

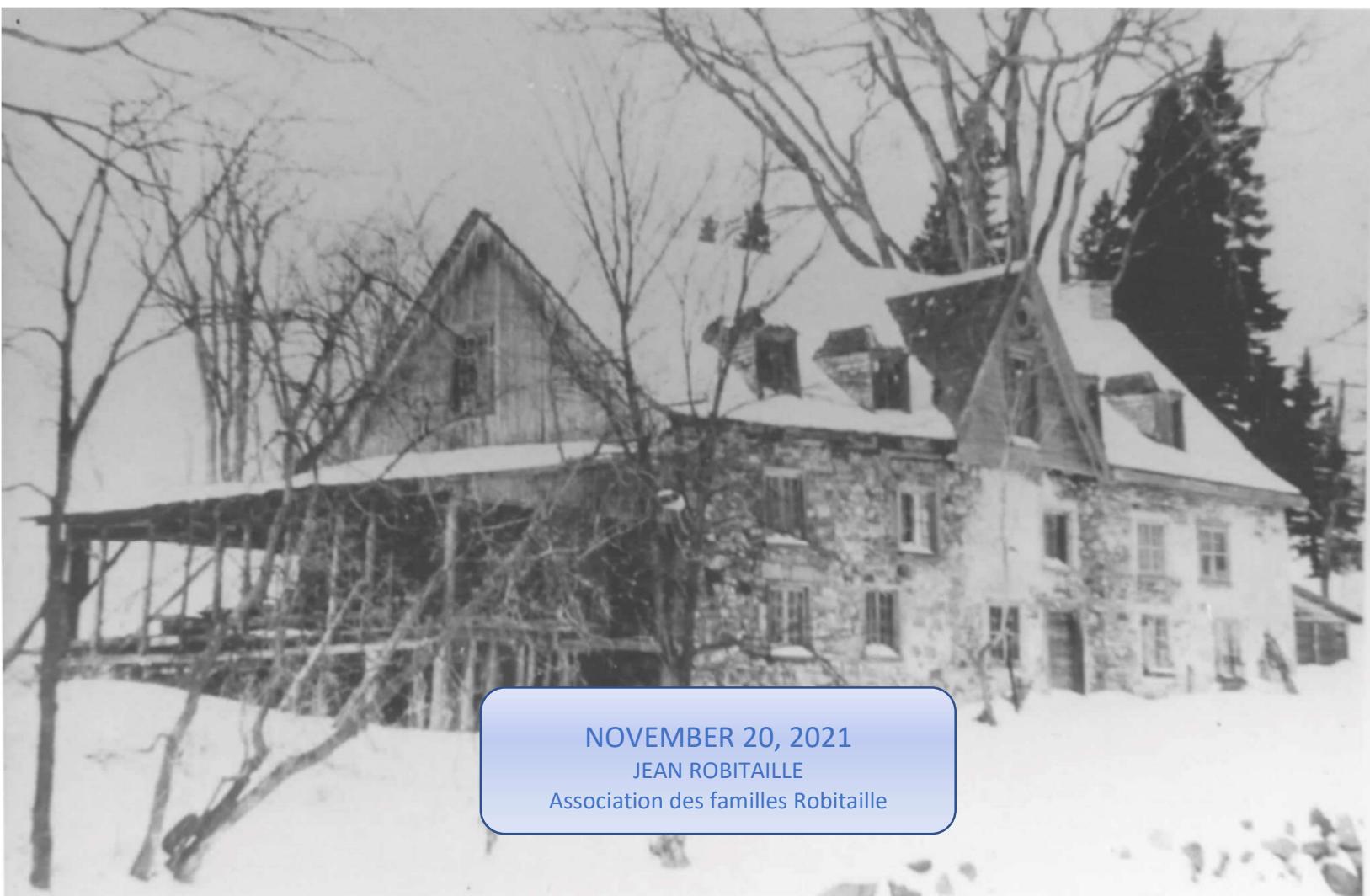


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# THE ROBITAILLE MILL

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The L'Ancienne-Lorette Banal Mill



NOVEMBER 20, 2021  
JEAN ROBITAILLE  
Association des familles Robitaille

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*Cover photo*

*The mill in winter*

*(Image from the archives of the Société d'histoire de L'Ancienne-Lorette)*

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Legal deposit Québec, November 2021

## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	v
Thanks.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 – The mill of the seigneurie of St-Gabriel .....	2
Multifunctional.....	2
Chapter 2 – Millers .....	3
Rent .....	4
Chapter 3 – The Dérys .....	6
Louis I.....	6
Louis II.....	6
Louis III.....	6
Becker.....	7
Return of Louis III.....	8
Chapter 4 – Towner and the 1844 works .....	11
David Towner's family life .....	13
A pivotal year – 1849.....	14
Chapter 5 – The arrival of the Robitailles .....	15
5.1 Jean and Adélaïde.....	15
5.2 Jean Robitaille junior .....	18
The career of Jean junior (1828-1907) .....	19
Joseph's Journey (1831-1909) .....	21
5.3 Jean Hamel .....	22
5.4 Victor Robitaille .....	24
Fire of October 12, 1862.....	24
Victor's first children .....	25
Victor's Journey (1832-1895).....	25
5.5 Victor's sons: Joseph and Eugène.....	26
Chapter 6 – Pinsonneault's postcards .....	29
Chapter 7 – Bringing Water to the Mill .....	33
Chapter 8 – The Golden Age and Then the Decline .....	35
Visual testimonials.....	36
Chapter 9 – Recovery Project.....	40
Chapter 10 – What's Left.....	42
Remnant of the induct channel.....	44
Epilogue .....	46
Appendix A – Mediagraphy .....	47
Appendix B – Chronology .....	48
Appendix C – Bouthiller Letter .....	52
Appendix D – Family file of Jean Robitaille and Adélaïde Debigaré .....	53
Appendix E – Comparative Views.....	54
Appendix F – Curiosity .....	56
Appendix G – In the 1851 Census.....	58
Appendix H – Family Anecdotes.....	59
Was Jean the only one in his family who knew how to sign? .....	59
Did Jean's siblings know how to sign? .....	59

Did Jean's children know how to sign?.....	60
Debigaré, where does this name come from? .....	60

## Foreword

During my research on my Robitaille ancestors, I combed through the Canadian censuses to try to find my great-grandfather Cyprien Robitaille and I noticed in passing that his brother Victor had been a miller. An anecdote among many others!

When, years later, I came across an image of an ancient postcard marked with a caption that read: **Résidence et Moulin Robitaille, Ancienne Lorette** (Robitaille house and mill), my curiosity was piqued, and I wondered if my great-great-uncle could have been connected to this mill...

The following document records the information I have been able to gather on the subject.

## Thanks

I would particularly like to thank the following for their generous contribution to the preparation of this document.

- First, Mr. Gilles Falardeau president of the Société d'histoire de L'Ancienne-Lorette (SHAL), who provided us with many relevant details on the history of the mill and found us valuable photographic testimonies.
- From the same Société, Mr. Guy Gauthier who provided us with information on the water supply to the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette.
- Similarly, Ms. Catherine Lavoie, documentation technician at BAnQ who was able to answer our questions and provide us with some historical images from the Gérard Morisset Fund.
- Also Ms. Nicole Kelly, at the McCord Museum Boutique who provided us with good reproductions of Pinsonneault postcards.

I must also acknowledge the contribution of the volunteers of the Robitaille Family Association who participated in the proofreading of the manuscript and provided their comments.

And not to mention my wife, Ms. Monique Albert, who has repeatedly reread successive versions of the manuscript to make her criticisms, comments, corrections, and suggestions.

Jean Robitaille, November 20, 2021  
[jrobitai@sympatico.ca](mailto:jrobitai@sympatico.ca)



## Introduction

Forebear Pierre Robitaille settled in the Seigneurie of Gaudarville in 1670. This seigneurie covered a territory which today extends roughly from Cap-Rouge to L'Ancienne-Lorette. In 1672, Pierre also had another property granted to him in the neighboring Seigneurie of St-Gabriel, belonging to the Jesuit Fathers.

The descendants of Pierre and his wife, Marie Maufay, continued to occupy these lands and several others around them over several generations, but they also spilled over heavily into Ste-Foy and Québec City. Robitailles were soon everywhere.

We will focus here on a particular branch of Robitaille descendants who played an important role in L'Ancienne-Lorette in the 19th and 20th centuries; but, before talking about the Robitailles, let us start with some historical context.

## Going back to the sources

### The banal mill

On April 10, 1743, the Jesuit fathers rented their L'Ancienne-Lorette wheat mill, in the seigneurie of Saint-Gabriel, to miller Louis Déry. By this lease, for a period of nine years, Déry undertook to grind the wheat, to maintain the mill and to pay the Jesuits 300 minots of wheat per year on which he would not receive any milling duty. He will be supplied annually with 30 pots of pitch oil and 30 cords of wood.

As seigneurs, the Jesuits had the obligation to maintain in operation a banal mill for the use of their censitaires. In addition, the latter are needed to bring their grain there under penalty of fine or confiscation. However, they can go elsewhere if the wheat is not ground 48 hours after arrival. A milling duty, corresponding to the fourteenth of the production, is levied as it is recorded in the deed of concession. The miller, on the other hand, is required to weigh the wheat "with a stretcher and calibrated weights". In addition, the quality of the flours is the responsibility of the master of the mill as evidenced by several ordinances and judgments. Upon complaints from the inhabitants, the intendant may appoint experts to judge the good condition of the mill. From 1732, several mills will be equipped with cylindrical screens intended to purify wheat of dust and bad seeds to ensure better flour.

The banal mill is an integral part of the landscape of the seigneurie. It is the exclusive right of the seigneur to exploit it unless he assigns his right to an individual. At the same time, other mills will be built to meet the needs of the inhabitants. We find, in addition to flour mills, sawmills, necessary for the manufacture of boards, and tan mills intended to produce the tannin used for the treatment of skins. Most mills will take advantage of the many streams to operate, some will use the wind. In 1721, there were no less than 120 mills in the colony.

(This text is a collaboration of archivist Renée Lachance of the Archives nationales du Québec in Québec City.)

[http://rdaq.banq.qc.ca/expositions\\_virtuelles/coutumes\\_culture/aout/nouvelle-france/remonter\\_sources.html](http://rdaq.banq.qc.ca/expositions_virtuelles/coutumes_culture/aout/nouvelle-france/remonter_sources.html)

## Chapter 1 – The mill of the seigneurie of St-Gabriel

The Jesuits were the seigneurs of St-Gabriel and, like any seigneur, had to install a communal mill in their seigneurie to grind their tenants' grain. At the insistent request of the farmers of the seigneurie, the Jesuits first built a water mill in 1718. This mill, installed in a bend of the Lorette River, was in operation for a few decades, but its location left much to be desired due to the lack of maneuvering space around it, wedged between the road and the slope of the river. The users suffered this inconvenience, and the Reverend Fathers concluded that it would be better to build a new mill on the other side of the road. They first signed a land trade with Noël Alain, who had been granted the land and then contracted for the construction of a new mill at the new location. The demolition of the old mill provided a lot of material for the construction of the new one, starting with the millstones. The new mill was finally put into operation in December 1755. The new two-story construction measured 62 feet by 32 feet.



