

Preface

Warren Gereaux was an amateur genealogist and a computer buff. With these two hobbies he researched and assembled the following Gereaux family history. The information he presents here was gleaned from three main sources, i.e. the U.S. Federal Census Bureau, the Mormon Genealogy Library in Salt Lake City, and various Catholic Church documents in France, Canada and the United States which recorded births, baptisms marriages and deaths. Warren told me that the records petered out in the early 1600's; therefore, his investigations were limited to events after that time period.

Warren passed away a few years ago. He is surely missed by his family and friends.

Eugene J. Gereaux, La Canada, California – May 16, 2000



Toussaint Giroux—Marie Godard

Seventh Great Grandparents

by

Warren Gereaux

Toussaint Gereaux (1633 – 1715)

We who are the descendants of the hardy folk who left on ships from the French ports of Dieppe and La Rochelle in the seventeenth century to sail across the wide ocean to help carve an empire from the huge forest land of “Nouvelle France,” can be proud of our heritage. It took incredible courage to leave one’s homeland and enter into one of the tiny ships, expecting to arrive safely at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River 3000 miles away. If the breezes were favorable, the voyage lasted about four weeks; but with adverse winds and bad weather, the ocean crossing could last as long as three months. On such a long voyage, many died; and others became so very ill that it took them several months to recover.

Most of these intrepid voyagers were from the North and West of France---Normandy, Perche, Maine, Anjou, Poitou, Aunis and Saintonge. A few came from Central France----Ile de France (which included Paris), Orleanais, Tourraine and Berry. Their heritage started with the Celts who first settled the area; then was mixed with the Roman Conquerors of Gaul, then added to by the invasions of the Franks, the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons. Altogether a mixture that produced daring and resourceful adventurers.

The area of France from whence they came had suffered greatly during the Hundred Years War that ended in 1453. Then, between 1562 and 1593, the Religious Wars raged across much of the same territory. The peasants of the countryside and the merchants in the small hamlets and villages were kept in constant turmoil by the ravaging armies. Between the wars, the people in these areas had an opportunity to bring a semblance of order and peace to their lives; but soon new depredations brought ruined fields, hunger and despair. Also, every adult male was liable to be called into the army to help the current King fight his wars. It is no wonder that the news coming out of New France encouraged the young and bold to strike out on the “Great Adventure.”

All across France the people were discussing the voyages of Jacques Cartier, and the daring adventures of Samuel de Champlain among the Indian tribes. There began a stirring in the breast of the young people---a whispering---an urging---Go west to Nouvelle France! The older people were disturbed by the apparent restlessness of the younger generation; they did their best to discourage the distant travel. At bedtime, mothers told their young children stories of the terrible, long voyage across the wild sea. They told of the burning fever that came during the horrible voyage; and if death came, the body was cast into the ocean, never to have the peace of a good Christian burial. They told of the copper-skinned savages who roamed the forests of the far away land, lurking behind trees to pounce upon the unwary colonist. But the stories of the unending virgin forest, the clear running streams, the beautiful panoramas and the fortunes to be made trapping the fur-bearing animals could not be overcome. From the year 1620 onward, the flow of emigrants from France for the New World increased dramatically.

Approximately 80 miles West by South of Paris, France, lies the ancient walled city of Mortagne, once the capital of the Province of Perche. During the French Revolution, several of the religious monuments were destroyed, but there remains still, many Pre-Renaissance buildings whose turrets and high gables rise into the azure sky. After the Revolution, when the boundaries of the Old Provinces were changed and the designation of each area became known as Departments, Mortagne was no longer the capital, but it is still considered one of the most beautiful cities in France. Hear what the French poet has to say:

“Look for the tracks of our purest jewels,
The church, the mill, the manor or the tower...
The whole of Perche, flower of the old races,.
Confides its secrets to you,
And offers itself to your love.”

At the time of the Roman invasion, all of the country for many miles in every direction was covered with virgin forest. The conquerors called this forest “Silva Pertica” (forest like a perch) hence the name La Perche. By the middle of the Seventeenth Century, Mortagne had several wealthy churches, one hospital and one leper hospital. In the whole Province of Perche there were thirteen abbeys and priories inhabited by Benedictine, Trappist, Cisterian and Trinitarian monks. It also counted 2 female monasteries with Benedictine and Cisterian nuns. **From these environs came the French-Canadian ancestor whose name we bear.**

In the small hamlet of Reveillon, just a short walk from the city of Mortagne, a hard working weaver name Jean Giroust built his house and set up his weaving loom. Here he wove cloth to be sold to his friends and neighbors in Reveillon, or to the merchants in Mortagne. He married Marguerite Quilleron about 1621 or 1622. The register of the parish church of Reveillon reveals a sad story of the next 20 years.

