

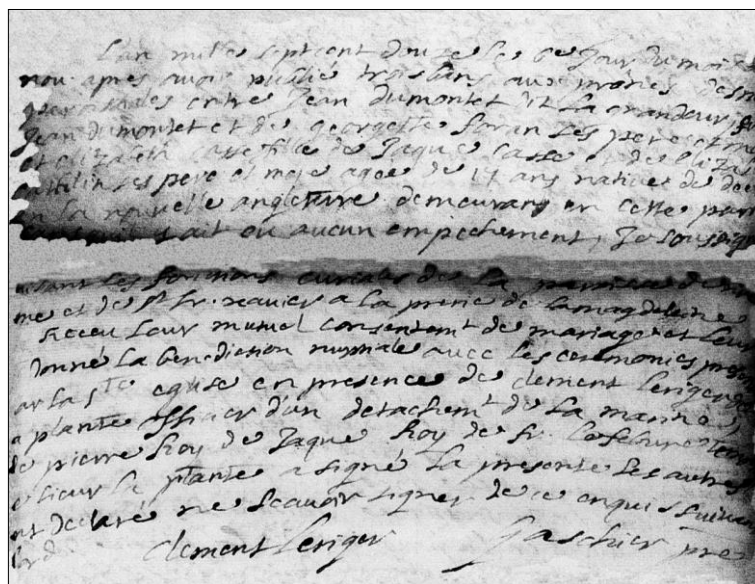
# She was Élisabteh Casse

*in New France*

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Going back in time through our ancestral tree we discover the presence of Élisabeth Casse as the mother of the groom in the marriage certificate of her son Jean-Baptiste Dumontet when he married Suzanne-Élisabeth Charbonneau; act in which we also identify her husband and father of Jean-Baptiste, Jean-Baptiste Dumontet dit Lagrandeur.

This information allowed us to find her marriage certificate with Jean-Baptiste Dumontet dit Lagrandeur.



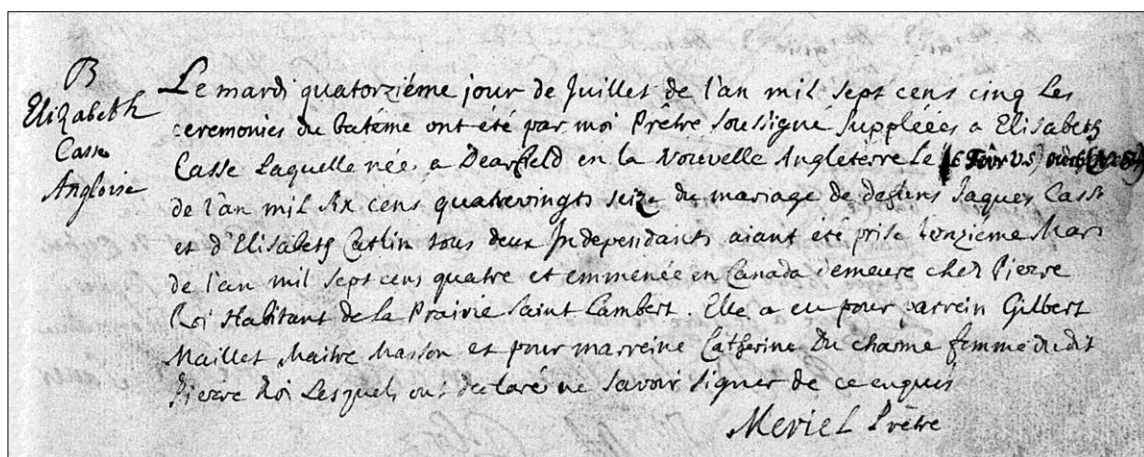
Marriage certificate of Élisabeth Casse and Jean-Baptiste Dumontet dit Lagrandeur,  
November 6, 1712 in La Prairie, QC<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Family Search Collection

Her parents are identified as Jacques Casse and Élisabeth Cathlin. We also learn that she is 17 years old, in fact she is 16 years old as we will see later, that she is originally from Deerfield in New England and that she lives in the parish of La Prairie. The witnesses identified are: Clément Leriger dit Laplante, officer of a detachment of the Marine, Pierre Roy, Jacques Roy and François Lefebvre.

Surprise! Although she was originally from New England, further research allows us to find an act of baptism, celebrated on July 14, 1705 at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Montreal.



Baptismal certificate for Elisabeth Casse, July 14, 1705  
at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Montreal, QC<sup>2</sup>

This document confirms Deerfield in New England as her place of birth as well as the identity of her parents, while specifying that they are independent<sup>3</sup>, that her father is deceased and that she is English. The date of birth written on her baptismal certificate is (February 6 OS) 1696 [OS for old style]. This is information that Father Meriel will have obtained by questioning Élisabeth about her origins. We should know that at the time New England worked with the Julian calendar, while New France used the Gregorian calendar. With this statement (OS), we understand that the celebrant was therefore fully aware of the use of the Julian calendar in New England at the time. In 1696, when she was born, the Julian calendar was 10 days behind the Gregorian calendar; Élisabeth was therefore born on February 16 on the Gregorian calendar. She was 9 years old when she was baptized.

