



## **SPRING 2008**

**Fort La Présentation  
Association  
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**The newsletter reflects  
the interests of the Fort  
Association and explores  
aspect of the Fort's history.**

**Send comments to  
fort1749@yahoo.com**

# *Les Nouvelles du Fort* *The Fort News*

**"Poor people didn't wear stays", "All women always wore stays," and "Stays were never worn uncovered."**

**M. E. Riley**

As with most sweeping statements, neither (sic) of the above statements is true. Poor women DID frequently wear stays; not wearing them was generally considered a sign of loose morals; and was considered so important that poorhouses in England provided them to the women in their care. Stays were often available on the used clothing market, or could be made at home, so they weren't necessarily out of the financial reach of poor women; and many period depictions show lower-class women wearing stays (milkmaids, fishwives, etc.).

On the other hand, there are also period depictions and descriptions of women who aren't wearing stays. Who were they? Well, to name a few examples, there's the whore's servant in "A Harlot's Progress", who wears a bedgown without stays underneath; the "Jersey Nanny" (presumably a nursemaid, but nothing more is known about her, who wears what appears to be a bedgown pinned shut; the Scots-Irish young women described in Dodderidge's journal of his travels on the frontier, who wore nothing but a shift pinned close to reveal their figures. These women would have been considered 'slatterns', slovenly or unfashionable people outside the mainstream of society.

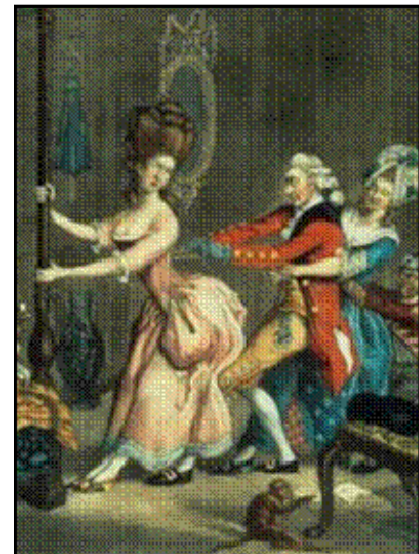
Also, women who were in the privacy of their own home (due to post-pregnancy confinement or illness) could wear a lightly boned or unboned garment called 'jumps', or a quilted waistcoat, which provided moderate

support and modesty. They would not have worn these items in public, say, to the market or church.

So, choose an option that is appropriate to your impression. If you are portraying a slattern (and I have a few friends who do, and have a good deal of fun with that impression), then that's fine. But if you want to portray a 'proper' woman, you really do need to wear stays.

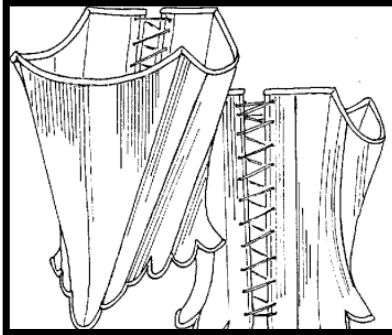
I think many women resist wearing stays because they think that stays will be uncomfortable -- they associate them with the scene in "Gone With the Wind" where Scarlett is being laced into her corset. Nothing could be further from the truth. A good-fitting corset should be snug enough not to

(cont'd on page 2)



## “Poor people didn't wear stays”

move around much on the body, but you should be able to breathe while wearing it (you may need to loosen your stays a little if you plan on dancing vigorously, of course). And stays for women who expected to work in them were cut differently from those worn by upper-class women; the armscyes were bigger, and allowed for more arm movement.



Half-boned stays are fine, by the way. There seems to be an attitude in some reenacting circles that fully-boned stays are ‘better’ than half-boned stays, but both styles were period, as well

as stays that were fully-boned in front (for better support) and half-boned in back. As to where it's appropriate to wear your stays uncovered - there are period depictions and descriptions of women wearing stays in their own homes.