Etienne Giroux:	Baptized 25 Mar 1623
Nicolas Giroux:	Baptized 4 Jan 1625 (Died)
Catherine Giroux:	Baptized 19 Dec 1625 (Died)
Antoine Giroux:	Baptized 18 Sep 1627 (Died)
Thomas Giroux:	Baptized 8 Mar 1629
Toussaint Giroux:	Baptized 2 Nov 1633
Marguerite Giroux:	Baptized 6 Mar 1640 (Died)
Jean Giroux:	Father 10 Jan 1641 (Died)
Etienne Giroux:	Eldest Son 4 Oct 1641 (Died)

So it was that by the beginning of the new year, 1642, Marguerite Quilleron was a widow with only two of her young sons, Thomas, age 12, and Toussaint, Age 8, to give her comfort.

Next door to the widow, Quilleron, lived Zacharie Maheult, whose nickname was “Daybreak”, a baker and a mason. He was young Toussaint’s godfather, and as was the custom of the day, he took it upon himself to teach and guide the young boy. It is doubtful that Toussaint, at the age of eight, had learned the skills of a weaver, and there is no evidence that he followed this trade later in life. Nor is there any indication that he learned either of the trades of his godfather, Zacharie Maheult. It is probably that the young lad worked at helping in all three trades without having apprenticed in any of them. Whatever his accomplishments over the next eight years, he spent that time in and around the environs of Reveillon.

Another Percheron who played a significant role in the life of Toussaint Giroux, was Robert Giffard, originally from Authenuil, a town north of Mortagne. After completing his studies in medicine, Giffard opened an Apothacary in Tourouvre in 1615, but moved to Mortagne in 1619. It was from here that he was engaged as a doctor to accompany a fur trading venture to the new world. He spent two or three winters in Canada at about the time Champlain was attempting to establish fur-trading settlements along the St. Lawrence River and some of its tributaries.

It is not known how many trips Giffard made to the settlements, but about 1632, he returned to France to settle his affairs in that country. Having been given a Barony in New France, Robert Giffard left Mortagne for the last time in 1634 to become the Lord of Beauport (a settlement just

north of Quebec City) His brothers-in-law, Noel, Jean and Pierre Juchereau stayed in France for some time to recruit craftsmen and laborers for the new Lord. Later, Noel and Jean followed him to the new continent---Pierre remained in France.

One of the craftsmen recruited by the Juchereau brothers was Zacharie Maheult. He and his son, Rene, who was a year older than Toussaint, told him of their decision to emigrate to the virgin country far across the ocean and found Toussaint eager to answer the mysterious call. So it was that, sometime before 1654, accompanied by his godfather, and his friend, Rene, Toussaint left his mother in Reveillon, Perche, France, and sailed away from his native country----never to return.

When the three voyagers arrived in New France, they traveled to the Barony of Beauport where Lord Robert Giffard greeted them effusively. He granted to the three, jointly, a first concession of land from the vast holdings that he had. Giffard himself dictated the contract:

“Because we want to give thanks and show our will to Zacharie Maheult, Toussaint Girou, and Rene Maheult, residents of Beauport, we give them as a rentable seigneurial property, a land of high trees, and with the following limits: on one side, Jacques Badeau’s and Robert Drouin’s land; on the other side, the river belonging to the Lord up to the fir-plantation....

“In order to use the property and to dispose of it, they must pay, every Christmas, 25 Sols for the rent, one Sol for the quit-rent, and a fat chicken; according to the edicts of Paris, under which this country is governed.

“For the amount of 200 acres, 100 acres for the grazing of cattle, and 100 acres for the cutting of firewood, the leaseholders, following the Lord’s will, will give two days of work each week.

“In case of war, the leaseholders will take shelter in the Lord’s house in order to follow the Lord’s orders and directions. The Lord promises the right to fish from the small meadows to the Buisson River, which belongs to the Lord of Beauport, to the leaseholders.

“here we sign this original document on which we set our seal, and let the Notary of this place countersign, here in Beauport on June 20th, 1654.

(signed) Robert Giffard

(signed) Badeau, Royal Notary

This was the means by which Canada was settled in the 17th Century. The King of France, or the current Intendant at Quebec (who was appointed by the King), would give vast tracts of land to a favored few, whose responsibility it became to populate and clear the land for cultivation. Many people in France would become indentured to these Lords for a period of three or more years. Their ocean passage would be paid, and they would receive room and board and a small stipend

for the length of their indenture. After their work period was over, the Lord would usually give them a small plot of ground which they could work for themselves.

Other landlords, such as Robert Giffard, would give the new arrival a piece of ground and let him farm it for himself, paying only a nominal fee each year. Each tenant usually had to work one or two days per week for the landlord; and all had to be ready to defend the community against the raids of the hostile Iroquois Indians whose hatred for the French settlers knew no bounds.