Figure 1- The mill as seen from the river  
(photo: Société d'histoire de L'Ancienne-Lorette)

### Multifunctional

The L'Ancienne-Lorette mill has always had at least two millstones, one for wheat and the other for oats; and, over time, other uses have been added such as a wool carding mill or a sawmill, and even a power station and laundry room<sup>1</sup>. However, the flow of the river was insufficient to operate all these services simultaneously so that the tenants occasionally had to go to another mill, like that of St-Ambroise-de-la-Jeune-Lorette on the St-Charles River which also belonged to the Jesuits and was in the same seigneurie of St-Gabriel.

Over the years and with a great deal of use, the mill required major repairs. The seigneur initially took charge of this work because it was excluded from the regular maintenance that the tenant had to provide. Often, this involved long negotiations, complaints from users, inventories, engineer's reports, then construction contracts followed by new evaluations and, possibly, recourse for manufacturing defects. Nothing new was invented in the 21st century!

Generally, in L'Ancienne-Lorette, the tenant of the mill was himself the main miller, which did not prevent him from having from time-to-time assistants, apprentices, or laborers to assist him.

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<sup>1</sup> Mentioned in *Le Soleil* of September 18, 1949.

## Chapter 2 – Millers

The Jesuits were the seigneurs of St-Gabriel and owners of the seigneurial mill. From the beginning, they entrusted the operation of the mill to a tenant miller.

The first miller was the neighbor, Noël Alain, who was mentioned above. He remained in post until his death in 1726. That year, the mill was taken over by Louis Déry who was its miller for the rest of his life: that is, until 1748. Then, in turn, the Dérys, son and grandson, succeeded each other as miller until 1836.

Meanwhile, after the Conquest, the Jesuit order was dissolved, and their property seized by the Crown after the death of Father Casot, the last Jesuit in Canada. The Government effectively became the owner of the mill. A Commission was then responsible for administering the property of the Jesuits. In the Québec region alone, this included five mills: L'Ancienne-Lorette, St-Ambroise, Valcartier, Charlesbourg, and Beauport.

The Jesuits had not operated the mill in L'Ancienne-Lorette, and the Government did not do so either, entrusting that responsibility to a lessee. From the 19th century onward, the lessee agreed to pay annual rent to the owner and to grind the grain of the tenants of the seigneurial within the territory of the parish. He was also to ensure the full maintenance of the mill and its outbuildings and, at the end of the lease, return the mill and its outbuildings in the same condition in which he had received them. The tenants had to pay the miller for his work, often in kind, with a share of the flour obtained. The miller could also offer other services such as sawing wood or carding wool.

The land adjacent to the mill had an area of about 17 arpents, and the tenant had to manage them sensibly. He could cultivate and enjoy them, with the responsibility of repairing the fences and access points. The miller usually lived in the mill with his family, which, on occasion, could cause tension when the mill changed millers at the end of a lease.

When, during his lease, the miller made repairs or improvements to the mill, added equipment or services, the lease contract stated that these additions did not belong to the miller but to the lessor (the owner). This also caused some friction when changing tenants. In the archives, we find testimonies of conflicts linked to these clauses. These difficulties led the owners to include clauses in the contracts for taking an official inventory at the start of the lease to ensure the preservation of the property.

When the lessee changed, the new occupant often complained about the dilapidated state of the mill, the wear of the mechanisms and the grindstones, the rot, and often claimed that these

**1719** – An aging parish priest, Mr. François Dupré (73 years old), still reigns over the pastoral promontory of L'Ancienne-Lorette. For the past five years, the censitaires have discussed with him the need for a flour mill and a larger church.

After the departure of the Hurons, the Society of Jesus had granted land next to their domain of the "House of Lorette" to Noël Alain.

It is on the path that runs along this house, at the bottom of the heights of the line-square, that the Jesuit fathers plan to build the mill. On 22 January 1719 they had a sum of £2640 invested in this project. There is £2000 left to spend on perfecting it. It was viewed as a big amount for the time.

During the holiday season of that year, several citizens must have travelled to see the new construction.

Gilles Falardeau  
Historical Society of L'Ancienne-Lorette

Sidebar in the *Journal de L'Ancienne-Lorette* (January 2012, page 8)

defects had been hidden from him during his inspection visit. The new tenant took the opportunity to ask for a reduction in rent or even sometimes a termination of his lease. The tenant also complained, from time to time, of the poor harvests which led to a decrease in his output, or a drop in the number of users when a new mill was built in the area, factors which pushed him then to request a reduction or a postponement of his charges.

Sometimes, we also see that the lessee who carried out major work at the mill was trying to withhold the rent that he should have paid, in compensation for the work undertaken. He was thus trying to do himself justice.

## Rent

The Jesuits did not operate the mill at L'Ancienne-Lorette themselves. They entrusted its management by lease to a tenant who was to maintain the mill, operate it, and pay rent to the seigneur, generally by paying him a share of the flour produced by the mill, but these conditions could vary from one lease to another. Thus, as the ordinance called for, the seigneur (the Jesuits) reserved a one fourteenth share of the flour produced by the mill, which was called the milling right, and paid the miller a salary. In the beginning, this salary took the form of a share of the profit.

- In 1718, the first miller, Noël Alain, kept 2/5 of the grind for himself and left the remaining 3/5 to the Jesuits.  
In 1726, Louis Dery accepted the office of miller on the condition of receiving 1/3 of the flour and leaving 2/3 to the Jesuits.

Later a fixed-rate approach was adopted whereby the miller kept all the milling rights but paid a fixed and predetermined rent.

- According to the lease of 1743, the miller had to pay the seigneurs 300 minots of wheat annually, but he received "30 cords of wood and 30 pots of pitch oil".
- In 1778, Louis Dery II had to pay 350 minots of wheat annually, which meant that he kept the rest for himself. In 1779, the rent fell to 300 minots and two minots for sacramental bread.
- In 1786, Louis Dery III took over the lease from his deceased father and continued to pay 200 minots of wheat per year.
- Under the lease of 1791, Louis Dery III continued to pay annually 200 minots of wheat.
- In 1797, renewal of the lease for 9 years for 200 minots of wheat per year.

From the 19th century onward, the rent was paid in cash.

- In 1806, Christian Becker offered 300 pounds per year for the lease of the mill.
- In 1809, the annual rent for Louis Dery III was set at 154.10 pounds. It was revised to 100 pounds in 1812 then reduced to 90 pounds in 1822.
- In 1836, David Towner signed a 7-year lease with an annual rent of 69 pounds.
- In 1852, the highest bidder offered 40 pounds per year for 21 years, but the lease does not appear to have been signed and the mill was instead sold.

We see that the Jesuits first recovered a fraction of the flour produced, then they went to a predetermined quantity. After 1800, the government chose to ask for a cash rent and allow the miller to keep the grind. We also clearly see the continuous decrease in the cost of rent of the mill over the years.

Although we were mainly interested in the role that the Robitaille played in the history of the L'Ancienne-Lorette mill, the consultation of the archives led us to redo bit by bit the chronology of the previous events.

## Chapter 3 – The Dérys

We saw that, for the first years of operation, the Jesuits had entrusted the mill to the miller Noël Alain.

### Louis I

When Noël Alain died in 1726, the Jesuits, in search of a new miller, hired Louis Déry, a 25-year-old boy born in Château-Richer. The seigneurs were satisfied with his work, keeping him in office for 22 years, until his death in 1748.

### Louis II

They did not need to look far to find a successor because the eldest son, already there and seasoned at the risks of the profession, offered to take over. Louis II was 23 years old when he took over as miller of L'Ancienne-Lorette in 1748. He remained in office until his death in 1786 for 38 years. Along the way, Louis II brought in his wake several of his children who must have worked at the mill, willingly or by force, no doubt.

### Louis III

The eldest son of Louis II, also named Louis, was a strong supporter of his father at the mill. He had probably been a miller's assistant since a very young age, and when his father heaved his last breath, he was ready to take over the role. But it was 1786 and times had changed: there had been the Conquest, the English had taken control over the trade, the Jesuit seigneurs were on reprieve, the farmers of L'Ancienne-Lorette still needed a mill but would the 19-year-old be able to rise to the task?

The Jesuits, in increasingly small numbers, had many other fish to fry than to worry about the fate of a small country mill. For them, it was reassuring to continue with the Déry lineage, without having to deal with the repercussions of a regime change.

#### Louis Déry, from father to son

0. Maurice Déry & Marie Madeleine Philippeau (m. 1679-01-16)
1. Louis Déry I (1701-07-22/1748-12-03)  
& M. Élizabeth Gagnon (m. 1724-09-19)
2. Louis Déry II (1725-09-23/1786-08-20)  
& Thérèse Plamondon (m. 1766-09-19)
3. Louis Déry III (1767-04-19/1850-01-10)  
& Magdeleine Alin (m. 1796-01-26)

The Dérys were originally from Château-Richer. This is where the first Louis was born. He obtained the miller's lease from L'Ancienne-Lorette, which prompted him to move there and settle for good.

On the death of Louis II, Louis III took over his father's lease on the same conditions as before.

In 1797, the lease of Louis Déry III was renewed for nine years by a deed passed by the notary Planté. Louis was to pay 200 minots of wheat per year as rent for the mill.

In October 1799, the Jesuits sold, by notarial contract, part of the mill land to Louis Déry for the sum of 400 livres. The surveyor Ignace Plumondon junior then carried out a survey of the mill estate.<sup>2</sup> It will be seen later that this transaction will be a source of problems for the successors.

Recall that the last Jesuit in Canada died in 1800.

From the moment the Government took charge of the seigneury, the renewal of the lease would be the subject of very formal calls for tenders with auction at the doors of the churches and publication in the newspapers, under the direction of the Jesuit Property Commission.

## Becker

In 1806, a call for tenders was launched and the lease was granted to Christian Becker, a resident of St-Augustin, on the banks of the Cap-Rouge River. Becker won the auction with a bet of £300 a year.

As soon as Becker took possession of the mill, difficulties accumulated. When he took up his post on Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, 1806, Becker was sorry to note the condition of the property and the mill. A lot of equipment had disappeared, the mechanisms of the mill were in poor condition, the buildings were dilapidated.

