

BIGRAS

Bigras, Francois (signature), born about 1663 of the marriage of Mathurin (Bigras) and Catherine Parenteau, of St. Nicolas of LaRochelle, formally contracted on 25 August 1685 at Montreal to marry Marie Brunet, daughter of Mathieu (Brunet) and Marie Blanchard (Maugue's registers). The future bride, having at the time of the contract only 8 years of age, the marriage did not take place until 31 August 1693 at Montreal. In the mean time, Bigras offered his services to the Trois Rivieres' merchant, Joseph "Petit le Bruno" on the 20th of November 1685 (Maugue's records). After his marriage, he settled at Lachine where he signed a contract to pay an annual rent of 3 livres 3 sols (63 cents) to the cure Remy (Pottier's records, 5 May 1697). On the Plat of Montreal for 1 702, Bigras occupies three arpents of frontage land in Grande Anse above the town of Lachine, between M. Chartier and Claude Robillard. His oath of fealty to his feudal lord in 1731 places Francois Bigras at Pointe-Claire, between Louis Fortier to the northeast and Guillaume Barbe to the southwest (Rapport de L'Archeviste de la Province de Quebec, 1941-2, p. 115.) The land was three arpents wide and contained a house, a barn, and stables; 30 acres were farmed and three were in grasslands. In addition to agriculture, our man engaged in commerce with "the high country" (around Michigan); on 19 September 1713*, he engaged Charles Parent and Paul Chevalier to make the trip to Lake Erie, and on the 23rd of May, 1714,* Paul Sabourin was hired to go to Michilimackinac (gr. Adhemar). Four of his sons were voyageurs to the Ottawas: Jacques, Francois (Jr.), Alexis and Joseph (Cf. Rapport de L'arch de la Prov de Quebec, 1929-30), especially Jacques, who died at Detroit. The two eldest (Jacques and Francois) were called "Fauvel" or "Fauvel dit Bigras". The Father died 25 July 1731 and was buried the next day at Montreal. Marie Brunet, his wife, was buried at Ste. Genevieve of Montreal 12 January 1756. Children:

1. Marie-Louise, b. Lachine (L) 29 October 1694; M. Pointe-Claire (PC) 16 Oct. 1713 (cf. Lepallieur's records) to Andre ^{Ray} (Franche) dit Laframboise; died....
2. Jacques dit Fauvel, b. Montreal (M) 14 September 1696; received a concession of land at Cote-St-Remy, 5 August 1718 (Raimbault's registers); m. (cf. Breul, priest, 15 May 1720, recorded in Lepallieur) to Angelique Clement; died Detroit, 4 February 1751.
3. Françoise, b. L 4 May 1698; engaged servant to Claude Maurice LaFontaine, 17 Oct. 1710; (Adhemar); M. PC 15 June 1716 to Rene Aubin; died///.
4. Francois dit Fauvel, b. L 31Feb 1700(?); m. 1^o St. Laurent, Montreal (SL) 15 July 1724 to Therese Desvoyaux (Lepallieur, 25 July); 2^o Marguerite Boutron (or Bautron) (before Letellier, missionary of Montreal (SL) 7 June 1734, cf. Lepallieur)
5. For the rest of the children see the ducostat copy elsewhere in family papers.)

* Cf. family papers for these contracts.

Variations of the name Bigras: At LaRochelle: one finds Bigras, Bigros, Bigreau, Bigra, and Bigueriau.

Etymology: Bigret, bigrat, from the old French, bigre, meaning rich. Surname of a bee raiser (Zauzat)

Taken from Archange Godbout's "Nos Anc-tres Au XVIIe Siecle" which appeared in the Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Quebec, (1955-57), pp. 460-461)