When Samuel de Champlain first came to Canada, he made friends with the northern tribes of Indians. The main tribes were the Montagnais, who lived along the northern shore of the St. Lawrence River, the Algonquins from the Ottawa River country, and the Hurons, who lived between Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe in the present day province of Ontario. Champlain and his men went along with these various tribes on raids against the fierce and daring Five Nations of the Iroquois. This confederation consisted of the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas and the Senecas.

The Iroquois never forgave the Frenchmen for taking sides against them, and for over a hundred years, they harassed the Canadian settlers---killing from ambush, kidnapping the children while they were at play, slaughtering the cattle as they grazed in the fields, sacking the houses while the inhabitants were at church and burning some homes in the middle of the night. Many housewives watched their husbands leave for work in the fields not knowing if they would return at the end of day. It was at these times that the talk turned to France, and many wished they were there again. But slowly the fields were cleared and the population increased. The immigrants were still rather poor, but they could see better times ahead.

In 1646, the road leading from the small hamlet of Beauport to the common mill on the Buisson River was called the King's Way. Where the road passed by another small settlement called Fargy, and at two or three other vulnerable places, Robert Giffard ordered his settlers to build palisaded forts for protection from the Indians. These small forts were places of sanctuary in case of surprise attack. Between 1634 and 1663, Robert Giffard brought more than 50 men and their families to his Seigneurie from France. He was always looking out for their welfare.

In the early fall of 1654, Toussaint Giroux had his land---now he needed a wife. The record states:

“On 29 September 1654, Father Paul Raganeau, a Jesuit priest, united Toussaint Giroux and Marie Godard in holy wedlock.”

The ceremony was performed in the house of Lord Giffard, and the marriage certificate was signed by the Lord and his son, Lord Denys, as witnesses. The contract of marriage was written by Francois Badeau, Royal Notary. In this contract it states:

“Giroux and Godard are one, and have all their goods in common according to the laws of Paris.”

When the census was taken in 1655, the couple had 4 acres, 54 perches, of their land under cultivation. It seemed that they were on their way toward a happy and prosperous married life; but for a while it was a sad one.

The young newlyweds lived for several years in the home of Lord Robert Giffard and his wife. As early as the winter of 1655, Toussaint and Marie were preparing the cradle for their first born. They looked forward to the event with great joy; but the young, 16 year old mother-to-be was not in the best of health. This entry in the registry of the local parish tells the sad story:

“In Lord Giffard’s house on April 30th, 1655, Toussaint Girou and Marie Godard’s son was delivered by Lord Giffard. On May 7th this son was baptized by Father Raganeau, a Jesuit. Godfather---Joseph Giffard; Godmother---Louise Giffard, Lord Charles de Lauson’s wife. The name Charles was given to him. The child deceased and was buried the same day, May 7th, 1655”

There were sad hearts around the Giffard house for the next few weeks. Madam Giffard had used all her skills in the attempt to save the baby, but to no avail. After the death, she used comforting words to the young couple, trying to console their broken hearts. Time passed, and another birth was recorded:

“On July 21st, 1656, Raphael was born, he was brought to the church on July 30th. He was baptized by Father Poncet, a Jesuit. Father Jerome LaLamant was the parish priest. The Godfather---Raphael Thierry, Godmother---Marie Rognouard, Lord of Beauport’s wife.”

Raphael was to live for 60 years, and being the oldest child, he became a great comfort to his father in later life.

Two years later, on September 1, 1658, another son was born. He also was delivered by Lord Giffard. The baptism was three weeks later in the front room of Lord Giffard’s house. This child also received the name Charles. Godfather---Charles Cloutier, Godmother---Anne Cote. Charles lived until 1706. He never married.

Lord Giffard and his wife, Madam Giffard, were very kind to their settlers. Many times they took in the poor and needy to give them succor. Madam Giffard had 20 years experience in Canada and she always shared judicious advice with the younger women of the village. She advised them on the right food and clothing for the young children. Marie Godard, wife of Toussaint, was very fortunate to have been able to live so close to the dear solicitous lady.

The years passed swiftly and it was now 1658. After four years there was very little to show for the hard work that Toussaint had been doing. Many other settlers, with the help of their neighbors, had built their own homes, but Toussaint and Marie, with their two young sons, were still living in the house of the Lord.

Then on the 14th of October 1658, a good friend and neighbor of the Giroux's, Jean Creste, called them to his house one afternoon. Also present was the Royal Notary, Paul Vachon, who drew up a contract:

“Jean Creste acknowledges that he sold and transferred to Toussaint Girou, a piece of ground 7 poles in length by 6 poles in width, for a location for a house, a yard and a garden. This sale has a condition---Girou must clear a piece of land of the same area as that given to him by Creste, and put it in the same shape as the land he is given, within one year; all this on Jean Creste's concession.”

Witness: Rene Chevalier
Witness: Michel Baugis
Witness: Jean Langlois, Sr.