Becker, who knew the mill estate well, having often visited it, no longer recognized the place. He learned that the land on the estate enjoyed by the previous miller was now cut by almost half of its area because of the 1799 transaction. Déry was still occupying the land that Becker believed he had rented.<sup>3</sup>

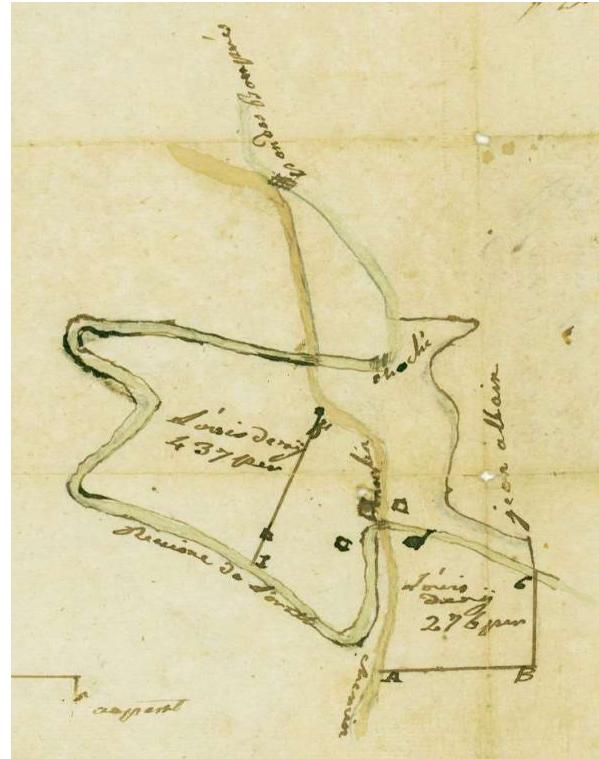


Figure 2- Plan of the mill estate by Plumondon in 1799

<sup>2</sup> <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3146516>

<sup>3</sup> From the original area of 1504 poles (perches), 713 poles were granted to Louis Déry, so the mill land was therefore reduced to 791 poles (one arpent = 100 poles).

Barely ten days after taking possession of the mill, Becker filed a written complaint with the Commission. He refused to sign the lease or to pay the promised deposits. A formal inventory of the mill was carried out before a notary. Becker lodged a formal protest.

Exchanges between Becker and the Commission multiplied and festered. Becker deposited, in support of his protest, a diagnosis prepared by two master blacksmiths of the place. On Oct 23, 1806, Becker submitted to the Commission a list of repairs to be made to the mill. Becker undertook the necessary repairs at his own expense.

The Commission responded by requesting that the bonds promised by Becker be deposited and that the lease be signed. Becker refused. The Commission's agent at Québec City sought advice from his superiors in Montréal. Legal proceedings were brought against Becker.

In early 1807, carpenter Louis Alain confirmed in writing Becker's claims about the poor condition of the mill.

On September 5 of the same year, four local citizens came to testify, before Judge Williams of the Court of King's Bench, on the state of play when Becker took possession of the mill. It seems that Déry, leaving the premises, took with him everything that was not attached to the walls and that he even damaged what he could not take with him.

In January 1808. Becker filed a document in which the inhabitants of the parish testified to their satisfaction with the quality of the mill finally repaired and that of the flour produced by Becker. A few days later, Becker appealed to James Henry Craig, Governor General of British North America. The Governor replied that he did not want to intervene before the Court had rendered its judgment.

On 29 July 1809, after almost three years of proceedings, Becker tabled a new proposal in which he suggested cancelling past debts, the annuities he had not paid being cancelled by the expenses he had to absorb and asked for a new lease of 21 years. This proposal remained unanswered.

The judgment finally fell against Becker and the Commission regained possession of the mill in September 1809. A few days later, Becker was summoned to come to the mill to attend an official inventory. In a correspondence of September 15, we learn that Louis Déry had then been appointed as temporary guardian of the mill.

On October 3, 1809, the Commission issued a new call for tenders for the lease of the mill. Two millers answered this call: Christian Becker and Louis Déry. Of the two bids, Louis Déry's bid was selected by the Commission and a 9-year lease was granted for an amount of 154 pounds and 10 sols annually. Becker had served for three years.

### [Return of Louis III](#)

One might think that everything was back in order, but as soon as 1812 Louis Déry wrote to the Commission and warned that he would not be able to pay the mill's rent because of the deterioration of the grain market. The Commission agreed to reduce the pension requested to £100 per year. At the end of this 9-year lease, Louis Déry offered to renew the lease of the mill

but the Commission then demanded that Louis Déry return to the Commission the two plots of land that the Jesuits had granted him in 1799 so that the Domaine would regain its former unity. Louis Déry asked to reduce the annual rent to 80 pounds, the Commission asked for 100 and proposed a new one-year lease.

The lease was again offered in the newspapers. Faced with the lack of interest raised, the Commission extended the current lease from six months to six months.

The table of receipts produced<sup>4</sup> on October 1, 1820, by Lewis Foy, prosecutor of the Jesuits, shows that Louis Déry still struggled to make the payments of his annuity for the mill.

A new nine-year lease was finally signed with Louis Déry in October 1820 before notary Archibald Campbell, a lease in the amount of 90 pounds annually.

In August 1821, Louis Déry presented an invoice of nearly 40 livres for the repair of the roof of the mill. In 1823, urgent repairs were needed to the mill dam (the large causeway). Déry estimated the cost of the necessary repairs at 150 louis, the Commission authorized the works.

In 1825, Louis Déry invoiced the Commission for masonry work.

There then seems to have been a dispute over the maintenance costs that Déry wanted to pass on to the Commission. In 1826, an independent expert was appointed to assess the situation. In his report, Mr. Henderson noted that the main causeway had been properly renovated and recommended payment, but he considered that the other minor work (roofing, masonry, and others) should not be reimbursed to Déry because it was the usual maintenance that remained at his expense according to his lease.

In 1829, bids were returned, and it was again Louis Déry who accepted the lease for seven years, for 79 livres a year. Conditions were tightened: all repairs, both minor and major, would now be the responsibility of the tenant. The lease was signed on April 10, 1830 at the notary Campbell's office.

On 31 March 1835 Louis Déry had delays in his payments to the amount of 104 livres.

Louis Déry III's lease ended in 1836. Again, the lease was to be auctioned. Louis III was 69 years old. Would he still be in the ranks?

Over the past few years, Louis III has accumulated delays in paying the semi-annual annuities he had committed to pay in his lease. On Sept 29, 1836, he signed an acknowledgement of debt of £100 to the Commission for this purpose.

On October 11, 1836, the lease was granted to David Crosbie Towner.

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<sup>4</sup> Revenue table, BAnQ, <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149824>

On November 25, 1836, Louis Déry was back before the notary to sign an undertaking of 100 livres *for rent due* and he mortgaged his property in favour of the Commission. He would drag this financial burden for a long time.

## Chapter 4 – Towner and the 1844 works

In 1836, Louis Déry III had again lost the continuity of the title of miller to the detriment of David Crosbie Towner who took possession of the mill on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1836.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1837, Towner produced a report explaining that the millstones were unusable. In 1838 the Commission hired an expert to assess the condition of the mills in the Québec City area. Louis Marchand, miller of Batiscan, tabled his report on Nov 20, 1838, in which he indicated that major repairs would be required at L'Ancienne-Lorette. On Aug 10, 1839, the Commission agreed to grant Towner a rent reduction because of the repeatedly low harvest. The annual annuity was then reduced from £69 to £40 for the last five years of the lease.

In June 1843, an estimate of the repair work required around the mill was drawn up.<sup>5</sup>

In the spring of 1844, a new 7-year lease was prepared at the notary Louis Panet for an amount of 50 livres per year but does not seem to have been signed by the parties. We assume that the parties would then have agreed to postpone the signing of a lease and to carry out a renovation project under Towner's supervision. Towner therefore seems to have finally obtained from the owner that the planned work be carried out and a budget was then probably allocated. We will see in the accounts that the invoices were presented to Mr. Towner, but the receipts show that it was the notary Louis Panet who paid them, Panet being at the time the official agent of the Commission for the Québec City region.

The 1844 construction site came at a pivotal time in the life of the mill and opened the door to an active involvement of the Robitailles. The fact that this project was being conducted under the direction of the Jesuit Property Commission, a government agency, meant that we exceptionally have access to crisp details on the progress of operations through three files kept at BAnQ: the payroll of the site, the package of invoices and receipts and the final summary of expenses incurred. The analysis of the mill's accounts for that year proves that major repair work was underway.

Through the payrolls, we see that several workers were at work, including at least three Robitailles. In these lists, which ran from May to December 1844,<sup>6</sup> Johny, John, and Jow Rubitoy were commonly seen. It would be the father John, his eldest son John and his second son Joseph.<sup>7</sup> The father was hired with his horse to carry materials (on pay slips, he is then "teamster"), his sons were workers "labourer", "carpenter" or "joiner" depending on the week. As these lists of

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<sup>5</sup> <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151386>

<sup>6</sup> Payroll of mill employees L'Ancienne-Lorette, BAnQ,  
<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149844>

<sup>7</sup> We have, in the lot, a ticket identified with a Josey Plant (which is then called Jow Plant) and signed Joseph Plante. We thus understand that Towner, who wrote the French names to sound, wrote Jow when he heard «djos». A receipt to Josaw Batmel is signed Joseph Hamel. Another receipt from July 26 for Jock Below is signed Jacques Belleau.

employees are not very explicit about the identity of individuals – and the spelling is very approximate – it is possible that other Robitailles hide behind these inscriptions.

This Robitaille family operated a farm near the mill, if we are to believe the Canadian censuses of the period, including that of 1861. (*A careful survey of notarial contracts would confirm this, which is unfortunately out of our reach in these times of pandemic.*)

It should be noted that Joseph Robitaille (Jow or Jaw depending on the week) appears on all payrolls from July to November: he is then paid 3 shillings per day. However, in the November 1<sup>st</sup> payroll covering two weeks of work elapsed, his name appears twice, and he has 11 days of work as a laborer (3 shillings) and 23 days as a carpenter (4 shillings). Should this be seen as a form of retroactive payment in recognition of one's work? Still, in the following period, Joseph is credited with 6 days as a carpenter.

In the same period, the statement of accounts<sup>8</sup> of the mill repair project shows that, on many occasions, Jean Robitaille is found as a witness when paying invoices for the delivery of materials. We found half a dozen very clear signatures of Jean. Is it the father or the son? We know, thanks to the parish registers, that the father knew how to sign from his marriage in 1828 but the son Jean did not sign at his own marriage, nor at the baptisms of his children. It is therefore the father "farmer", 39 years old, who is a man of confidence and who countersigns the receipts. The sons Jean and Joseph who worked at this site were then 16 and 13 years old respectively.

We will see later that, after the renovation work, the two sons remained at work at the mill.

The work is completed with the arrival of winter. On December 31, the notary Panet produced a Statement of disbursements relating to the repairs of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette whose total was 594 pounds, 6 shillings, 7 pence and a half, a sum to be put in perspective with the amount of the sale of the entire estate (1000 livres) in 1852.

With the refurbishment work completed, the Commission published an appeal in the newspapers to offer the mill for rent. The announcement stated that the mill was recently renovated. Four people then presented a written offer to take over the mill and it was Towner who won. A seven-year lease was offered to him in the spring of 1845.

Johny Davaud	Amount brought forward	✓ £ 35.3.9
Johny Martel	4 days at 4/-	.. 18.4.
Johny Rabotay	Towner 12 loads at 3/-	2.2.-
Jthiel Towner	Towner 5 loads at 3/-	.. 17.6
Johny Rabotay	Towner 1 day at 6/-	.. 6.4
Jthiel Towner	Towner 8½ days at 6/-	2.11
David G. Towner	Towner 20½ days at 4/-	2.2.-
Bt Lizardy	Towner 1 day at 4/-	.. 4.0.3
	Received the sum of forty five pounds	
	10/3. C. from Mr. Panet	
	Quebec 24. August 1844.	
	David G. Towner	

Figure 3- An extract from a 1844 payroll

<sup>8</sup> Bundle of accounts and receipts from the mill of Charlesbourg and L'Ancienne-Lorette, BAnQ, <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149842>

Meanwhile, Louis Déry III had still not repaid his debt to the Commission. On July 24, 1844, he asked to be discharged from his debt. On 12 June 1845 the Governor replied that this favour was refused.