For instance, women are shown doing laundry, picking apples, or serving tea to the master of the house while wearing their stays. In some of the street scenes by Pyne and others, a woman is shown in the street bringing a chair to a peddler who is going to re-cane the seats. So, if you are working, your stays may be uncovered. (They don't have to be, of course; there are also pictures of women working while wearing their gowns or jackets.)

However, if you are ‘in public’ in the sense of going to market, going to visit neighbors, or going to church or a public meeting, you really should be wearing a gown or jacket or some other covering over your stays.

A generation ago, it was considered rude for men to appear in public without a jacket over their shirts. If you saw a man in his shirtsleeves, it was in a working context. Now, anything goes. So we've lost a lot of the social context needed to understand the mindset of what clothing was worn in what circumstances.

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## Founder's Day Weekend

The tents pop up like mushrooms and the bateaux dot the river as would so many water striders. Lanterns and campfires light the night. Muskets crack and cannons roar as reenactors hold their ground.

Clearly, there must be more to preparing for Founder's Day Weekend than marking dates on the calendar and showing up.

In fact, hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteer hours are necessary to ensure the event is successful. Fort Association members, young and old, are encouraged to offer their skills and talents to ensure Founder's Day runs smoothly.

Many of the volunteer hours go to fundraising efforts to meet the \$14,000 hosting cost.

Planning for this year's event kicked off with a meeting in January, but in reality planning began before last year's Founder's Day was over, and a meeting was held in August to review the 2007 event in order to improve the next.

You'd be surprised at the range of support essential to delivering a first-rate weekend.



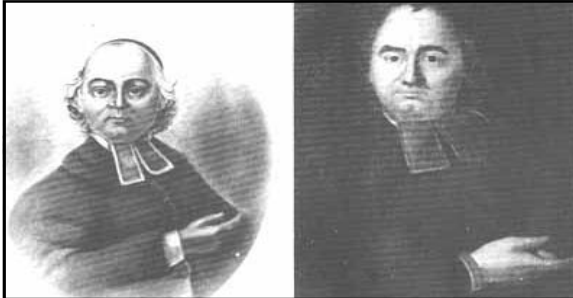
The La Sarre Regiment at Founder's Day

Founder's Day Weekend 2008 is approaching fast but, even as you read this, there is time to come forward.

Your services are needed before, during and after the event. Help is needed for fundraising, preparing the site, registering participants, taking admissions, assisting with the children's program, helping with various on-site arrangements from coordinating activities to picking up trash, and much more.

If you have an interest, please come forward. Your enthusiasm may just come with the must-have know-how vital to the success of Founder's Day Weekend.

**Fort de la Présentation:  
The Early Days  
Kevin M. McGill**



The idealized impression (left) and the realistic portrait (right) of Abbé François Picquet

In 1749, the war between France and England (King George's War as it was known in the Colonies) had come to a fragile peace with signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle October 18, 1748. Although this Treaty restored the *status quo ante bellum* for the French and English in North America, a common distrust and a lingering wait for the next big explosion between the two sides remained.

In 1748 a Sulpician, Abbé François Picquet who had successfully built a mission<sup>1</sup> at the Lake of Two Mountains on the Ottawa River, persuaded the government of New France to allow him to build a mission on the British side of St. Lawrence River. The mission was to shelter and convert the Iroquois, chiefly Onondaga and Cayuga<sup>2</sup>, to Catholicism and provide a military base in English territory. Piquet's hope was to woo the Indian population away from the English and engage them as an effective fighting force.

With the blessing of his government and Iroquois leaders, Picquet embarked on his quest. Traveling up the St. Lawrence River, Picquet was attracted to the peninsula at present-day Ogdensburg, N.Y. His military eye saw the protected, natural harbor at the mouth of the Oswegatchie River as a strategic location. He landed November 21, 1748 (The Feast Day of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary) and made arrangements to return the following spring to realize his goals.

