

The Morin Family of Beaubassin – Banished from Acadia
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In 1688, a local farmer's son romanced the daughter of the prominent family in the Acadian village of Beaubassin. When she became pregnant, the farmer, **Pierre Morin dit Boucher**, and 18 members of his family forfeited all of their village property and were banished from the colony of Acadia. The punishment was excessive even by the conservative mores of the time. To understand how this could happen, one needs to know the events that led up to that banishment and the situation in Acadia at the time which is outlined below.

About 1661 to 1680

Pierre Morin *dit* Boucher married **Marie Madeleine Martin** at Port Royal, Acadia, in about 1661. Pierre was originally from Normandy where he was born about 1634. Pierre and Marie Madeleine's second son, **Louis Morin**, was born in 1664 at Port Royal, Acadia, where Pierre had a small farm. The 1671 census mentions that Pierre possessed: three head of cattle; four sheep; and had one *arpent* (about 0.85 acre) under cultivation. Pierre and Marie had eight children by 1680 and had moved to the village of Beaubassin in northwest Acadia at the head of the Bay of Fundy.¹

The village of Beaubassin was founded about 1672 by **Jacques Bourgeois d'Aulnay**. There were six families living in the village five years later. **Michel Leneuf de Lavallière** obtained a *seigneurie* for the area near the original village as a reward for seizing three small English vessels in 1676. His *seigneurie* did not include the original village, but Leneuf plotted to acquire the excluded land. In 1682, Leneuf listed eleven men who rejected the concession contracts that he offered. On that list were: Pierre Morin; **Guyou Chiasson**; **Michel Poirier**; **Roger Kessy**; **Claude Dugast**; **Germaine** and **Guillaume Bourgeois**; **Germaine Giroir**; **Jean Aubin Migneaux**; **Jacques Belou**; and **Thomas Cormier**.² Few new people relocated from other areas in Acadia or from France, so Leneuf brought in *engagés* (workers under contract) from Québec to populate his *seigneurie*.³

1680 to 1687

Michel Leneuf's first wife, **Marguerite Marie Denys**, daughter of **Nicolas Denys** and **Marguerite Lafite**, died sometime before 1683. He later married **Françoise Denys**, daughter of **Simon Denys** and **Françoise Dutartre**. In 1683, Leneuf served as governor of Acadia for one year. The courts relieved Leneuf as governor because he granted fishing rights to fishermen from Boston. Leneuf took possession of his *seigneurie* in 1684. However, he returned to military service in Québec in 1687 during a time of increased Iroquois raids there. He left his future son-in-law, **Claude-Sébastien de Villieu**, in charge of his *seigneurie* in his absence and left his older children in Beaubassin.⁴ Whether he left his younger children and wife in Acadia or took them to Québec isn't recorded.

Marie Josèphe Leneuf was one of Michel Leneuf's daughters. She was born on 18 April 1671 at Trois-Rivières in Québec. She was no older than 12 years old when her mother died and was 16 years old when

¹ Rev. Archange Godbout, o.f.m., "Les Morin d'Acadie," *Mémoires*, volume 1, number 2, 101-110, translated by G. P. Hébert and republished in *The French Canadian and Acadian Genealogical Review*, volume 1, number 2, (1968), 133.

² Andrew Hill Clark, *Acadia: the Geography of Early Nova Scotia to 1760* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 142, as quoted on <http://www.acadian-cajun.com/bbassin.htm>, the Acadian-Cajun Genealogy and History Website, *Beaubassin*, on 10 September 2013.

³ Clark, 142, as quoted on the Acadian-Cajun Genealogy and History Website.

⁴ Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB), *Leneuf de LaVallière de Beaubassin, Michel*, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id_nbr=915, 10 September 2013.

her father left to go back to Québec in 1687. She appears to have been close to the family of Pierre Morin. She was the godmother of the two youngest children of Pierre: **Simon Joseph Morin** on 8 January 1685 and **Jacques Morin** on 2 March 1686.⁵

The fortunes of Pierre Morin improved during the early 1680s. By 1686, Pierre and Marie Madeleine had 12 children. It is recorded in the 1686 census that Pierre Morin, senior, had: 15 head of cattle; eight sheep; 12 pigs; and cultivated 30 *arpents* while **Pierre Morin, junior**, had: 14 head of cattle; six sheep; eight pigs; and cultivated six *arpents*. The 1686 census also recorded that there were only 129 persons living in the Beaubassin area.⁶

Other changes were also happening in Acadia at this time. The parish priest in Beaubassin, **Fr. Claude Moireau**, was recalled to Québec in 1686. Fr. Moireau was a Récollet priest. The Récollets were a French branch of the Franciscans. **L'abbé Claude Trouvé** assumed the responsibility for administering to the people in Beaubassin. Trouvé was a Sulpician priest.⁷ The object of the Society of Saint Sulpice is "to labor, in direct dependence on the bishops, for the education and perfection of ecclesiastics."⁸ Trouvé had a varied background as a parish priest in France, as a missionary to the Iroquois, and as an ecclesiastical superior of the Ursuline monastery in Québec.⁹ Although the sources do not explicitly say, it is certainly possible that his approach to administering to his parishioners was a bit stricter than was Fr. Moireau's.