### David Towner's family life

After settling in L'Ancienne-Lorette in 1836, Towner did not leave much trace in the area until April 13, 1847, when he married Jeanne Archange Labbé at the *Church of England* in Valcartier. We learn that he is then a widower. The records of the *Church of England* are not very explicit. A few weeks later, on June 29, 1847, the new couple had a girl named Marie Philomène baptized in the church of L'Ancienne-Lorette, but the poor little girl died at the age of 3 weeks, and she was buried in the parish cemetery.

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1847, David again went to the N.-D. de l'Annonciation church in L'Ancienne-Lorette to have his daughter baptized *aged 3 years 5 months and 15 days* who took the name of Marie Sally Ann Turner. The godfather and godmother were Jean Robitaille and Adélaïde Debigaré. We will learn more about this couple in the next chapter.

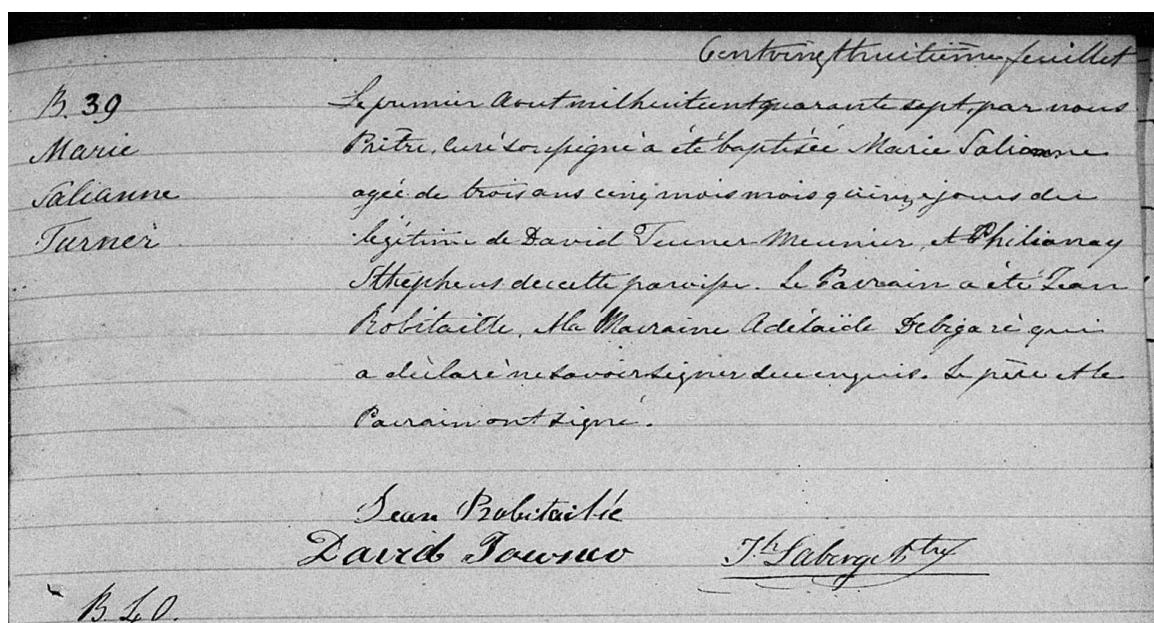


Figure 4- Baptism of Salianne (Sally Ann) signed by Jean Robitaille, godfather, and David Towner, father. It will be noted that the priest Laberge writes Turner but that the father clearly signs Towner.

The following year, on July 23, 1848, David Towner again showed up at the same place to have two more of his children baptized: David (16) and Esther (13). This 16-year-old David later married with Émilie Robitaille (a distant little cousin of Jean) in 1858 in St-Ambroise-de-la-Jeune-Lorette, in nearby Loretteville.

## A pivotal year – 1849

A crucial correspondence discovered at the Archives<sup>9</sup> lifts the veil on this critical moment in the mill file. On March 17, 1849, G. Bouthiller, assistant commissioner of Crown lands, wrote from Montréal to Louis Panet, agent of the Jesuit Property Commission in Québec City, to guide him in his actions. It turns out that Towner, whose lease was renewed in 1845, was found in default in several respects, having not duly signed his new lease, having failed to provide credible bonds, and having neglected to pay the annuities due, his lease would be withdrawn and there were questions about possible recourse against Towner. The Deputy Commissioner authorized the possibility of granting the lease to the "Robitaille brothers".<sup>10</sup> He also sent Panet a series of reminders and advice to ensure a healthier and less costly management of the mill.

In the historical accounts of L'Ancienne-Lorette, and in particular in the monograph of Lionel Allard, it is often claimed that the Dérys, from father to son, were millers of the mill for more than a century, until 1849. This is not true!

As we have seen, the mill was also leased by Christian Becker and David Towner who occupied and ran the mill for many years during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In 1849, Towner's lease was terminated, and the Commission took over the mill.

It is understandable that, at that time, Louis Déry III, now 84 years old, no longer had the capacity to retake the mill where he had worked for so long with his father and grandfather but which he had left 13 years before. Indeed, Louis Déry III died on January 12, 1850. The situation called for a change of guard.

For his part, Towner went on to pursue his career as a miller in Lotbinière where he settled with his family.

In L'Ancienne-Lorette, a new three-year lease was signed with **Jean Robitaille** and the young Jean Robitaille offered as collateral the land and buildings of his father Jean and the lands of his uncle Simeon. Who are these Robitaillies? We will learn about this family in the next chapter.

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C for the full text of this correspondence.

<sup>10</sup> In the *Bulletin des Recherches Historiques* of January 1968, Pierre-Georges Roy lists the documents relating to the mills of St-Gabriel kept in the Archives of the Province and mentions an unsigned correspondence of March 17, 1849, which makes a recommendation in favour of the Robitaille brothers for St-Ambroise. We have not found this document.

## Chapter 5 – The arrival of the Robitailles

To begin, let's try to place this Robitaille family in the context of the time.

### 5.1 Jean and Adélaïde

Father Jean Robitaille was born in L'Ancienne-Lorette on May 3, 1805, the son of Joseph Robitaille (1768-1856) and Josephe Drolet (1772-1858). His father was a farmer. He had to be too. It had been like this for five generations. We deforest, we clear, we cultivate, we live off the land.

Jean married Adélaïde Debigaré on August 26, 1828, in Notre-Dame-de-Québec. She was strong like him and had guts. They had fifteen children, born between 1828 and 1851.

In 1851, when the youngest Élisabeth was born, thirteen children were still alive. There were a lot of people around the dinner table. (See the family file in Appendix D)

Father Jean received the lands of his parents Joseph and Josephe as a donation by a notarial act passed before the notary Louis Panet on June 16, 1847. This notarial act tells us that Jean was then a militia captain. It is a prestigious title that clearly recognized the value of the person and his influence in his community.

In previous generations, there were many births in families across the country, but infant mortality was so high that fewer children reached adulthood. In the 19th century, sanitary conditions improved, less disease, less famine, more relief, more food on the table: the children grew up beautiful and strong.

So, parents Jean and Adélaïde were probably desperate to settle all their kids in L'Ancienne-Lorette where the land was all occupied and lots were getting smaller and smaller. Opportunities were scarce in L'Ancienne-Lorette, which had little more than agriculture as the only local industry. The six daughters may find a husband, but the seven sons must settle down. The family land may go to the elder if he wants it, but what of the other six?

As the children grew older, Jean and Adélaïde could not help but notice that many of their neighbors were leaving the region to settle further and further away. What could they do to keep the children close?

Pierre Robitaille (1800-1845), big brother of Jean and 5 years his senior, was a baker. This big brother Pierre married in 1822 a certain Jeanne Déry, daughter of Louis Déry III, the miller then stationed at the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette.

#### Ancestry title

- I. Pierre R. & Marie Maufay (Duquet Contract, 1675-05-05)
- II. André R. & Françoise Catherine Chevalier (Ste-Foy, 1713-08-11)
- III. François R & Marie Angélique Chartrain (L'Ancienne-Lorette, 1750-01-26)
- IV. Joseph R. & Josephe Drolet (L'Ancienne-Lorette, 1790-08-09)
- V. Jean R & Adelaïde Debigaré (N-D-de-Québec, 1828-08-26)
- VI. Jean, Joseph, Victor, ...

The mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette was located very close to the family's land. In Father Jean's mind, his sons may have a future as millers. Two of Father Jean's brothers (Pierre and Louis) were bakers. Birds of a feather flock together.

From the Canadian census of 1851, in fact carried out in 1852, we learn that, in the household of Jean (46 years old, farmer), the sons Joseph (21 years old) and Victor (17 years old) are millers, the son Jacques (16 years old) is an apprentice miller, the twins Cyrille and Charles (8 years old) go to school and little Cyprien is only 3 years old. The eldest son, Jean (23), himself a miller, had recently married and left the family nest.

So, let's introduce one by one the sons of Jean and Adélaïde:

1. The oldest, **Jean** (1828-1907) was already a miller in 1849, when he obtained the lease of the local mill. He would be a miller all his life, first in L'Ancienne-Lorette and then in St-Raymond. We will talk about him a little later.
2. **Joseph** (1831-1909), the next, was a miller in L'Ancienne-Lorette from 1849 to 1860 and then left to marry in Trois-Rivières and was a miller in that region for a long time. He then returned to Québec City. We will review his career as well a little further on.
3. **Victor** (1832-1895) did follow in the footsteps of his brothers. The older two had to move to get their jobs in an outside mill. He, luckier, did not miss the opportunity to buy the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette in 1860. He was able to work there all his life and leave the mill as an inheritance to his sons.
4. **Jacques** (1837-1921) started out as an apprentice miller (1851 census) and worked at the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette, but he eventually opted for agriculture. In the 1861 census, he was a farmer on his father's land. It was Jacques who kept the family land which was ceded to him by inter vivos donation in January 1865. In 1881, still a farmer, he was married with eight dependent children and his widowed father lived in his house.
5. **Cyrille** (1843-1924) soon migrated to Québec City. He had a knack for commerce. He opened a sewing machine store in the St-Roch district and then added the sale of pianos and musical devices.
6. **Charles** (1843-1921) also migrated to the city. In 1861, at the age of 18, he was an apprentice shoemaker. It has been his job all his life.
7. **Simeon** (1847-1847) sadly passed away at the age of 4 months.



Figure 5- Cyrille Robitaille



Figure 6- Charles Robitaille

8. **Cyprien** (1848-1912) was also a shoemaker in Québec City, then a mechanic and owner of bicycle and automobile stores with his sons Joseph and Adélard. Of all the children of Jean and Adélaïde, Cyprien will be the one who will have the largest family: 17 children. (He was my great-grandfather...)