The Abbé returned May 30, 1749 with four to six converted Iroquois, a stonemason, a carpenter, a few French soldiers and Canadian laborers, about 29 people in all. The mission, know as Fort de la Présentation, was started June 1, 1749

Twenty-four days later, June 25<sup>th</sup>, Céloron de Bienville, on his way to officially claim the Ohio Valley for France, found Abbé Picquet lodging under an Indian-type bark shed while the post was under construction. The first structures included lodgings, a simple house for the Abbé, a barn and an oven. A rough, dressed-stoned palisade, flanked the house.

Sometime between June and December 1749, a small band of Indians slipped down the Oswegatchie and attacked the mission. They met resistance, but managed to use incendiaries to burn the most of the structures. The defenders were just as determined to drive back the attackers and both achieved their goals. The only reported casualty was a French guard who lost an arm when his musket exploded.

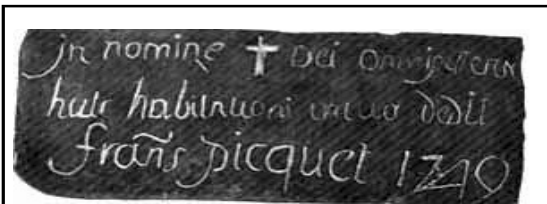
The attack was blamed on the Iroquois, particularly the Mohawks allied to the English at Oswego. The number of defenders at the mission is unknown and is ranged between three French soldiers and the original 29. The whereabouts of the Abbé at this time is uncertain given the time frame stated for the attack. However, there are indications he was not present.

The outcome of the attack did not deter the spirit of the Abbé nor affect his goals. Within a few years, Fort de la Présentation was rebuilt, became an important military base and provided an invaluable Indian fighting force for the French.

1 The Iroquois called the new mission *Kanesatake*, the Mountain, in remembrance of the original mission on Montreal Island. The Algonquins called it Oka (pickerel) likely for the fishery.

**Algonquin History in the Ottawa River Watershed**  
[www.ottawariver.org/pdf/05-ch2-3.pdf](http://www.ottawariver.org/pdf/05-ch2-3.pdf)

2 **Indian Missions of the Middle Atlantic States**  
[www.accessgenealogy.com/native/mission/middleatlantic.htm](http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/mission/middleatlantic.htm)



The Fort's cornerstone in Ogdensburg City Hall.  
"François Picquet laid the foundation of this habitation in the name of Almighty God in 1749."

## The First “Mailman”



Pedro da Silva dit le Portugais arrived in New France before 1673. When he settled in Quebec City, he became involved in transporting goods. Each summer by boat, and in winter by horse-drawn sleigh, he delivered mail. He is known to have been paid 20 sols to take a package of letters from Montréal to Québec City in July 1693. In 1705, da Silva received a commission from Intendant Jacques Raudot, bestowing on him the duty of “first courier” in New France.

## Mission Pears

Roman Catholic missionaries carried more than their faith into the interior of North America. The Jesuits and their successors often set off with a trove of pear seeds.

At portages and camps, they sowed their small treasures. Many of these seeds germinated and thrived to provide fresh fruit to adventurers who traveled the waterways and the people who later settled on lands surrounding the Great Lakes.

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century accounts report some pear trees as tall as 100 feet with a circumference of six to eight feet. One is known to have survived in a Detroit park until the late 1930s.

Through the missionary connection, these fruit trees became known as Mission Pears, and their DNA is distinct from that of modern varieties.

Because these pears of ancient lineage survived for hundreds of years in relative isolation, they maintained or developed resistance to many diseases and insects affecting new varieties.

In 1999, after involving the public in the search for the oldest fruit trees of this type, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada collected this unique pear germplasm for the Canadian Clonal Repository in Harrow, Ontario. This valuable genetic material can be shared with plant breeders around the world.