Changes were happening in the civil government also. **Louis Alexandre Des Friches de Meneval** was named governor of Acadia on 1 March 1687. He traveled from France and did not reach Port Royal until early October 1687. Meneval's first concerns were to examine the accounts and illicit trading activities of the previous governor, pay arrears owed the soldiers, and either restore the fort at Port Royal or decide to build a new one. Prior to his appointment, he had been only a company lieutenant in the army. Although, he was not experienced in colonial administration, he did have the recommendation of **Charles Duret de Chevry de la Boulaye**, the king's lieutenant in Acadia.¹⁰ In the autumn of 1688, Meneval sent a letter to the government in France listing the many things that were needed to provide protection for Acadia. His letter ended with the prophetic observation that the English "very much wanted Acadia."¹¹ Meneval's job was made even more complex by the circumstances in Europe that led up to the French invasion of the Rhenish Palatinate in September, 1688 and the subsequent War of the League of Augsburg. Meneval must have been very busy in early 1688.

The lieutenant governor acted as judge and clerk of the court for Acadia and assisted the governor. **Mathieu Des Groutin** replaced aging **Michel Boudrot**, who was in his late 80s, in this office. Des Groutin arrived in Acadia in 1688 on the ship, the *Fripone*, but was not confirmed in his office by the Sovereign Council until 29 November 1688. Although the lieutenant governor would normally play a major part in any consideration like the banishment of the Morin family, that office was operationally vacant in early 1688.¹²

⁵ Godbout / Hébert, 129-130.

⁶ Godbout / Hébert, 129.

⁷ Godbout / Hébert, 130.

⁸ New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, *Society of Saint-Sulpice*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13378a.htm>, 11 September 2013.

⁹ DCB, *Trouvé, Claude*, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/trouve_claude_2E.html, 11 September 2013.

¹⁰ DCB, *Duret de Chevry de la Boulaye*, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/duret_de_chevry_de_la_boulaye_charles_1E.html, 26 November 2013.

¹¹ DCB, *Des Friches de Meneval, Louis-Alexandre*, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/des_friches_de_meneval_louis_alexandre_2E.html, 9 September 2013.

¹² Godbout / Hébert, 129.

Early 1688

Louis Morin was 23 or 24 years old while Marie Josèphe Leneuf was almost 17 years old. They had known each other for several years. With her mother dead, her father gone to Québec to fight the Iroquois, and the familiar parish priest reassigned, one thing led to another and Marie became pregnant. Marie's family sought retribution.

L'abbé Trouvé acted as a criminal judge and prosecutor, although he appears to have had no authority. Trouvé found Louis Morin guilty and also judged Pierre, his wife, their children, sons-in-law, and grandchildren to be co-conspirators. The sons-in-law were included because one of them had talked about Trouvé and about the young lady. Trouvé sentenced Louis Morin to navel service for the rest of his life.¹³

The nineteen persons in the Morin family forfeited their property to the absent Michel Leneuf. **Reverend Archange Godbout** quotes a letter written by Lieutenant Governor Mathieu Des Grouin – signed on 2 September 1689. The letter complained about Trouvé's banishment of the Morin family and mentioned that the Morin family was related to almost one third of the Acadian population and were friends with many others. Godbout also quotes a letter of Mathieu Des Grouin – signed on 2 October 1690 – mentioning complaints against Trouvé regarding the banishments “and about the confessions ...”¹⁴ The specific complaint isn't mentioned, although it is unlikely that the confession penances were considered too lenient.

Reverend Godbout also noted the normal penalties that the law of that period called for:

In France, an arbitrary penalty proportionate to the circumstances which surrounded it is pronounced against those who seduce virgins. If the girl voluntarily acceded to her seducer, and her carnal knowledge was followed by pregnancy, only a sentencing to damages and interests is pronounced against the author of the pregnancy, and more or less considerable, according to the rank and fortune of the parties concerned. The begetter of the child is moreover condemned to assume responsibility for it, to cause it to be fed, and brought up in the Catholic religion.¹⁵

The complaints against Trouvé were so great that he was forced to abandon his parish. He initially wanted to relocate to the nearby village of *Les Mines*, but the people there would not receive him. Finally, he moved to the capital, Port Royal, where he was under the protection of Governor Meneval.¹⁶

Louis Morin was sent to France on the ship, the *Fripone*, which had recently brought the new lieutenant governor, Mathieu Des Grouin, to Acadia. Louis was never heard from again. Pierre Morin and the other 17 members of his family were forced to forfeit their property and to leave Acadia. **Richard Denys** established the exiles at Ristigouche, about 150 miles northwest of Beaubassin in Chaleur Bay, near his trading post. Richard Denys was the brother-in-law of Michel Leneuf. Although it is mentioned that Denys did this to make up for the wrongs his family inflicted on the Morins, it was also to his benefit to settle the Morins near his trading post. The trading post was near a Mikmac Indian village but there were no French settlers there before the Morins arrived. Pierre Morin died at Ristigouche in 1690. Richard Denys died in 1691 and the Ristigouche *seigneurie* reverted to the Crown. After this, the Morin family moved to Québec where several of them and of their extended families achieved success and social

¹³ Godbout / Hébert, 128.