Jean and Adélaïde raised a large family. Adélaïde died at the age of 48. Her husband lived to be 86 years old. The L'Ancienne-Lorette burial register indicates that Adélaïde and Jean, a former churchwarden, were both buried inside the church, an honor reserved to people of importance. It's an honor that their son Victor will share as well.



*Figure 7- Cyprien Robitaille*

## 5.2 Jean Robitaille junior

In 1849, as we have seen previously, the situation was tense at the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette. Towner, the miller tenant of the mill had the lease for a dozen years, but the Jesuit Property Commission decided to break the lease three years before the expected end and take over the mill.

They had to find a replacement and quickly. As we learn in the letter of Deputy Commissioner Bouthiller addressed to Louis Panet<sup>11</sup>, the "Robitaille brothers" are expected to take over the lease.

On April 30, 1849, the commission signed, with the notary Panet, a lease for 3 years running from May 1, 1849, to April 30, 1852, with Jean Robitaille "adult boy", lease with very severe conditions, given the difficulties encountered with the previous miller, Mr. Towner.

Three Robitailles signed the new lease: Jean (senior), farmer, Simeon, farmer, and Jean (junior), miller.

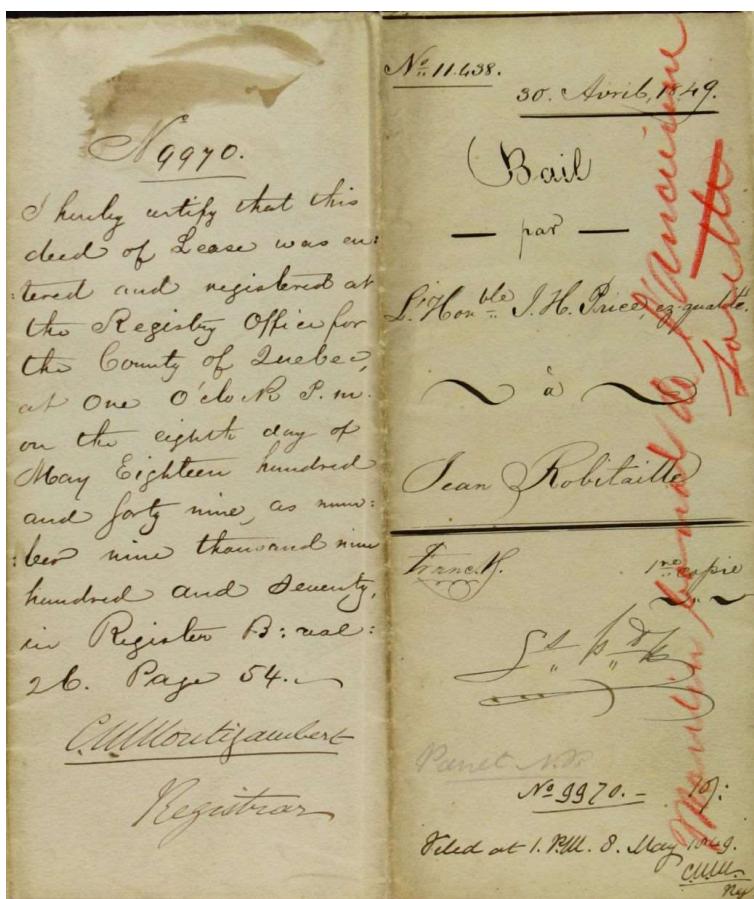


Figure 8- 03Q\_E21S66SS3\_SSS6\_D1319\_0009.jpg-

### Pledged land

#### From Jean senior:

A land located in L'Ancienne-Lorette, two arpents of front on thirty arpents of depth bounded from the front: the chemin du Roy, from behind, Philippe Drolet, on the south-west side, by Louis Flavien Dufresne, squire, on the north-east side by Jacques Plamondon, with house, barn, stables and other buildings ...

#### From Simeon:

A land located at L'Ancienne-Lorette, 1½ arpent of front on 30 arpents of deep bounded by the Chemin du Roy in front, behind, Jean Savard, to the southwest, Guillaume Robitaille, to the northeast, Jacques Robitaille, with house, barns, stables, circumstances and outbuildings;

Another land 1½ × 30 bounded by front, St-Charles River, behind, Jean Savard, to the southwest, Jacques Dion, to the northeast, Jacques Robitaille, with circumstances and dependencies;

Another land ½ × 30 bounded by front, the Chemin du Roy, behind, Pierre Blais or his representatives, to the southwest, Jean Plamondon, to the northeast, Jacques Robitaille, with circumstances and dependencies.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix C.

As collateral to the lease of the youngest, both farmers pledged their land. Young Jean agreed to pay 50 pounds a year to the Lessor.

In his book **L'Ancienne-Lorette** published in 1973, Lionel Allard argues that Jean Robitaille seems to disappear at the end of his 3-year lease and he concludes that "*Jean Robitaille had little taste for milling or that he could not pay his royalties.* »

On the contrary, Jean had the fiber of a miller. He accepted the lease of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette in 1849 when he was barely 20 years old. He fulfilled all his commitments during his three-year term. He then participated in the auction for the sale of the mill in 1852 but did not have the resources to compete with the other bidders. He nevertheless continued to work at the same mill on behalf of Jean Hamel for eight years. In 1860 he landed a position as a miller in St-Raymond,<sup>12</sup> where he remained active for twenty years. He clearly had a "taste for milling."

### The career of Jean junior (1828-1907)

To understand his journey, we have redone the chronology of the events of his life.

Date	Place	Event	Trade
1828-11-21		His baptism	
1844		Payroll at the mill	He works on the restoration of the mill
1851-08-12		Marriage to Louise Légaré	Miller Louise is the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Légaré and Louise Robitaille.
1852-06-20		Baptism of his daughter Louise	Miller
1854-04-12		Baptism of his son Jean	-
1854-06-30		Burial of his son Jean	-
1855-08-19		Baptism of Zoël	Carder
1857-05-09		Baptism of Zéphirin	-
1859-03-07		Baptism of his son François	Miller
1860-06-28	L'Ancienne-Lorette	Obligation with François Bédard, merchant of St-Roch	Miller He borrowed 25 louis and mortgaged land with a mill in St-Raymond. His father endorsed him.
1861-03-31	St-Raymond	Baptism of his son Joseph	Miller
1861		Census	Farmer at a flour mill
1863-04-05		Baptism of his son Ludger	Farmer
1866-06-01		Baptism of his son Jean Baptiste	-
1868-05-24		Baptism of his daughter Virginia	Miller
1871		Census	Miller

### The signatories of the lease

Father Jean senior, husband of Adélaïde Debigaré, is 44 years old at the time. Senior Jean and Adélaïde have 12 mouths to feed at home.

Junior is 20 years old. He is the eldest son of Senior. He married Louise Légaré two years later.

Simeon is the brother of Senior, and the uncle of Junior. He was born in 1809, married Marie Mayrand in 1831. When the Lease was signed, he was 40 years old, and he had eight children at home.

Of the three, only Jean senior knew how to sign.

<sup>12</sup> Obligation by Sieur Jean Robitaille to Sieur Frs. Bédard, BAnQ, Greffe du notaire Jos. Laurin, Act #4223

<b>1877-10-02</b>	Louise's wedding	-	
<b>1880-05-18</b>	Zoël's wedding	-	Zoël is said to be miller
<b>1880-06-01</b>	Death of Virginie	-	
<b>1881</b>	Census	Miller	Three of his sons are millers: Joseph 20 years old, Ludger 18 and Jean Baptiste 15
<b>1881-03-12</b>	Discharge from his obligation of 1860		It took 20 years to repay his loan of 25 louis
<b>1882-08-14</b>	François' wedding (farmer)	Farmer	
<b>1882-08-14</b>	Joseph's wedding (farmer)	Farmer	
<b>1887-01-18</b>	Ludger's wedding (daily worker)	Daily worker	
<b>1887-07-18</b>	Zéphirin's wedding (mechanic)	Not specified	
<b>1890-09-30</b>	Jean Baptiste's wedding (daily worker)	Farmer	
<b>1891</b>	Census	Farmer	He is called Johny
<b>1907-05-02</b>	His burial	-	He died at the age of 79.

In short, Jean remained in L'Ancienne-Lorette from his birth until around 1860. In 1844 he would have worked on the repair of the mill. From 1849 to 1852, he had the lease of the L'Ancienne-Lorette mill. From 1852 to 1860, he would be a miller in L'Ancienne-Lorette while the mill was owned by Jean Hamel. Around 1860 he moved with his family to St-Raymond, where he worked as a miller for twenty years before returning to farming again and remaining there until his death. According to his burial record, he would have died in Québec City and was buried in St-Raymond.

We have seen that his sons Zoël, Joseph, Ludger and Jean-Baptiste also touched on the trade of miller.

## Joseph's Journey (1831-1909)

While we're at it, let's look at the journey of his brother Joseph.

Date	Place	Event	Trade
1831-02-13		His baptism	
1844	L'Ancienne-Lorette	Payroll at the mill	He works on the restoration of the mill
1851		Census	Miller
1860-01-30		Marriage to Émilie Bernier	Miller
1860-12-23	Louiseville / Trois-Rivières	Baptism of his son Adélard	Miller
1863-12-29		Burial of Émilie Bernier	Miller
1869-04-05		Marriage to Philomène Dumontier	-
1870-04-17		Baptism of his daughter Rébecca	Miller
1871		Census	Miller
1873-11-27		Baptism of his son Donat	Miller
1877-01-11		Baptism of his son Arthur	Miller
1881	Ste-Flore	Census	Miller
1884-01-08		Sale of his property by the Sheriff	
1891	Québec	Census in Québec City	Sewing mill clerk
1899-06-26		Marriage of Napoléon (Mechanic)	Timber merchant
1901		Census	Mechanic
1903-02-02		Arthur's wedding	-
1904-09-27		Rebecca's wedding	-
1909-02-12		His burial	He died at the age of 77

In short, after his youth in L'Ancienne-Lorette where he worked as a miller with his older brothers, he got married in Louiseville. He worked as a miller in the region for a while. His first wife died. He remarried in Louiseville, moved to Ste-Flore, again as a miller.

In the Gazette officielle du Québec, on November 3, 1883<sup>13</sup>, we find the announcement of a sale by the Sheriff for "a lot of land situated in the parish of Sainte-Flore on the Chemin des Pilles... with a flour mill, a sawmill, a carding mill and a fuller with their turns and workers on them erected, circumstances and outbuildings" in the context of a lawsuit between Adam Rémillard, plaintiff and Joseph Robitaille, defendant.

Then, between 1881 and 1891, Joseph returned to Québec City to take on various jobs. He may have worked in the sewing machine store of his brother Cyrille.

