

Françoise Lemoine, "Fille du Roi"

(7th Great-Grandmother of Charles Sieracki)



Daughters of the King

Samuel de Champlain founded France's colony, New France, in 1608; but when he died thirty years later the colony had grown to scarcely 300 people. Years later, King Louis XIV undertook a vigorous campaign to populate the colony. In addition to sending soldiers and contract laborers, he sponsored over the course of 10 years a contingent of 768 respectable young women to sail to New France to choose a husband and raise a family. Shiploads of young women would meet and eligible bachelors in Quebec City. And if a bargain were not struck there, the young women would sail upriver to cast their lot in Sorel and Montreal. Ninety percent of the women found husbands. The King financed their travel and provided a dowry of 50 livres – about two-thirds of what a contract laborer would earn in a year. In a stroke of marketing genius, these women were referred to as "filles du Roi" - daughters of the King. By 1681 when the program ended, the population of New France had reached about 10,000, which assured the success of the colony. Most of the Francophone population of Canada is descended from these 10,000 settlers. Our ancestor Françoise Lemoine, born in Paris about 1644, and the grandmother of Felix Peloquin, was a "fille du roi," and our ancestor François Peloquin was one of the soldiers sent by the King who received a plot of land for his service.

The connection of our family to the history and heritage of New France and Canada is so close that our cousin Ray Cummings joked that when he meets a French Canadian, he often greets them by saying, "Hello cousin!"