## Nicknames in the Lower Classes

The use of nicknames (“dit” names) was widespread during the French Regime, quite frequent among civilians in the lower classes and almost universal among French soldiers in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since it was not uncommon for these monikers to totally supplant soldiers' names, they were recorded in the official rolls after 1716 alongside the actual first names and surnames. This tended to further entrench the use of these nicknames.

The variety and frequent double meanings of nicknames make it almost impossible to categorize them systematically. In general, however, there were six main types, all referring to personal characteristics of the soldier to whom they referred.

Sometimes “Saint” was simply added to the soldiers' surnames or first names, or possibly to those of their mothers. For instance the soldier “Jacques Vadeau” became “Saint-Jacques.” Nicknames referring to regions of origin were also common, for instance Champagne, Poitevin and Picard referred to French provinces.

They could also indicate particular trades, for instance “Lacouture” (Needlework), “Boulangier” (Baker) or “La Flamme” (Flame) for someone who had a cookhouse. Other nicknames alluded to soldiers' past military experience, such as “Carignan.” Nicknames referring to plants were very fashionable, such as “Laframboise” (Raspberry), “Lafleur” (Flower), “Larose” (Rose), or “Latulippe” (Tulip).

Finally, some nicknames were based on personal characteristics. Some were physical such as “Blondin” (Blond), “Le Borgne” (One-eye), or “Lajeunesse” (Youth), but more frequently they referred to personality such as “Léveillé” (Lively), “Vadeboncoeur” (Goes-with-goodheart), and “Brind'amour” (Bit-of-love). They bear witness to the joie de vivre and the gallantry of some of these men. Their more warlike traits found expression in such names as “Tranchemontagne” (Slice-mountain), “Frappe-d'abord” (Strike-first) and “Vaillant” (Valiant).

Many French-Canadian surnames of today were once the nicknames of discharged soldiers who remained in Canada.

Source: **Canadian Military Heritage. Appendix B, Daily Life in New France**, page 5. [www.cmhg.gc.ca/cmh/en/page\\_169.asp?flash](http://www.cmhg.gc.ca/cmh/en/page_169.asp?flash)

**For more information see: *The Military Roots of “dit” Names* by Luc Lapine PhD. [www.historica.ca](http://www.historica.ca)**

## Les Filles du roi

About 800 women were sent from France to New France between 1663 and 1673. These orphans and single women of good character were relocated under the financial sponsorship of Louis XIV to address the gender imbalance and promote the stable development of the colony.

They were known as the King's Daughters or *Les Filles du roi*. Many brought a royal dowry of 50 livres or more to their first marriage. In general proportion to the number single males, the women were disembarked at Quebec, Trois Rivières and Montreal.

For more see [www.fillesduroi.org/index.html](http://www.fillesduroi.org/index.html)



Les Filles du roi embarking in France

## Education of Children

The education of European children in New France had two goals; religious instruction because the teachers came from religious communities, and the education of youth.

Religious teaching was the principal motive for instruction. Beginning in the established communities, a network of schools for boys and girls was put in place that later spread to the countryside. As the number of schools increased, the religious leaders and teachers realized the level of cultural and moral ignorance.

The youth were accused of debauchery, laziness, lying, idleness and a notorious disrespect for authority. The goals of education were, therefore, to infuse a fear of God and inculcate the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, as the basis for boys to acquiring a trade or profession.

The extent to which girls had been prevented from gaining a minimal education was soon realized. They would one day become the educators of their children, instructing the basics of the Catholic religion. Hence schools welcomed as many girls as boys, although in separate facilities.

As a French colony, education was organized on the French model. The clergy coming to Canada, Louisiana and Acadia brought the ideologies and teaching methods which seemed appropriate to them. And, as there were no printing presses or booksellers in New France, all books and educational materials were imported from France.

The funds to maintain the religious communities offering education were most often provided by French clergy, and parent organizations in Paris regularly sent money, supplies and equipment in support of their colonial missions.