In the 1896-1897 Québec City Directory<sup>14</sup>, Joseph is found living at 145 Charest where he is listed as a



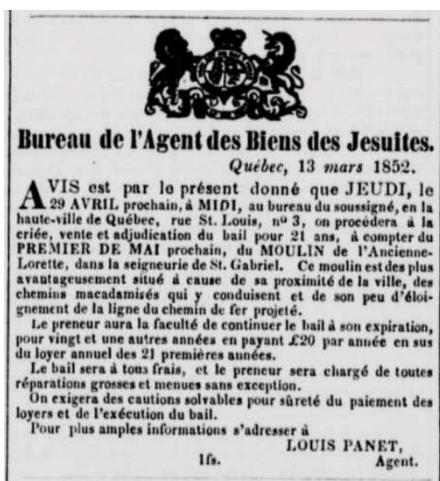
<sup>13</sup> <https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/2354750>

<sup>14</sup> <https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/3691344>

*former miller.* It will be the same for several years because he is still there in the directories of 1908-1909<sup>15</sup> and even 1909-1910<sup>16</sup>.

### 5.3 Jean Hamel

Around 1850, the Government observed that the management of the patrimony inherited from



the Jesuits weighed on it and proved to be a source of excessive expenditure. They seriously considered putting up for sale the Jesuit mills in the Québec City area, but time passed and the lease of the L'Ancienne-Lorette mill came to an end. In the spring of 1852, it was announced that the lease of the mill would be auctioned on April 29. After a starting price of 30 pounds per year, the auction was won by F.-X. Labrie with an offer of 40 pounds per year.

This lease seems to have never been signed because events went rushing. The sale of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette and its estate was decided shortly afterwards. The auction was held on July 15, 1852, at the office of the

Jesuit Property Agent on St-Louis Street in Québec City.

In the minutes of this auction, we learn the terms of the sale as well as the course of the auction. The mill with its outbuildings was priced at 600 pounds, half a dozen interested parties raised the bids. Jean Robitaille offered 660 pounds, but his offer was quickly supplanted by other bidders. The mill was sold to Antoine Dery<sup>17</sup> for 1050 pounds but Dery could not collect the guarantees in time, and it was therefore to the next bidder, Jean Hamel, that the mill was sold for 1000 pounds.

This document tells us that the mill was sold with the right of banality, implying that the miller of the place recovered the "share of the seigneur" on all the cereals he was grinding. This will not be the case for the other mills in the region sold in the years that followed.<sup>18</sup>

In the minutes of the auction detailing the conditions of the sale, there is a last-minute addition to the document which states that the carding mill and what depends on it "is the property of Jean Robitaille who will take it away in the 4 days following the sale".<sup>19</sup> This shows the interest in the mill shown by Jean Robitaille during his short three-year lease. This also explains why, in 1855, at the baptism of his son Zoël, Jean stated that he was a carder and not a miller.

<sup>15</sup> <https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/3691507>

<sup>16</sup> <https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/3691513>

<sup>17</sup> Likely, this Antoine Dery is none other than the son of Louis Dery III. Antoine was born on May 29, 1808. He was therefore 44 years old at the time of the auction.

<sup>18</sup> List of transactions concerning mills forming part of the Jesuit property located in the district of Quebec (BAnQ Cote: E21,S64,SS5,SSS2,D612)  
(<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3147878>)

<sup>19</sup> BANQ Cote: E21,S64,SS5,SSS6,D1391-2

It must be understood that in 1852, the mill was still in very poor condition and required major repairs that had been estimated by an expert at about 566 pounds. The sale was accompanied by an obligation to continue to offer banality, that is to grind the grain of the censitaires and to pay royalties to the seigneur. The seigneurial system was still in force and remained so until 1854. By purchasing the mill in 1852, Jean Hamel pledged to offer the milling service, to pay cens and annuities to the seigneur (at the amount of 34 sols per year) and to bring all the repairs to the mill estate mentioned in the expert report attached to the sales contract.

Remember that the owner (or tenant) of the mill was not necessarily the miller. He could hire one or more millers to operate the mill daily and grind the grain.

Was Jean Hamel a miller? In the 1851 census he was a grocer in the St-Roch district of Québec City. Thus, our grocer from St-Roch ended up as miller in L'Ancienne-Lorette. Without prior training, he probably hired Jean junior and his brothers who had already been working as millers at the mill for at least three years.

During that time, we know that Jean Hamel moved to L'Ancienne-Lorette because, in 1853, he had his son Eugène baptized in L'Ancienne-Lorette and the register specified that he was *Meunier Bourgeois* (Gentleman Miller). The nuance here is interesting. The baptism celebrant did not write Miller but Gentleman Miller, meaning that he is a Sunday miller, a kind of gentleman farmer.

In 1854, Jean Hamel had Rosalie Marie baptized and, this time, he was simply Miller: the trade was setting in, he now had flour in his blood!

In 1858, on September 27, he had Marie Emma baptized, he was still a miller but, surprise, the godfather was then a certain Victor Robitaille! (This Victor was another of Jean Senior's sons and therefore the younger brother of Jean Junior.)

**1855** – At the bottom of the ravine, behind the church, the flour mill of Vieille-Lorette has been operating as best it can for a century. Jean Hamel, a merchant-grocer from the Faubourg Saint-Vallier, bought it in the fall of 1852.

The stone building and two floors, has two moulanges (grain wheels), one for wheat and another for oats as well as a carding mill (to untangle the fibers of wool), under the responsibility of a tenant.

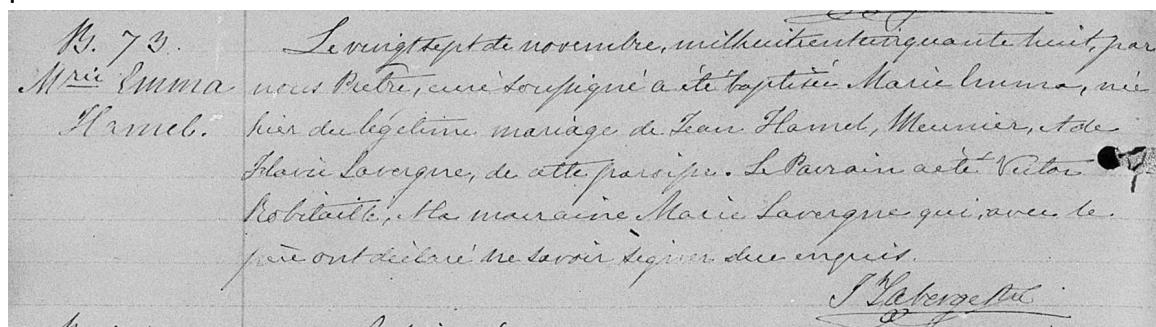
The installation can only run in large waters, because the communicated force can only operate one mold at a time. The mill is in a very bad condition, both outside and inside and, in recent years, the inhabitants of the parish of Vieille-Lorette are sometimes forced to go to the nearby mill. The mill employs two people: miller Jean Robitaille and an apprentice.

A second carding and treading mill (beating woven wool) was built about 20 acres from the flour mill. The mill cost £350 (\$575) to build, but the income barely paid interest on the capital, although a single worker could make it work.

Gilles Falardeau, Société d'histoire de L'Ancienne-Lorette

Sidebar in the *Journal of L'Ancienne-Lorette* (March 2017, page 31)

\*\*\*See also Appendix G



In 1860, Jean Hamel put his mill up for sale and it was Victor Robitaille who bought the mill and its estate.

After selling the mill, Jean Hamel moved to Montmagny, his wife's home country. He lived there as a merchant until his death in 1890.

#### 5.4 Victor Robitaille

In 1860, Victor Robitaille bought the mill for the sum of 1900 pounds. The sale was recorded by the notary Étienne Légaré on January 18, 1860. The full images of this contract are available on the BAnQ Numérique website.<sup>20</sup>

The contract specifies that the sale includes "*the house, the mill, the shed, stables and other buildings built on it, water privilege and the right of banality in and on all this part of the seigneurie of St-Gabriel which is now included in the limits of the Parish of L'Ancienne Lorette ...*".

At the time of the sale, Victor was 28 years old and had been married for five years to Marie Agnès Lavergne known as Renaud. It is amusing to note that the seller Jean Hamel is the husband of Flavie Lavergne known as Renaud, the sister of Marie Agnès and two years her senior.

Fire of October 12, 1862

In the newspaper *Courrier du Canada* on Wednesday, October 15, 1862, we learn, on page 3, that a fire broke out in the Robitaille mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette "last Sunday around 5 a.m." and that everything burned down.

Victor soon recovered from this disaster since, on June 27, 1872, twelve years after taking possession of the mill, he met Jean Hamel at the notary Étienne Légaré to receive the discharge from his debt. Victor then remained at the mill until his death in 1895.

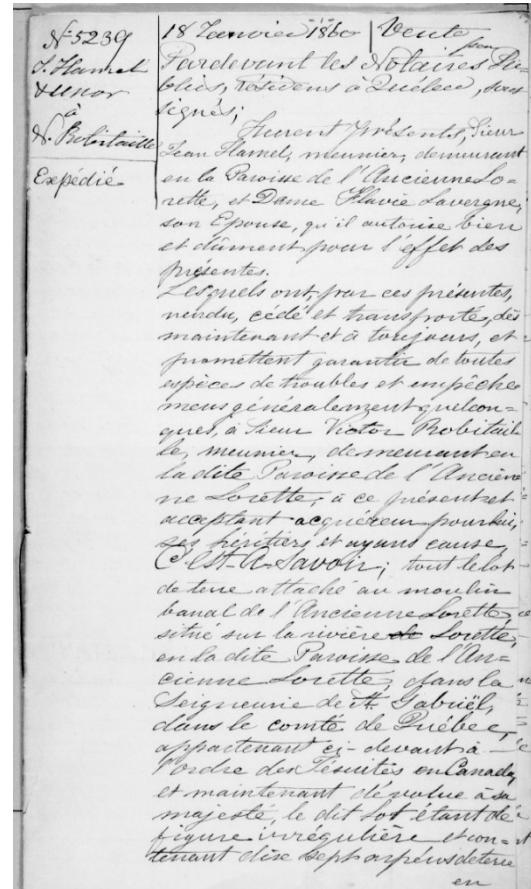


Figure 9- Contract for the sale of Jean Hamel's mill to Victor Robitaille

**FAITS DIVERS.**

**INCENDIE A LORETTE.**—Dimanche dernier, vers cinq heures du matin, un incendie s'est déclaré dans le moulin à farine de M. Robitaille, à l'Ancienne Lorette. Le moulin a été entièrement consumé ainsi qu'une cordeerie adjointe. Une quantité considérable de grain et de laine a été détruite. Les pertes de M. Robitaille ne sont couvertes par aucune assurance.

Figure 10- Fire of 1862

<sup>20</sup> <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3770537?docref=MfKiF1L9qINJ3RGyBmEe0g>

## Victor's first children

The couple Victor and Agnès had four children between their marriage in 1855 and the purchase of the mill in 1860. Two children who died at birth remained nameless. Flavie was born in 1857<sup>21</sup> and Adélaïde in 1859. At every event recorded in the parish register between 1855 and 1860, Victor was mentioned as a miller. There is reason to believe that Victor worked all this time at the mill of his brother-in-law Jean Hamel.