Toussaint began the task of building his house. With the help of his neighbors, he soon had a substantial dwelling into which he moved his wife and family. It was a good house, with a room with a fireplace, an ante-room, a cellar and a granary. Now the Giroux family had a third share in 200 acres of land plus their own homestead. Things were looking up for the Giroux family, and on February 24th, 1660, when the Archbishop of Laval visited Beauport, Toussaint, at the age of 26 years, was confirmed into the Catholic faith. This gift of strength was welcome because there was new trouble on the horizon to threaten our ancestor's peace of mind.

When a child was baptized into the church at that time, the custom was to give him, or her, the name of the Godfather or Godmother; but Marie Goddard was adamant in her desire to name one of her male children Toussaint, after the father. So it was that on May 2nd, 1660, Toussaint Giroux, 8 days old was presented for baptism by his Godfather, Rene Chevalier; Godmother---Marguerite Colin; to Father Paul Raganeau, who performed the ceremony. The child was to live only two months:

“On July 7th, 1660, Toussaint Girou, child of two months, and son of Toussaint Girou, was buried in the cemetery near to the church of St. Joseph's on Beauce Street.”

After sorrow, surely there must come joy. On June 12th, 1661, there was born another son to the Giroux couple. He was baptized on 19th of June and given the name Michel. Godfather---Michel Maugis, Godmother---Marguerite Langlois, wife of Paul Vachon, Royal Notary. Now Marie Godard was happy and she sang a little song as she rocked her newborn son in his cradle:

“It is the young hen
Who lays an egg in the church
It will lay a nice small egg
For its little one who is going to sleep.”

On February 5th, 1663, the whole of Canada was shaken by a very severe earthquake. From 5:00 to 5:30 in the evening, a continuous shockwave rocked the houses and brought terror to the hearts of the inhabitants. Most of them ran here and there, not knowing where to turn. The churches were crowded to the doors with hysterical people wanting to confess their sins.

The shaking of the earth had opened large fissures from which belched forth fire, smoke and ashes---whole mountains disappeared; rivers ran dry. The aftershocks continued for many months, keeping the people in a state of fear and anxiety. Many were the converts to the church, both white and Indian. Amazingly, no one was killed, and only a few had minor injuries. Most felt it was God's warning to the people to mend their ways.

Again the still young mother, Marie, was expecting. The baby arrived on October 17th, 1663. It was baptized on October 21st and given the name Toussaint. Godfather---Jean Creste, Godmother---Nicole Rolland, wife of Francois Blondeau. But again the dear mother was doomed to disappointment. This child, also, was too weak to survive. He died on November 10th, 1663. The following Sunday, Toussaint Giroux took the small coffin under his arm and made the long, sad walk to the cemetery at Quebec. Here, in the "Slope of the Mountain" cemetery, the tiny body was laid to rest.

The next child was born on October 19th, 1664. He was delivered by Monsiegnur de Charney, and was baptized by him on the same day. The child was given the name Jean, probably after his grandfather. Godfather---Zacharie Maheult, Godmother---Robine Poete, wife of Paul de Rainville. Jean lived a long and healthy life, outliving three wives!

On October 5th, 1665, Toussaint Giroux and his friend, Michel Maugis, along with Paul Vachon, Royal Notary, traveled to Quebec in order to draw up a contract with Charles de Lauzon, priest and Lord of Charny. It seems that Toussaint felt a need to expand his holdings. A deed was drawn up in which the two friends agreed to purchase land from the Lord of Charny, to wit:

"Four acres in front of the St. Lawrence River by 40 acres deep, in the location called "Mount Saint Michel" in the Lauzon domain, with a right to fish, to hunt and to let the cattle graze. For this they must pay every year, on Saint Remy's Day, October 1st the sum of 20 Sols for each acre fronting on the St. Lawrence River. They also have to give 2 Deniers and 1/11th of the fish that they catch---these fish will be salted by them. The boats for fishing and the salt shall be supplied to them"

This seemed like a very good deal for the two friends, but they had extended themselves too far. The clearing of the new ground, and the amount of fish that had to be caught was far too big a load for them. At the end of 4 years, they were again before a notary, this time getting rid of this burdensome piece of property. They had found a buyer.

On December 3rd, 1660, Paul Vachon, Royal Notary, was called to Toussaint and Marie's house to draw up another contract. The wives of the two friends, Toussaint and Michel, were also present at this meeting as they had goods in common with their husbands. It was conceded that there was once acre to cut down trees on the concession which the buyer, Jean Drouard, agreed to pay for. The contract states further:

"The buyer promises to deliver 3000 eels to the sellers, which will be well pickled, and in good condition. The payments will stretch over three years---1670, 1671 and 1672."

