefore free to explore his new land.

Laurent could have easily been one of the "employees" who arrived in the country in September 1663. He would have been about fifteen years old. The following year, in 1664, the Sovereign Council complained to the King that the "majority of the recruits of 1663 were young people, clerks, schoolboys and most of them had never worked before". It is quite possible that Laurent was among this group of young people. Between 1667 and 1669, Laurent did not leave any trace.

Establishment

"On April 5, 1669 the King signed a document to fine anyone who did not have intention of marriage at an early age."³ Laurent understood the message. It became time for him to acquire land in his new country and to get married. After thinking about it, he decided to establish himself on the coast of Lauzon located on the edge of the Saint Lawrence River almost in front of Québec. On September 22, 1669 he rented from Henri Brau ⁴, sieur de Pominville a 3 by 40 acre tract of land, with "fishing," for three year.⁵

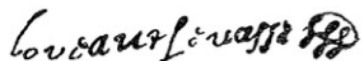
Marriage

Laurent was now able to think of getting married and he seems to have found his soul mate. Thus, on November 19, 1669, he signed a marriage contract before the notary Romain Becquet with Marie Marchand, daughter of Louis Marchand and Françoise Morineau from Saint-Martin on the Île de Ré. He got married in Québec at Notre-Dame Church on April 30, 1670. The couple had fourteen children. Among them, three sons and a daughter had families, two other daughters became Ursuline lay nuns, five children died at a young age and another daughter, who was handicapped, was placed in the Québec General Hospital after the death of her mother. Laurent ensured a pension for his daughters who became nuns and the one who lived at the hospital.

In 1709, according to the chart of Gédéon de Catalogne, Laurent owned three pieces of land along the river. In his lifetime, Laurent owned five pieces of land on the coast of Lauzon, in addition to the one he rented for three years in 1669. He was seemingly an enterprising man. According to Adrien Levasseur, "the land he owned was fourteen acres wide by forty acres deep, which was much bigger than most"⁷. In addition to cultivating the land, Laurent liked to go fishing and hunting, as can be noted in some notarized documents. According to the Jesuit Charlevoix, "*fishing and hunting provide abundantly for those who put in the effort. We fish in the Saint Lawrence River an extraordinary quantity of large eels*"⁸.

At the end of a full life, Laurent passed away in Québec on December 26, 1726 and was buried the next day at Notre-Dame de Québec Church. His wife passed away 10 years before him. Laurent's descendants can be found in all parts of Québec, but the majority are in the Bas Saint-Laurent region. Many families of this ancestor also immigrated to the United States and to other provinces of Canada, particularly New-Brunswick and Ontario.

Lastly, contrary to many of his compatriots, Laurent Levasseur could sign his name, a rare thing for his time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Laurent Levasseur" followed by a decorative flourish.

Signature of Laurent Levasseur ⁹

1. The civil registries are lacking between 1642 et 1667 in Bois-Guillaume.
2. At the beginning of the colony, the private ship-owners transporting furs to France had committed themselves to transporting a number of immigrants to New France. They were reimbursed for their travel expenses by the farmers already established in the country that needed help. The farmers were in turn compensated by 3 years of service from their "employee".
3. Jacques LACOURSIÈRE, *Histoire populaire du Québec des origines à 1791*, Québec, Septentrion, 1995, p. 127.
4. Farming Lease between Henri Brau de Pommaiville et Laurent Levasseur, clerk's office of Pierre Duquet de Lachenaye, September 22, 1669, in Parchemin.
5. According to Adrien Levasseur, this is not the land occupied by the descendants of Laurent Levasseur until 1925
6. as it was previously confirmed by J. Edmond Roy.
7. J.-F. Adrien LEVASSEUR, Laurent Levasseur. *Origine et Histoire et la première génération en Nouvelle-France*, Longueuil, QC, 1988, p. 29.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
9. Michel LANGLOIS, *Dictionnaire biographique des ancêtres québécois (1608-1700)* Sillery, Maison des ancêtres québécois, 2000, tome 3, p. 327.

LEVASSEUR ASSOCIATION



The Association, Levasseur d'Amérique Inc. is a non-profit organization, founded in 1988, in accordance to a federal charter. Its goals are:

- To join together and unite a large number of Levasseur and other descendants who have adopted the patronymic Borgia, Carmel, Carmell, Vasseur, Vassor, Vasser.
- To promote, develop and diffuse historical genealogical knowledge about the Levasseur families with Internet, an electronic Newsletter published three times per year also the publication of genealogical dictionaries.
- To maintain and update, on an ongoing basis, the genealogical data base available to members at all times on the Internet.
- To make available to members a family photo album and the Newsletters that the Association has published since 1988.
- To honor the memory of our forefathers and their descendants by way of monuments, plaques or symbolic gestures that commemorate historic events that are chronicle the Levasseur family.
- To gather all documents related to the Levasseur family for the purpose of constructing archives that will constitute the heritage of our Association and that will provide a source of information for historians and genealogists.

We would appreciate if you could send us family related documents that would add to our data base of archives and also enable us to continue the publication of the Levasseur Newsletter three times per year. The participation of the Levasseurs and members of their families is essential to allow us to pursue our mission. Send us your photos and texts for the next publication of the Newsletter. You can download them very easily with this new tool and by providing a brief description of the photo or text that is being sent. Following receipt of your documents, a copy of all information to be published in the Newsletter will be sent to you for approval prior to final publication.

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