## Victor's Journey (1832-1895)

Date	Place	Event	Trade
1832-08-16		His baptism	
1851		Census	Miller
1855-02-12		Marriage with Marie-Agnès Lavergne	Miller
1856-02-18		Anonymous child burial	Miller
1857-03-20		Baptism of his daughter Flavie	Miller
1858-10-02		Anonymous child burial	Miller
1859-11-11		Baptism of his daughter Adélaïde	Miller
1860	L'Ancienne-Lorette	Purchase of the mill	Miller
1861		Census	Miller
1861-01-05		Baptism of his son Joseph	Miller
1862-10-12		Fire at the mill	Miller
1864-04-01		Baptism of his son Eugène	Miller
1886-02-02		Baptism of his son Ludger	Miller
1867-11-12		Baptism of his daughter Mary Anne	Miller
1895-08-21		His burial	Miller He died at the age of 63

His career path is crystal clear. He was a miller all his life.

---

<sup>21</sup> The godfather and godmother of little Flavie were Jean Hamel and Flavie Lavergne! The same Jean Hamel who bought the mill in 1852 and sold it to Victor in 1860.

## 5.5 Victor's sons: Joseph and Eugène

Two of Victor and Marie-Agnès' sons continued the family work at the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette. They are Joseph and Eugène.

**Joseph** was born on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1861, the sixth child in the family, and died at age 74 on March 14, 1935. He was a "miller and grain merchant" and was said to be "in business with his brother Eugène." Married at 34 to Anna Pageot, he left no descendants, their only son Victor died very young.

**Eugène** was born on April 1, 1864 and died at the age of 87 on June 8, 1951. He was a "*miller, grain merchant, and organist.*"

In the newspaper *L'Étendard* of December 19, 1890, there is a report of an Intercolonial train derailment. The Express from Halifax derailed at St-Joseph, near Lévis, and Eugène was injured. Fortunately, he recovered. It is thus understood that Eugène was no longer at that time a flour covered miller who lived in the mill. We understand that, as a businessman, he was already traveling in search of business opportunities for his father's mill.



Eugène married Hélène l'Heureux on May 23, 1898. He was then 34 years old, and she was 25. They had eight children, two of whom died in infancy. Their eldest daughter Anna Marie was, like her father, organist for the parish for many years. Their son Eugène, born in 1901, also regularly played the organ at parish celebrations.

An article in the newspaper *La Presse* of July 26, 1907<sup>22</sup> describes the village of L'Ancienne-Lorette on the occasion of the blessing of the cornerstone of the future church. On page 8, it says:

*"We still see as an old relic the old communal mill of the Jesuits of 1674 and restored in 1777 and which is now the property of Messrs. Joseph and Eugène Robitaille, millers, also owners of the Electrical Facility of this parish"*

In the Québec City Directories kept in the Archives, it is easy to find family members involved in the grain trade. Examples include:

- In 1905-1906, Joseph and Eugène, millers and grain merchants on St-Vallier Street where they had an office and mill "*near the barrier*".
- In 1916-1917, Joseph and Eugène Robitaille were grain merchants at 21, 1st Avenue in the Limoilou district, not far from Ludger, their younger brother, who is listed as a seed merchant.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> <https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/3213373>

<sup>23</sup> <https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/3691627>

- In 1924-1925, **Jos and Eug Robitaille** opened a shop at 1283 St-Vallier Street in addition to the 1st Avenue business.
- In 1935-1936, **Jos and Eug Robitaille** were still located at 1283 St-Vallier Street and 31 1st Avenue.

\* \* \* \* \*

In *Récits Laurentiens* (1919), Brother Marie-Victorin wrote:

"Curiosity, decidedly piqued, brought the next evening the whole village of L'Ancienne-Lorette on the steps of the church. We saw the Hamel, old and young, Father François Kirouac and his boys who only had to cross the field and pass the turnstile, the **Robitaillies of the mill**, the Blondeaus, the Gauvins, the Pageots, Father Huot, schoolmaster, and even Dr. Laurin, from Les Saules, who, returning from a visit to the sick in the Grands Déserts, tied his horse to a pole, and waited in his coach. »

He probably then refers to Joseph and Eugène.



Figure 11- Funeral monument of Victor Robitaille's family at the cemetery of L'Ancienne-Lorette (photo by the author)

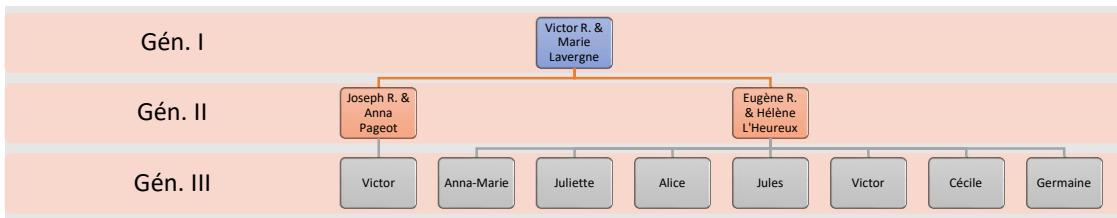


Figure 12 - Hierarchy of persons identified on the tombstone. Only one child of Eugène and Hélène does not appear here: Eugène junior (1901-1963), the only one who got married.

## Chapter 6 – Pinsonneault's postcards

Pierre-Fortunat Pinsonneault ran a successful photography studio in Trois-Rivières. Not satisfied with simply taking the picture of the citizens of his country, he wanted to broaden his field of action by selling postcards made in France. Seeing that it worked well, he had the idea of making his own postcards from his own photos.

To expand his catalogue, in 1903 and again in 1905 he undertook a tour of picturesque towns and villages in the Province of Québec, including a visit to the village of L'Ancienne-Lorette where he took a series of photos of the main points of interest, including the old banal mill of the place.

We can thus contemplate some images of the estate and the mill at its peak, while it still looked great.

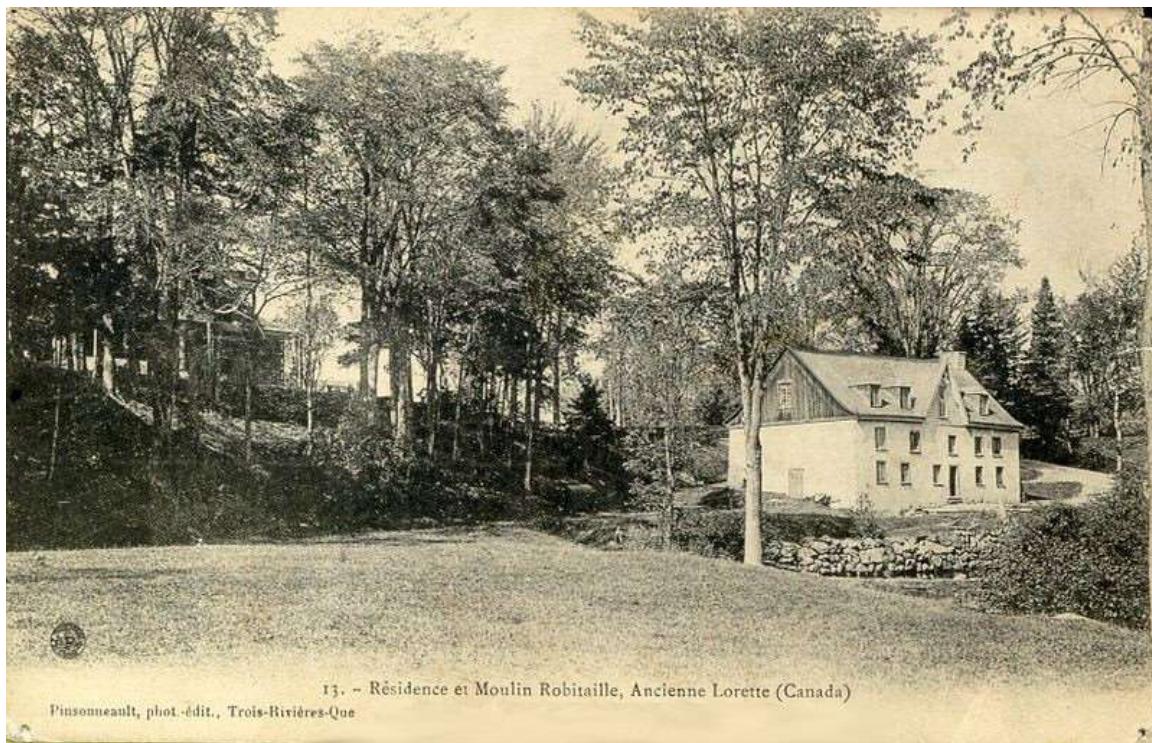


Figure 13- Pinsonneault #13 Résidence et Moulin Robitaille. We get a glimpse of the Robitaille residence under the trees on the left (source BAnQ)



Figure 14- Pinsonneault #6 Le Moulin à farine. The mill seen from the bridge overlooking the Lorette River (McCord Museum MP-0000.1183.12)



Figure 15- The same place in 2020 (photo by the author)

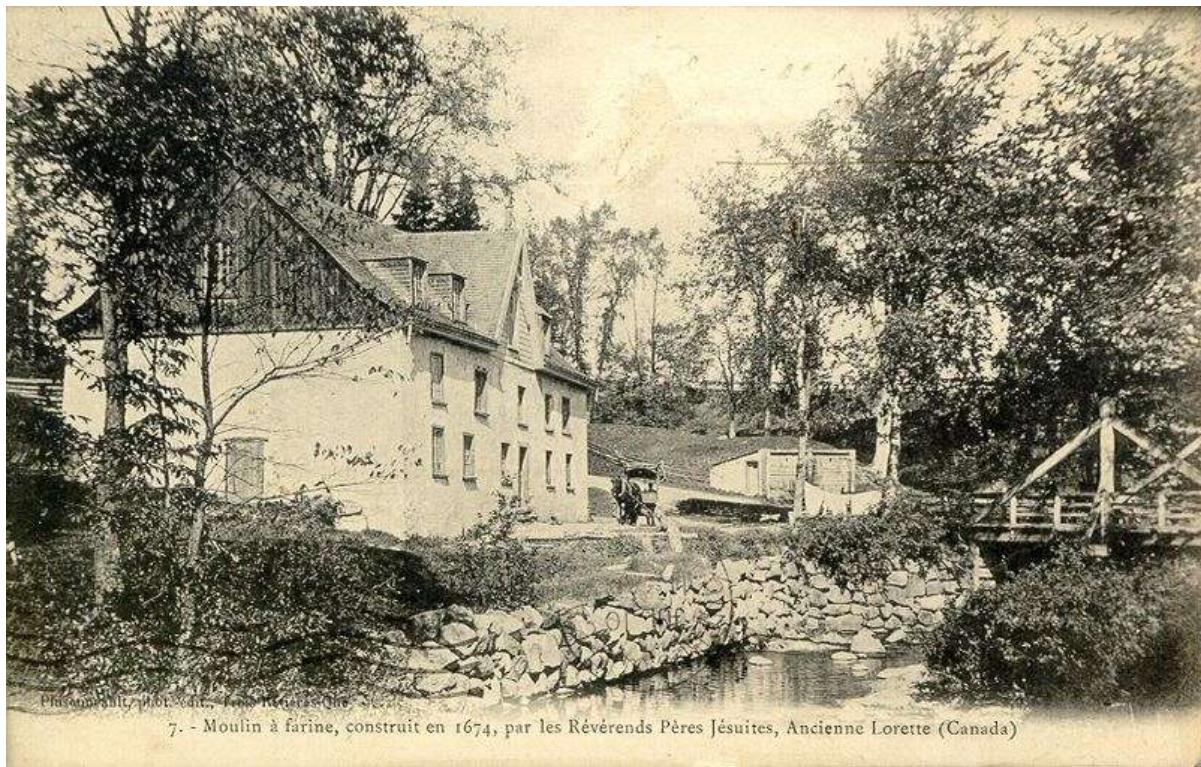


Figure 16- Pinsonneault #7 Moulin à farine. The mill seen from the river, below the previous image (source BAnQ). The date of 1674 in the legend is implausible. This mill was built in 1755.