Teaching methods remained French as well, and educators enjoyed a fair degree of success among the sons and daughters of colonists.

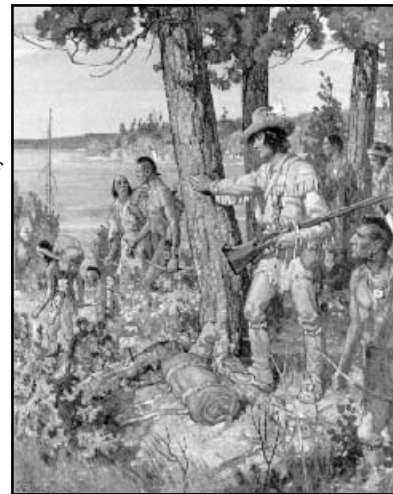
Source: **Museum of New France – Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation**

[www.civilization.ca/vmnf/education/int00\\_e.html](http://www.civilization.ca/vmnf/education/int00_e.html)

## Les Coureurs de bois

The *coureurs de bois*, the runners of the woods, were free spirits who would not be confined to the domestic colonial life of New France

Despite regulations to curb the illegal fur trade, these men set off for adventure in the interior, and some may be said to have “gone native.” They learned from the First Nations to survive in the wilderness, and the skills necessary to hunt, trap, canoe and snowshoes.



**Etienne-Brulé:  
The first coureur de bois**

Many spent years in *les pays d'en haut*, the upper country, and married native women, thus founding the Métis Nation. Some returned from time-to-time to “civilization.”

The most famous, or infamous, of the *coureurs de bois* were the brothers-in-law Pierre Radisson and Sieur de Groseillier, instrumental in the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670.

## The Sulpicians in New France

The Sulpician Order (the Company of Saint Sulpice) was founded in 1641 near Paris by Jean-Jacques Olier to train candidates for the priesthood.

Olier had earlier helped establish “La Compagnie des Messieurs et Dames de Notre-Dame de Montréal” to send settlers to New France, under the command of Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve. In May 1642, they founded Ville-Marie on the Island of Montreal.

When the Compagnie de Notre-Dame de Montréal dissolved, the Sulpicians as the new seigneurs continued granting lands to settlers, built mills and roads, and began a canal to ease boat traffic between Montreal and Lachine.



On the Island, the Fathers carried on their missionary activities with various tribes. In 1676, on the slope of Mont Royal, they built a residence for themselves and accommodations for the Indians. They and their converts moved to Sault-au-Récollet in 1696 to escape the influence of alcohol.

Two decades later, the Seminary obtained from the French king a new seigneurie on the Ottawa River on the shore of the Lake of Two Mountains. In 1721 Oka/Kanesatake, where Algonquins and Iroquois settled peacefully, was founded. François Picquet, the “Father of the Five Nations” as Montcalm called him, was one of the remarkable men who served there.

The Sulpician Fathers also preached in what is now Ontario. At the request of the Indians, they established a mission in 1672 on Lake Ontario’s Quinte Peninsula. From there they covered the north shore of the lake to its western edge. They ceased in 1680 because the people were semi-nomadic.

In the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Sulpician Order sent missionaries, by request, to Acadia. Their territory encompassed what are now Canada’s Maritime Provinces: New Brunswick; Ile St-Jean (Prince Edward Island); and Ile Royale (Cape Breton, Nova Scotia). In 1755, they endured expulsion with their Acadian flock.

Source: *L’Encyclopédie de l’histoire du Québec/The Encyclopedia of Quebec History*  
<http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/encyclopedia/Sulpicians-SulpicianOrder.htm>

## Ironworks in New France

The industrial complex of New France, *Les forges du Saint-Maurice*, was established in 1738 near Trois-Rivieres on the St. Lawrence River below Montreal.

Here bog iron was smelted with charcoal. The molten metal from the furnace was formed into iron bars for shipment to the French navy arsenal in Rochefort and the royal shipyard at Québec.



