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ANDRE BADEL, THE SWISS SOLDIER

-- John P. DuLong

Although Switzerland has a reputation for being peaceful (and is now strictly neutral), at one time it had a very militaristic population. The Swiss Cantons would negotiate as brokers for their citizen soldiers who would be employed by other nations as mercenaries. Since the reign of Charles VIII, France has employed Swiss mercenaries. The most prestigious unit was the *Cent-Suisses de la Garde*, which was the first permanent Swiss unit founded outside of Switzerland in the year 1496. Louis XIII also raised a Swiss guard regiment in 1616, *Les Garde Suisses*.¹ The Swiss not only fought in Guard regiments for the King and Queen, but also in various other units. At the time of the Seven Years' War (better known in America as the French and Indian Wars), the French employed some 20,000 Swiss mercenaries.² Two companies of the Karrer Regiment, a Swiss unit raised by the French Ministry of Marine in 1721, were stationed at Louisbourg in 1745.³

Not all of the Swiss joined these special "foreign" regiments; some signed on in regular French units. Such was the case of Andre Badel *dit* LaMarche. He was a member of the Carignan-Salieres Regiment in the company of Captain Hector d'Andigne de Grandfontaine. This French regiment had been fighting the Turks in Hungary and was being transferred to New France to wage war against the Iroquois. Andre departed France on 13 May 1665 aboard *L'Aigle d'Or*.⁴ It was a ship of 400 tons, commanded by the Sieur Villepars. The ship was transporting 200 soldier of the Carignan Regiment. At sea for four months, the ship finally docked at Quebec on 18 August 1665.

In October Captain Grandfontaine's company was assigned to building a road along the Richelieu River between Fort St-Louis at Chambly and Fort Ste-Therese. In 1666 his company was among the troops which invaded the Mohawk territory. They left Quebec on the fourteenth of September and returned on the fifth of November. The campaign had succeeded in capturing only four deserted villages and burning them to the ground. However, this was enough to impress the Mohawks who soon after sued for peace.⁵

¹Terence Wise, Military Flags of the World in Color (New York: Arco Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), pp. 106 & 109.

²John Mollo, Uniforms of the Seven Years' War, 1756-1763, in Color (New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1977), p. 140.

³Martin Windrow, Montcalm's Army (Berkshire, England: Ospery Publishing, Ltd., 1973), p. 34.

⁴Michel Langlois, "Liste des Navires venus en Nouvelle-France de 1657 à 1665," L'Ancêtre 3:1 (September 1976):3-15, p. 14.

⁵George W. Brown, ed., Dictionary of Canadian Biography (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1979), vol. I, pp. 62, 556, & 570-571.

With the end of the campaign the Carignan Regiment was withdrawn. However, Jean Talon, the Intendant, with the blessing of Louis XIV and his financial minister Colbert, encouraged many of the soldiers and their officers to remain and settle in Canada. Andre Badel was one of the men who took the offer.

Andre was originally from Geneva, Switzerland. He was born there on 7 June 1632 and was baptized on the tenth in the Protestant cathedral of St-Pierre.⁶ His father was Etienne Badel, a carpenter from the town of Certoux, who moved to Geneva about 1620. Certoux is today in the Canton of Geneva, but in the seventeenth century it was a part of the Duchy of Savoy. It is located south of Geneva, near the border of France. His mother was Pernette (Perrette) Mermou or Mermoud (Marmaute). She was from the village of Vandoeuvres, which is northeast of Geneva.

Etienne Badel and Pernette Mermou were married in Geneva on 21 December 1626. Etienne's father was Julien Badel, who was alive at the time of the wedding. However, Pernette's father, Nicolas Mermou, was already dead. Etienne died on 29 December 1662 at the age of 62 years. Pernette followed him the next year on the first of February at the age of 69 years.

Andre either left home or lost contact with his mother around 1662, since at the time of his marriage he only reported that his father was deceased. He was married on 26 October 1671 at Quebec to Barbe Duchesne, the daughter of Claude Duchesne and Claude Laval. On the twenty-second they had a marriage contract made before the notary Romain Becquet.⁷ It seems that Andre neglected to mention his Huguenot upbringing at the wedding, or perhaps he had never taken Protestantism seriously. No record of his abjuration has been found.

Although the marriage record indicates that Barbe was also from the Canton of Geneva, no evidence has been uncovered about her origin. It is interesting to note that she and Andre both claimed to have come from the same area in Switzerland. The Duchesne surname is common in Savoy and the Christian names of her parents suggest that she may have been Catholic. It is difficult to account for her presence in Quebec. She is not recorded as being a "Daughter of the King." Nor is there any evidence that she

⁶Letter from Barbara Roth-Lochner, Assistant Archivist, *Archives d'Etat*, Republic and Canton of Geneva, to John P. DuLong, 5 September 1980. To the best of the author's knowledge the information in this letter about Badel's origins, and reported in this article, has never before been published.

⁷Rene Jette, *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles du Quebec* (Montreal: Presses de l'Universite de Montreal, 1983), p. 40.

Cyprien Tanguay, *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes* (7 vols., reprint ed., Montreal: Editions Elysee, 1975), vol. 1, p. 21.

accompanied her parents to Quebec. As yet no servant contract has been found for her. Few women came to New France without their parents except as "Daughters of the King" or as contracted laborers. There is another possibility which must be considered. Perhaps she was a camp follower who accompanied Andre to New France where he married her when he finally decided to settle down. Even though this was a common practice in the seventeenth century, there is no sound evidence to support this conjecture. The fact that they did not marry until 1671 and that they did not have any illegitimate children contradicts this supposition. However, it is very unlikely that the Carignan Regiment arrived without its collection of camp followers and hangarounds.

Andre and Barbe had eight children. Etiennette was born on 10 December 1672 on the *Petite Riviere St-Charles* and was baptized the next day at Quebec. She married Hugues Messaguier on 23 September 1687 at Montreal and she was buried on 21 March 1695 at Lachine. Marie married Jacques Sequin on 28 November 1689 at Montreal. Anne married Jean Danis (Dannay) on 10 September 1691 at Montreal. Jeanne was baptized on 12 January 1680 at Montreal and married Jean Monet on 5 November 1693 at Montreal. Jean was born on 26 January 1682 at Montreal and was baptized there on the next day. Marie-Charlotte was baptized on 12 December 1687 at Montreal and married Claude Aumay on 7 February 1701 at Lachine. Jacques was baptized on 10 July 1687 at Montreal and was buried on 28 October 1688 at Montreal. Finally, Hugues was baptized on 6 October 1689 at Montreal and buried 1 December 1689 at Montreal.

After settling at Quebec, Andre eventually moved to Montreal. His wife died there and was buried on 10 July 1710 at the age of 60 years. Andre died the following year and was buried on 20 February 1711. His age was reported to be 100 years, but he was really only 79.

Andre Badel, the mercenary, lived a long, adventurous life far removed from his Swiss homeland. He survived the voyage to New France, the campaign against the Iroquois, and the rough Canadian winters. Although Jean, his only son to survive to adulthood, never married, many Franco-Americans are descended from him through his daughters.

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