Apparently the fishing was not good along this stretch of the St. Lawrence River because Giroux and Maugis had not been able to meet their obligation to Lord Charny, and the new owner, Drouard, had to get an extension. It took him ten years to fill his contract. On March 9th, 1680, the interested parties again met at Paul Vachon's house in Beauport. At this meeting it was acknowledged that Drouard had delivered the 3000 pickled eels to the partners, Giroux and Maugis. The contract was closed...

An old French proverb says: "Money is a dead treasure, but children are a living treasure," so it was that the Giroux family of Fargy in the Barony of Beauport, continued to become wealthy.

On January 1st, 1667, there was great happiness in our ancestor's home. On this date Marie Anne Giroux was baptized. At last! A girl! After seven boys, Marie Godard had namesake of her own. Godfather---Claude Besmen de la Martiniere, Godmother---Marie Juchereau, daughter of Lord St. Denis.

Eighteen months later, another son was born. He was baptized on December 1668, and given the name Jean Baptiste. But again a tragic end, he died while still a very young baby.

The first Lord of Beauport, Robert Giffard, was a very generous and forgiving landlord. He did not charge his tenants as much as most landlords did for their concessions; and if the tenants were late in their payments, he was exceedingly lenient. Some of his lease-holders were far in arrears with their payments. Toussaint Giroux was one of these, and the good and tolerant times were about to come to an end. Robert Giffard died in the latter part of 1667, and his son, Joseph, became the new Lord of Beauport.

It is evident that the second Lord of Beauport was of a different temperment than his father, because on June 18th, 1668, eighteen inhabitants of his Barony, among them Toussaint, had their concessions revoked. They had failed to carry out the conditions of their contracts. The deposed tenants protested to the Lord's Council, but the eviction was upheld. The council further ruled:

- The inhabitants will be reduced to one acre each.
- The fences will be taken off and rebuilt according to the map drawn by Monsieur Bouteroue, Intendent.
- The buildings near the paths will be pulled down and transferred from the locations of the owners at the owner's expense.
- The new owners will refund the former owners for any clearing that has been done on the land of the former owners.

This was a time of hardship for many of these displaced families. With only one acre for sustenance, they were hard pressed to keep food on the table. They were still angry with Lord Giffard for shoving them off of their land, and somehow they seemed to blame each other for their woes. Dissension became rampant among the villagers.

But despite the setbacks that the family had received, there was still happiness in the Giroux home. On December 29th, 1669, a second daughter was born into the family. She was baptized on January 1st, 1670, and given the name Madeleine. The baptism took place in the chapel at Beauport, and the ceremony was performed by Monseigneur Charles Lauzon.

After the family returned home from the church on this the first day of the new year, they kneeled around the fireplace where a cheery fire of maplewood was burning. Raphael, proud of his station as the eldest son, asked his father to give the blessing. Toussaint answered with a voice touched with emotion:

“My children, I bless you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit”

Everyone received the wishes for a Happy New Year and a kiss from the parents. Madeleine was the tenth child of Toussaint Giroux and Marie Godard. According to a magnanimous offering from the King of France, the family was now 300 Pounds richer. Each family that had ten children was entitled to this amount; and when the family size reached 12 children, the amount was increased to 400 Pounds. It is no wonder that the Giroux family celebrated on that New Year's Day!

And again, our ancestor was more fortunate than the other dispossessed settlers. On August 20th, 1670, Joseph Giffard made another concession to him of 3 acres of land in St. Joseph village. Toussaint was obligated to build a house within one year and to cultivate the land. Why he felt that he needed more land than the place he had in Fargy is not known. Perhaps he thought he could have it ready for his son when he became of age, but Raphael was only 14 years old at the time.

Again, Toussaint had over-extended himself. By the middle of the next year, realizing he could not fulfill his contract with Lord Giffard, and to avoid another sanction, he wrote a new contract:

“On November 16th, 1671, Toussaint Giroux and Marie Godard, sell to Pierre Parent, a 3 acre concession on the border of St. Joseph village, with the pulled down trees....”

On March 1st, 1672, Marie Godard gave birth to another son. He was baptized the next day and given the name Toussaint. Already she had named two of her babies by this name, but they lay in the cemetery at Quebec. But this young Toussaint was destined to live. And again the Godfather, Paul Vachon, left the privilege of naming the boy to the mother. Godmother---Marie Marsolet, wife of Jean Guyon.

It seems that Toussaint was never satisfied with what he had, he was always reaching for more. On March 27th, 1672, he purchased from Lord Giffard and his wife, Michelle Therese Nau, the following:

“A concession consisting of 3 & 5/6ths yards in the village of St. Michel. This land has no bushes or trees; it has a hut and a shed with all that depends on it. There is a tax of 3 Sols, and 3 Pounds, 15 Sols, with 3 living Capons. This

tax is due on St. Martin's Day. After paying the price and the amount of 100 Tournois Pounds with valid money, they can use the land that has no wood at this time. The land is ready to be sowed; the Lord and his wife keep the right on the seed for this year only...."