¹⁴ Godbout / Hébert, 128.

¹⁵ Godbout / Hébert, 132.

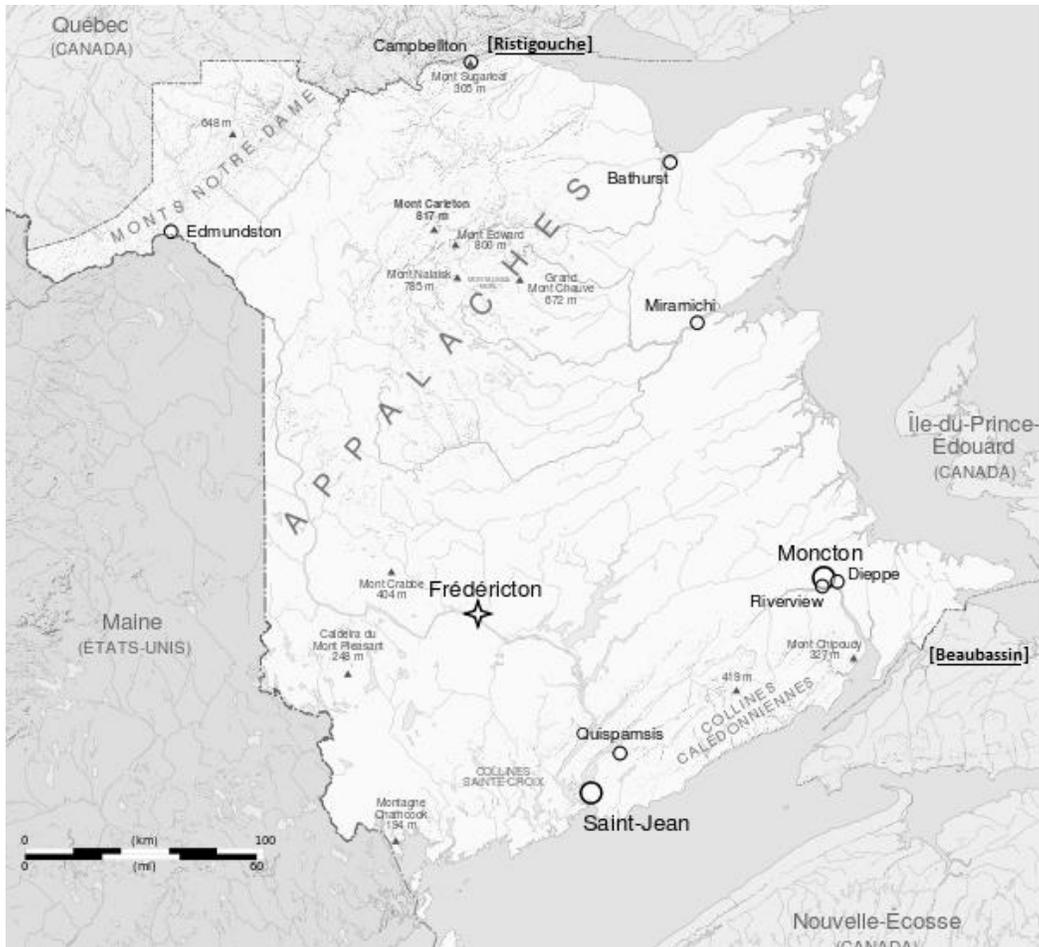
¹⁶ Godbout / Hébert, 128.

positions.¹⁷ The Morin family also avoided the later Deportations that tore apart many Acadian families; however, that was nearly 70 years in the future and was not a consolation for the Morins of 1688.

Marie Josèphe Leneuf fared much better than did Louis Morin. In April, 1689, about a year after the Morins were banished, **Jacques René De Brisay, Seigneur** and **Marquis De Denonville**, and **Bochard de Champigny** granted Marie the area near the Chicabenedady River in Minas Bay to “make settlements there and trade with the savages.”¹⁸ She later returned to Trois-Rivières and married **Jean Paul Legardeur de Saint Pierre**, her second cousin, on 15 September 1692. They had five children. Jean Paul had a successful career as a military officer, fur trader, emissary to the Chippewas, and *seigneur*.¹⁹

There is no record of the baby of Marie Josèphe Leneuf and Louis Morin.

There is no evidence that Pierre Morin was related to **Noël Morin** who married **Hélène Desportes**, the widow of **Guillaume Hébert**, at Québec City in 1640. Both Pierre and Noël had large families and left many descendants in French Canada.



Map of the Mountains of New Brunswick by Wikimedia Commons user Sémhur, 14 April 2011. [Ristigouche] and [Beaubassin] are added just to the right (east) of their respective former locations

¹⁷ Godbout / Hébert, 133.

¹⁸ Godbout / Hébert, 130.

¹⁹ DCB, Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, Jean Paul,

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/legardeur_de_saint_pierre_jean_paul_2E.html, 17 October 2012.