<sup>2</sup> Family Search Collection

<sup>3</sup> Religious movement present in England and Scotland in the middle of the 17th Century. The Independents were claiming control over the religious affairs in their community.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent\\_\(religion\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_(religion))

The baptismal certificate also speaks of her being taken prisoner on March 11, 1704 at Deerfield before being brought to Canada. This requires further investigation from both the point of view of the New England colonies and New France. Fortunately, many literary works of very good historical and documentary quality are available on the web<sup>4,5,6</sup>.

We learn that there was indeed a raid - some would call it a massacre - on Deerfield, a border town between New France and New England, by an army made up of French and Native people led by Lieutenant Jean-Baptiste Hertel de Rouville. This attack was provoked by a dynastic war which was then taking place in Europe and which extended to the Connecticut valley in 1699. Governor Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil was eager to take action and consolidate his alliance with the Indigenous people, who reacted to the colonization of their territories by American settlers. The troops who gathered in Chambly at the end of 1703 came from communities hardened by fifty years of struggle against the Iroquois League of the Five Nations.

We note that this attack took place on February 29, 1704. So, how to explain that, according to her baptismal certificate, Élisabeth was taken prisoner on March 11, 1704? Once again, it is the use of the Julian calendar in New England and the Gregorian calendar in New France which explains this difference of 11 days. At the time of the raid, the Julian calendar was effectively 11 days behind the Gregorian calendar.

A descendant of one of the inhabitants of Deerfield at the time of the raid, George Sheldon, dedicated several years of his life to a historical work, published in 1895-1896<sup>7</sup>, recounting the fate of the majority of the inhabitants of Deerfield in the morning of February 29, 1704 (Julian). We learn, among other things, that Elizabeth is called Corse and not Casse then that she was born on February 4, 1696. It will be understood that her date of birth as recorded by George Sheldon is according to the Julian calendar. While Sheldon does not provide a reference to any documentary source for Elizabeth's date of birth, recent digitization of United States vital records confirms this date<sup>8</sup>. This means that her date of birth in the Gregorian calendar is February 14, 1696 and that the date provided by Elizabeth to Father Meriel is therefore incorrect.

<sup>4</sup> *The Canadian Encyclopedia* <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-deerfield-raid-feature>

<sup>5</sup> Raid On Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704 <http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/>

<sup>6</sup> Raid on Deerfield [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raid\\_on\\_Deerfield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raid_on_Deerfield)

<sup>7</sup> *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts the times when and the people by whom it was settled, unsettled, and resettled, with a special study of the Indian wars in the Connecticut Valley; with genealogies*; by George Sheldon 1895-1896

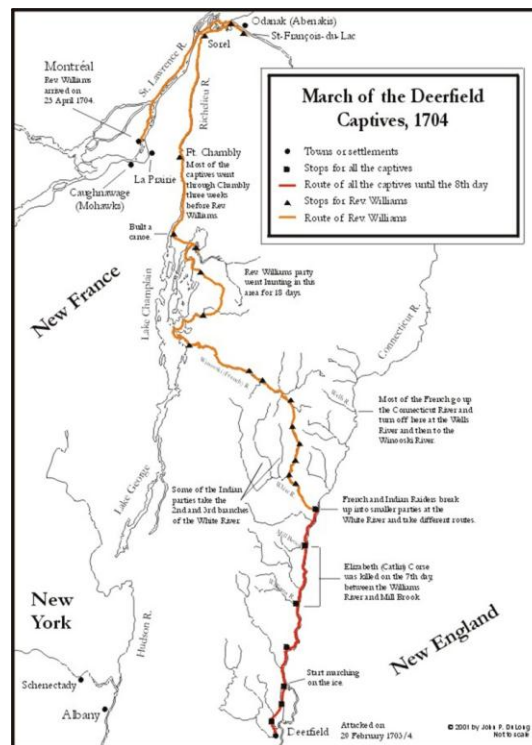
<sup>8</sup> Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988, Ancestry.com

Births in James Corse's Family	Burials in James Corse's Family
Ebenezer, Son to James & Elizabeth Corse, was born April 7 <sup>th</sup> 1692.	James Corse, head of the Family, died May 15 <sup>th</sup> 1696.
11 Same's Son to James & Elizabeth Corse, was born March 20 <sup>th</sup> 1693 <sup>3/4</sup> .	
Page Elizabeth, daughter to James & Elizabeth Corse, was born February 4 <sup>th</sup> 1695.	

Summary transcript of civil state records for the family of James Corse  
(Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988, Ancestry.com)

Sheldon also confirms that Elizabeth's father, James Corse, died shortly after her birth in 1696 and that she and her mother were taken prisoner by troops from New France and were forcibly returned there. Finally, we learn that her mother, Elizabeth Catlin, was killed on the way to New France.