On the 28th of October of that year, the sellers acknowledged that they received from Toussaint Giroux, the amount of 120 Pounds, witnessed by a notary. Therefore, the Lord and his wife released Toussaint Giroux and others from the debt. Evidently, the money that the Giroux Family was receiving from the King of France was being used to buy more land.

Now that he was becoming prosperous, Toussaint decided it was time to give thoughts to his spiritual life. He joined with 11 other men of Beauport in buying and donating a considerable amount of ground surrounding the parish church at Beauport. This church had been started in 1655 and finished in 1676. Lord Robert Giffard had donated the bell for the tower in 1666. This new addition was probably used for the cemetery. The entry in the registry of the church reads:

"A pure, simple and irrevocable donation with one condition---every year a low mass will be offered for the material and spiritual needs of the 12 givers, on the day following the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, the name day of the parish."

On April 7th, 1681, five of the children of Toussaint Giroux and Marie Godard received the sacrament of Confirmation from the Bishop of Laval. At about this time the village of Beauport had 420 houses, 600 families and 6 schools with 400 students in attendance. The census of 1681 shows Toussaint Giroux at the highest point in his life. He was 48 years old, his wife, Marie Godard, was 43. He now had several sons to help him on his land at Fargy, as well as his other two concessions. The census mentions 3 rifles, 11 horned animals, one horse and 53 acres under cultivation.

The years from 1681 to 1683 were very enjoyable to Toussaint and his large family. They were busy improving their land and planting the seeds for a bounteous harvest. Also, the family was growing. At the parish church on the first three Sundays in November, 1681, the parishioners heard the proclamation of the betrothal of Raphael Giroux, oldest son of Toussaint, and Marie Madeleine Vachon, daughter of Paul Vachon, Royal Notary, and his wife Marguerite Langlois. Because no one objected, the parish priest, Father Martin, united them in Marriage on November 26th, 1681. The list of witnesses was impressive:

Joseph Giffard, Lord of Beauport
Claude Bermen de la Martiniere
Nicolas Juchereau, Lord of St. Denis
Rene Remy
Michel Fillion, Royal Notary
Paul Vachon, Royal Notary

There was great friendship between the Giroux and the Vachon families. This friendship was sealed again later when Monique, the youngest daughter of Toussaint, married Noel Vachon, a son of Paul.

Then in August of 1683, after the hay had been gathered, two more weddings occurred. The 18th of this month dawned bright and clear, just the right kind of day for a wedding. Michel Giroux was marrying Therese Prevost; Marie Anne Giroux was marrying Jean Baptiste Prevost. The brother and sister Prevost were 2 of the 9 children born to Martin Prevost and the Savage, Marie-Olivier Silvestre Manitouabewitch.

After the double wedding, the tables were brought from the houses and loaded with food. The violins were tuned, and on this beautiful summer day they ate, sang and danced in the great outdoors.

The next entry in the parish register is a sad one for Toussaint Giroux and his children:

“On November 22nd, 1684, Marie Godard, 46 years old, wife of Toussaint Giroux, has been buried in the cemetery at Beauport. She died the day after receiving the penitence sacrament and the last sacrament, and after a good life. Present during the burial:

Rene Remy
Paul Vachon
C. Martin, Cure

The night before, the neighbors had gathered to keep the vigil, say the prayers and tell the beads. There were long silences while they thought about Marie and her beginning in a new life. Some moved closer to the coffin in order to touch her cold hands. They admired the hands of this wonderful woman---the hands that had rocked the cradle, that had tucked in the bed clothes at night. The hands that made the bread and prepared the meals; the hands that could gently arrange a bouquet of flowers. A spouse, a mother, devoted and tender, her beauty coming from within, from her soul.

Toussaint was heart broken. He sat in silent sorrow, his youngest daughter, Monique, clasped in his arms. It would take a long time to heal the wounds of this final separation.

Soon after the dawn of the new year of 1685, Jean, who was 21, married the first of his three wives. On the 19th of February, the ceremony of marriage between Jean Giroux and Marie Dauphin, daughter of Etienne and Marie Morin Dauphin, was performed at the parish church in Beauport. A short seven months later, Marie Dauphin, while on a trip to Quebec, was drowned at the River Passage, in the parish of Quebec. She was brought back to the parish at Beauport and buried in the cemetery there on September 30th, 1685. She was only 17 years of age at the time.

According to the law of the land, within a year of the death of either party to a marriage contract, an inventory had to be taken of the goods and real properties acquired by the couple over the years of the marriage. So it was that on the 1st day of November, 1685, sometime before noon,

the Giroux clan was gathered at the father's house. Present was Toussaint, the husband, father and guardian of Madeleine, 16; Toussaint, 14; and Monique, about 11. Also present were Raphael, Michel and Jean Baptiste Prevost, husband of Marie Anne Giroux. Charles, who was of age but had not married, and Jean, who had so recently lost his wife and had no children, could not be considered in the division of the property.