For the colony, the ironworks manufactured plough-shares, plough points, sock plates, cast-iron stoves, pots, pans, fire-backs, fire-dogs and munitions. Some of these products may have found their way to La Présentation.

Early experiments manufacturing steel and casting artillery were less successful. Nonetheless, the foundry was the most technologically advanced in North America for its first 100 years.

*The Forges du Saint-Maurice: The Beginnings of the Iron and Steel Industry in Canada, 1730-1883*, by Dr. Roch Samson, chronicles the 150 years of Canada’s first iron and steel industry through more than 450 pages and 130 illustrations.

For more information: [http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/qc/saintmaurice/index\\_E.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/qc/saintmaurice/index_E.asp)

In the British colonies, the Saugus blast furnace near Boston, Massachusetts roared to life in 1646.  
[www.nps.gov/sair/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/sair/index.htm)

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Source: **Colonial Wars – Juvenile Bibliography**  
<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramsevil/colonialbib.htm>

## Timeline: In the Life of Fort de la Présentation

- 1749** - Halifax, Nova Scotia founded to counter the French presence at Louisbourg on Ile Royale (Cape Breton).
- 1750** - Fort Toronto erected on the east bank of the Humber River. Fort Rouillé constructed a year later.
- 1751** - Fort Beauséjour built by the French at the head of the Bay of Fundy.
- 1752** - French fortify the Ohio Valley region with forts from Lake Erie to the forks of the Ohio River.
- 1753** - George Washington, a 21-year-old major in the Virginia militia, sent by Governor Dinwiddie to persuade the French to leave the Ohio Country.
- 1754** - The French and Indian War starts after the assassination of Ensign Jumonville, and Colonel George Washington's surrender at Fort Necessity in the Great Meadows, Pennsylvania.
- 1755** - Acadians expelled from Nova Scotia by order of Governor Lawrence.
- 1756** - England declares war on France. This is the start of the Seven Years War.
- 1757** - French capture Fort William Henry at the southern end of Lake George, New York
- 1758** - At Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) Montcalm's forces defeat British troops lead by General Amherst. The Fortress of Louisbourg surrenders to the British and the inhabitants are returned to France.
- 1759** - The capture of Quebec City by British forces and the deaths of Wolfe and Montcalm.

## A World Puzzle

Find the words below hidden  
in the letters to the right.

ACADIAN AMHERST BATTLE CANOE  
 CARILLON COLONY CORSET COUREURS  
 COURIER FILLES FORGE FORT IRON  
 LAWRENCE LOUISBOURG MISSION  
 MONTCALM NICKNAMES OSWEGATCHIE  
 PEAR PORTAGE PRESENTATION QUEBEC  
 RELIGION RIVER SCHOOL SNOWSHOES  
 SOLDIERS TRADE WOLFE

C W D S B S P O R T A G E R P  
 O E Z E E A E T E S R O C E R  
 L F J O M L T M Z D N F T V E  
 O L Y H N F L T A O A A N I S  
 N O I S S I M I L N Y R O R E  
 Y W V W D S D L F E K S T R N  
 G R U O B S I U O L W C E M T  
 N C F N P R L T C E L L I O A  
 A E O S A E S A G A I R O N T  
 I B R C V R A A W G N C R T I  
 D E G T E G T R I R D O R C O  
 A U E H S C H O O L E O E A N  
 C Q M Z H Y N T M P F N M L C  
 A A T I C O U R E U R S C M D  
 S R E I D L O S C O U R I E R

# FOUNDER'S DAY WEEKEND

JULY 19 & 20, 2008

LIGHTHOUSE POINT, OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK

ARMY, NAVY, MILITIA & NATIVE REENACTORS

LAND & WATER BATTLES

COLONIAL ACTIVITIES & TRADES

CHILDREN'S GAMES & DIVERSIONS



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