A map prepared by John P. Dulong, a researcher of the events in Deerfield, gives a good idea of the route hostages and troops must have taken after the attack. We learn that Elizabeth Catlin was killed on the 7th day of the ascent, that is March 17, 1704 (Gregorian), between Williams River and Mill Brook.



Map showing the route of the march to New France after the attack on Deerfield by John P. Dulong, 2001<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> John P. Dulong web page dedicated to Élisabeth Casse <http://habitant.org/corse/casse.htm>

As for James Corse's origins, his surname and its spelling, we refer once again to the research carried out by John P. Dulong in this regard<sup>10</sup>. According to documents found in New England, the surname that James, his children and several of their descendants used most often, was written Cors or Corss. This particular spelling, definitely of Scottish origin, derives from a Scottish term for a cross. The cases studied highlight the variances of the spelling (fs represents a long "s", which resembles today's letter "f", followed by the regular "s"). The texts show that Corse is more often spelled Cors, when written by a family member, and Cofs when written by a New England clerk. The "r" seems to have been silent to the ears of the English clerk.

The name of Elizabeth Corss should have been written as is in the religious registers of New France, but Father Meriel wrote Élisabeth Casse; or what he had heard. Franco-phones sometimes pronounce the vowel "a" "ah" or "aw", depending on the sound heard. This last form probably represents the pronunciation of the surname made by the child, the "r" being completely silent.

The loss of the "r" and the pronunciation of the "a" make Casse very similar to Coss, a known variant of Corss found in New England.

Finally, in a letter of October 15, 1895, Charles Corss wrote to George Sheldon that Corss was "in Deerfield's way of spelling [the name] of the first James". It was for a long time the form preferred by most descendants of James Corss in the Deerfield area. In short, the use of Cors or Corss rather than Corse, reveals the Scottish heritage of the Corse in Deerfield. In addition, we note that the spelling of the surname is indeed Corss in the Massachusetts civil record document presented above.

In May 1710, Elizabeth obtained the French nationality under the name of Elisabeth Coss<sup>11</sup>. Around July 1711, aged only 15, she will have an intimate encounter, probably involuntary, with a man of her entourage which will end with the birth of a girl named Marie-Françoise Casse, born of an unknown father, on April 20, 1712 in La Prairie. The child died on April 26, 1712 at the same place. There is a strong presumption that the father of Marie-Françoise Casse was a man of the Pierre Roy and Catherine Ducharme household. Indeed, Elizabeth, 15 years old at the time, lived in La Prairie with Pierre Roy, her guardian for 7 years already, following her capture in Deerfield in New England.

It was seven months after the death of her daughter Marie-Françoise, on November 6, 1712 in La Prairie, that Elizabeth married Jean-Baptiste Dumontet dit Lagrandeur with

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<sup>10</sup> MSGCF, volume 55, number 2, book 240, summer 2004, pp. 137-145

<sup>11</sup> Programme de Recherche en Démographie Historique, PRDH, <https://www.prdh-igd.com/fr/accueil>

whom she gave birth to eight children. He died on May 20, 1729, at the age of 62. It is their son Jean-Baptiste who ensures our genealogical link with Elizabeth Corss.

Genealogical lineage linking Guy Robert and Elizabeth Corss		
Guy Robert ( - )	marriage	Spouse ( - )
Émilien Robert (xxxx-xxxx)	marriage	Angéla Barré (xxxx-xxxx)
Aldora Leclaire (1879-1955)	November 12, 1901 St-Valérien-de-Milton, QC	Wilfrid Robert (1874-1942)
Magloire Leclaire (1824-1888)	August 15, 1854 Ste-Rosalie, QC	Françoise Côté (1837-1916)
Louis Leclaire (1786-1866)	January 12, 1818 St-Antoine-sur-Richelieu, QC	Angélique Dupont (1789-1866)
Marie-Madeleine Archambault (1767-1852)	January 30, 1786 St-Antoine-sur-Richelieu, QC	Louis Leclaire (1759-1831)
Suzanne-Élisabeth Dumontet (1745-1782)	February 1, 1762 St-Antoine-sur-Richelieu, QC	Pierre Archambault (1736-1788)
Jean-Baptiste Dumontet (1724->1774)	November 23, 1744 Varenes, QC	Suzanne-Élisabeth Charbonneau (1725-1750)
Elizabeth Corss (1696-1766)	November 6, 1712 La Prairie, QC	Jean-Baptiste Dumontet dit Lagrandeur (~1667-1729)

*Diagram illustrating the genealogical lineage between Guy Robert and Elizabeth Corss<sup>12</sup>*

After the death of her first husband, she married Pierre Monet on January 19, 1730. She gave birth to six children. Elizabeth Corss died on January 26, 1766, aged 69. Pierre Monet will survive her eight years.

Elizabeth Corss, this sixth great-grandmother, will have had a very eventful life, an extraordinary destiny and is an example of resilience for all human beings. We are happy to have shared this research with you, whether you are one of her descendants or not.

Guy Robert

*Member of the Société d'Histoire des Îles Percées*

<sup>12</sup> Produced by the GenoPresse software from data stored on the Heredis database.