A request would have been made by the children previous to this day, asking that their father take an inventory of the goods mutually possessed by Toussaint Giroux and Marie Godard, and to share such goods with good will, and to manage the whole transaction with softness; as they honored their father greatly, and respected his judgement. They had also asked that their father appoint two neighbors to help with the inventory and the estimation of the worth of the goods. Paul Remy, attorney and manager of the Jesuit business, and Jean de Rainville were the two men called upon.

First, the contract of the land transactions were studied and found to be in order. A list was made of all the common goods of the household and farm yard. The cattle were counted and all else was found to be in order. Toussaint Giroux, the father, took charge of all the personal goods and the tools, and would divide them amongst the children when they asked for them. The land was divided thusly: One half to Toussaint Giroux and his minor children, the other half to be divided into eight equal pieces for the eight children of his married sons and daughter. All this business was settled amicably and the children returned to their homes.

And again at the beginning of the new year of 1686, more members were added to the Giroux clan. On January 21st, 1686, Madeleine Giroux, at the age of 16, was married to Pierre Choret. From this union came 13 children.

Jean Giroux chose February 12th of the same year for his second wedding. After being a widower for five months, he married Suzanne Belanger, daughter of Nicolas and Marie de Rainville Belanger.

The more members added by marriage and birth, the less there were left in our ancestor's home. With the father now was Charles, the bachelor, young Toussaint and pretty little Monique. The large house seemed empty.

"It is not good that man should be alone." (Genesis 2:18) Toussaint had been a widower for almost two years and a helpmate was sorely needed in the Giroux house. A short distance down the road lived Therese Leblanc, the widow of Pierre Lavallee, mother of ten children. Perhaps there could be a liaison formed between the two? After a short courtship, the couple traveled to Quebec City to have the marriage contract drawn up by the Royal Notary, Aubert. The date was October 24th, 1686. The contract stipulated that:

"The community property will be shared while both parties to the contract are alive, and will be divided among the children of the previous marriages of both parties. The children shall be clothed and cared for until the boys become 18 years of age, and the girls until someone else takes care of them." (marriage)

The difference in age between the couple had not been neglected. Toussaint was 18 years older than his future wife, and he stipulated that she was to get 600 Pounds at the time of his death. Although every situation seemed to be covered by the contract, no one could foresee that the incompatible temperaments of these two would undermine any happiness that they might have had at the start, and drive them into a separation in less than 5 years.

The wedding occurred on October 29th, 1686, at Beauport. The couple settled down in the Giroux home with their twelve children, to which was added to on February 14th, 1688. Marie Angelique was born to the couple on that day.

In 1690, the English Troops from the Atlantic Coast near Boston, launched an attack against the French settlements of Quebec and Beauport. On the 18th of October, the invaders landed 1500 men with 5 cannon on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River above Quebec. They then began an approach to the settlements. Lord Juchereau of St. Denis, rallied all the able-bodied men of Beauport to the defense of the village, and the English were repulsed. Four Frenchmen were killed and seven wounded in this attack.

The English soldiers went into camp near Beauport and harassed the villagers for 3 days, but they could not break down the defenses of the forts. In several skirmishes, the enemy burned 6 or 7 farms, and took some cattle. Two more villagers were killed and thirteen more wounded. All the time the English were camped near the settlements, they kept up a continual bombardment of Quebec with their cannon. Very little damage was done, however; and the English became discouraged. During the night of the 21st, the English returned to their boats on the river and floated down to the Isle of Orleans which they tried to capture, but again were repulsed. On the 25th of October, the English turned in the direction of Boston, and disappeared down the river.

We can be certain that Toussaint Giroux and his older sons were active in the battle with the English. Due to his courageous leadership during the attack, Lord Juchereau was awarded letters of Nobility by the King of France. The French settlers returned to their daily routine with only the fear of Iroquis raids to mar their solitude.

The excitement of the English raid had pretty well been forgotten when, on November 14th, 1690, Toussaint, the younger, married Therese Dauphin, daughter of Etienne and Marie Morin Dauphin, also sister of her brother, Jean's, first wife. Besides the usual gift of 400 Pounds, the parents of the bride gave to their daughter a house in the village of Saint Michel, situated between Jean Giroux's and Guillaume Chevalier's houses. Two years later, on December 1st 1692, Toussaint, Jr., received a concession from Lord Joseph Giffard near the same location.

On the 21st of December, 1690, the first hint of trouble between Toussaint and his wife, Therese Leblanc, came to light. Toussaint was called to Quebec City by some of the merchants of the town. They informed him that he had debts totaling 138 Pounds. These debts had been previously unknown to him, so it was rather a shock to learn that his wife had been to Quebec and charged this amount of merchandise. He promised the merchants that he would pay the bills in two equal installments; one in October of 1691, the other in October of 1692. Dark clouds were beginning to show through the silver lining of this marriage.

By April 12th, 1691, the rupture was complete. An agreement was reached for a legal separation of the couple. The agreement, concluded before a notary, gave some of the reasons for the separation: They were incompatible, there had been infidelity, and the love had turned to hate. At the conclusion it said:

“In order to let her subsist, Giroux, the husband, gives her two work oxen. They will sow together this year only, under the condition that Leblanc, the wife, will give him one of her sons to help him.....

“And because they have common debts toward Sir Pachot, a civilian merchant in Quebec, in order to pay the amount, Leblanc promises to give one of her sons for two weeks, to help Giroux to bring the wood to Quebec---one week next winter, the other week, winter after next in 1692.

“And since they have a little girl, Giroux promises to take her with him, as it is convenient....”

The next year Toussaint suffered from a sickness that put him in the hospital for a month. The register of the sick reports:

“Toussaint Giroux, from Reveillon, in Perche, France, in-patient from July 1st to July 31st, 1692.”

We do not know what the sickness was, but Toussaint recovered sufficiently to continue with his work, and time passed. Monique, the youngest child of Toussaint and Marie Godard, married Noel Vachon, son of Paul Vachon and Marguerite Langlois. They were married on October 24th, 1695. She was widowed four years later, and probably moved into Toussaint’s home with her two children until she remarried.

Marie Angelique, the only child of Toussaint Giroux and Therese Leblanc, was married to Vincent Rodrigue on January 21st, 1707. This left Toussaint without any children to care for. He spent the rest of his life in the home of Raphael, his grandson. Soon he decided to rid himself of any incumberances during his declining years; so he had a notary draw up a declaration:

“The sale of the land located in Beauport, by Toussaint Girou to Raphael Girou, (this is a grandson, son of Raphael and Madeleine Vachon, born October 25th, 1686.) will remain valid under one condition: Raphael Girou promises to feed and to give to the donor all that he needs, until his death. He will take care of the burial and pray to God for him. He will also pay to all his children, after the death, the amount of 105 Pounds, 5 Sols.”

Therese Leblanc was again heard from when this donation was announced. She evidently felt that she was entitled to a portion of the land that Toussaint had donated to his grandson. Because of her objection, the case was judged before the Royal Council at Quebec. The verdict is written in the Registry:

“Toussaint Girou, who appeared before us in order to ask, in spite of Leblanc’s request, that the sale of land to his grandson, be declared good and valid. Toussaint Girou also

asks that the land he sold be free of mortgage and any pretensions that Therese Leblanc could have on it, because of the advantage he gave her in the wedding contract. Because she had left him over twenty years ago, and because of the powers of the law, she has no right to interfere in this transfer of land. Toussaint Girou had many rights on his side and he could have used them. He showed us receipts where he had paid debts for her; and she did not appear before us to defend her position; so we conclude that the bill of sale of 25 August 1711 gives Toussaint Girou the right to do with it as he pleases; and will be free from any rights or mortgages that Therese Leblanc might feel she has a right.”

Raphael, the grandson upon whom Toussaint seemed to depend, remained a bachelor until the age of 30. This was an unusual circumstance, as the children were usually encouraged by their parents to marry at an early age. In fact, the King of France added his persuasion to an early marriage by presenting a gift of 50 Pounds to the marrying couple; plus 20 Pounds if the groom was under 21, and 20 more Pounds if the bride was younger than 17. The parents of the boy who was not married by the age of 20, or a girl at 16, were called before the Clerk of their jurisdiction and questioned as to their inability to get their children married.

Although Toussaint had been separated from his wife for many years, it is doubtful that he was too lonely in his later life. Each year from 1686 to 1715, six to eight new baptisms added members to the Giroux clan. At the time of his death, his four living sons and four daughters, had given him over 70 grandchildren, plus numerous great-grandchildren. For Toussaint, the words of the priest at the wedding mass so many years before had been fulfilled:

“And ye shall see the children up to the 3rd and 4th generation.”

The year of 1715 was not a good year for the inhabitants who lived in and around the area of Beauport. A sickness came and took 10 lives from January 27th to April 17th, including two members of the Giroux family.

“On 11 Feb 1715, died Raphael Giroux, age 60.”

“On 16 Feb 1715, Toussaint Girou, inhabitant, about 80, deceased the day before after receiving the necessary sacraments.”

“On 6 Aug 1715, died Michel Giroux, age 55.”

“On 26 Sep 1715, died Madeleine Vachon, widow of Raphael, age 50.”

So ends the story of Toussaint Giroux, immigrant, pioneer, husbandman. Beloved by his first wife, scorned by his second; he never became famous, but he has left a posterity that spans the North American continent from East to West and from North to South. The far flung migration of the Giroux clan indicates that the spirit of adventure and discovery has been passed on to the younger generations.