Figure 17- Pinsonneault #5 Avenue des Peupliers et Résidence Robitaille. The mill is on the left and the Residence is at the end of the driveway; in the center, the water supply canal for the mill (Source BAnQ)



Figure 18- Pinsonneault #9 Petite Rivière Lorette. Little Lorette River (Source BAnQ)

## Chapter 7 – Bringing Water to the Mill

To operate a water mill, it goes without saying that it must be provided with a constant supply of running water.

To this end, in L'Ancienne-Lorette, the elders took advantage of the difference in altitude of the river between its meanders to build up a sufficient waterfall in height and volume.

The first work, as early as 1717, was to harness the Lorette River by developing two dams. In period documents, they are often called causeways, one small and one large, which are located upstream to the north, near the mill road. These two dams allowed a reservoir of water forming a basin that guaranteed a constant water supply to the mill.

From this basin, a diversion channel was dug that led directly to the mill downstream. Recall that initially the first mill was built east of the mill road. This first mill was in operation from 1718 to 1755.

In 1755, a new mill was built to the west of the road and so the diversion canal had to be redeveloped, diverted halfway to the new mill.

It is understandable that the supply of water for the miller is a critical factor of success and required constant attention. On several occasions in the archival documents, we see that the dams have required major repairs.

- In 1803 Louis Dery was paid £24 for repairs to the causeway carried out the previous year.
- In February 1806, Louis Dery received 36 livres for the work carried out in October on the causeway.
- In October 1821, Louis Dery presented an invoice of 39 livres for repairs to the roof of the mill and the two dams.
- In July 1823, the same Louis Dery detailed the repairs to be made to the main causeway. He then presented an invoice of 150 louis for the rehabilitation of this large dam.
- In June 1826, the Jesuit Property Commission received a report from John Henderson confirming that the

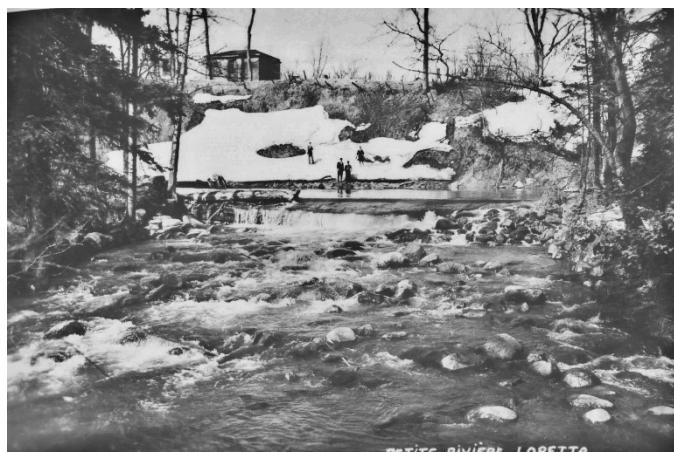


Figure 19 - The small causeway, in happier times. (SHAL photo)



Figure 20- The same site in 2020. The now dry concrete dam can barely be seen (photo by the author)

dam repairs had been properly carried out.

The details of the invoices presented by Déry in 1821 show us that the dams were mainly made of wood. The Henderson Report of 1826 indicates that the dams redone in 1824 consisted of large logs and cedar beams weighted with large stones, all covered with solid jointed planks. The whole work strongly covered with earth and equipped with a flood evacuation door. Henderson concludes that the work has been done well and that the works were solid and should last. In 1843, however, it was again estimated that new repairs were needed at an estimated cost of 150 pounds. Another report signed by Georges Bisset and dated January 27, 1852, again concludes that the causeways will have to be redone again at a cost of about 150 pounds.

We see that the maintenance of these structures often had to be redone. From 1852, the mill having passed into private hands, there is no longer any record of repairs to the mill or its dams and pipes, but it is easy to understand that the costs were recurrent. Whether it is to operate the flour mill or the carding mill or the power plant, the mill always needed water. As a result, the dams continued to be maintained repeatedly.

The two causeways were still well in place until the end of the twentieth century, thus forming for nearly three centuries a microcosm of greenery, a welcoming oasis for passing birds, small fauna, residents, and walkers. The small lake formed by the two dams surrounded an island cooled by the waterfalls that outcropped on the top of the two structures.

In the development plan prepared by André Robitaille in 1965 and which we will discuss later, the site of the causeways was to be developed to accommodate a restaurant, a small pedestrian bridge would have led, on the island, to a pier for canoes and rowboats.

After the demolition of the mill, the Domaine du Moulin was developed into a residential area and the residents of the district continued for years to ensure minimal maintenance of the dams, no longer for their economic-industrial contribution but for their ecological appeal of conviviality and, certainly, also in respect of the centuries-old tradition.

The small causeway was indeed rebuilt by the municipality of L'Ancienne-Lorette at the end of the 1990s, but the large causeway finally gave way in 2014. The basin then drained, the island became part of the peninsula on the northwest shore, the dry bed was filled with invasive vegetation. Today the basin is no more, the north arm of the river is dried up. The small causeway, intact, is no longer of any use, the water sneaking into the other arm of the river.

## Chapter 8 – The Golden Age and Then the Decline

Flour mills, especially in Canada, were expensive equipment to build and maintain. The harsh winters almost destroyed the driving force of the water mills and made life hard for pipes and gullies, masonry and, overall, all the equipment. Wood exposed to water, constant moisture, and frost, rotted quickly, and required constant attention.

The equipment was therefore expensive, and the miller's task was a considerable burden.

To diversify the activities and make the mill profitable, Brothers Joseph and Eugène Robitaille installed an electric generator at the mill in 1901 to produce electricity and supply the village. To reduce maintenance costs and increase the power of the mill, in 1917 they replaced the mill's water wheel with a more efficient turbine. It is reported that the turbine was finally stopped in 1939 and the mill then abandoned.

The decline was inevitable. For decades, the farmers of L'Ancienne-Lorette had abandoned the culture of wheat to simply produce hay, less complicated and equally profitable, given the proximity of the city and the significant demand for hay.

The rise of large industrial flour mills also sounded the death knell for small local flour mills. The millers of L'Ancienne-Lorette had to diversify their services to maintain their income and had to take advantage of the land surrounding the mill to cultivate it and ensure the subsistence of their family.

History has not retained the details of the life of the Robitaille millers in L'Ancienne-Lorette between 1850 and 1950. Nothing seems to have been publicly recorded after the 1860 sale. However, we have seen that they had become active in the retail trade in Québec City. While the trade occupied them downtown, the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette became less and less useful for their purposes. It is in the newspapers that we learn with much delay that a severe storm tore off the roof of the mill on February 8, 1947, and knocked down part of the walls. The building had been abandoned for a long time; must we understand.

The mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette was, in this sense, no different from other mills that were abandoned everywhere. The mills were no longer used. They were technologically and economically outdated, without interest. Concern was beginning to be expressed about their historical and heritage value. Some would have liked to see them repaired, arranged, preserved for the memory of a bygone era. They no longer had any economic value, only their symbolic and historical value remained.

On 2 April 1949, the daily newspaper *Le Soleil* recalls in a short section the history of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette and ends with "*But, with regret, this 'old mill' which brought back so many memories is in ruins. Only the walls remain.* ». On September 18, 1949, Louis Thivierge wrote an article entitled "Gone with the Wind... and the Smoke" in *Le Soleil* where he describes the misfortunes that struck three old mills left abandoned, including that of L'Ancienne-Lorette. He also concludes that it was a pity to see a symbol of the hard work of the ancestors disappear in this way.

## Visual testimonials

We have previously seen on Pinsonneault's postcards the state of the mill at the beginning of the twentieth century. Thanks to the archives, we still have some visual testimonies of the mill in the following decades.

In 1943, after the turbine stopped but before the winter storm that swept away the roof of the mill, the photographer Omer Parent left us some images of the mill and its surroundings. (BAnQ - Collection *Inventaire des Œuvres d'art effectué par Gérard Morisset*, Cote: E6,S8,SS1)



Figure 21- View from the top of the hillside, we can only see the (intact) roof of the mill



Figure 22- Approaching, we can see that the building looks abandoned



Figure 23- Old grindstones are leaning against the wall, among other debris



Figure 24- Some more grindstones lie on the ground, north of the mill

In 1954, seven years after the collapse of the roof, the photographer J.W Michaud relayed to us what remains of the mill.



*Figure 25- From the bridge over the river, between the hollowed-out walls, we see the bell towers of the church*  
(BAnQ Cote: E6,S7,SS1,P98254)



*Figure 26- From the same angle in November 2020 (photo by the author)*



*Figure 27- On the other gable of the mill, the lean-to holds firm, but it is overgrown*  
(BAnQ Cote: E6,S7,SS1,P98253)



Figure 28- The remains of the mill circa 1960 (Photo from the SHAL archives)

In 1963, Laval Bouchard's photo shows the ravages of time.



Figure 29- In 1963, we hardly see the mill anymore, a sign on the lean-to says: *Forbidden to pass on this ground. Not responsible for accidents* (photo: Laval Bouchard)



Figure 30 - Amazing photo by Laval Bouchard that shows the inside of the mill in 1963.

## Chapter 9 – Recovery Project

After the turbine stopped, the mill estate, surrounded by a meander of the Lorette River, became a peaceful green setting near the parish church. Brothers Joseph and Eugène Robitaille lived on the estate with their families and continued the grain trade in the city.

Passers-by were still commonly taking the path that passed in front of the estate and some were nostalgic for the past time when the mill was an important center of interest that brought together the population, where stories were exchanged while the millstones worked loudly. Joseph died without descendants in 1935. Eugène died in 1951.



Figure 31- André Robitaille,  
architect-urban planner

The parish priest had been toying for some time with the idea of highlighting this area and promoting that project all around, without much success. Meanwhile, citizens saw other symbols of the past slowly deteriorating and threatening to disappear. The mill was an important symbol of this heritage that was inexorably fading. There were also the Stations of the Cross left abandoned in the four corners of the village, the procession chapels were left without maintenance, the old bread ovens were breaking down, ...

In 1956, the local Chamber of Commerce launched the idea of grouping these artifacts on the mill grounds, restoring them, and enhancing them. The steps taken then remained in vain. Funding was lacking.

The idea remained a dead letter until the intervention of the City Council, which relaunched the project and hired André Robitaille, an architect-urban planner from Québec City, to draw up plans for the redevelopment of the Robitaille estate and the development of the site. The architect presented his plans on November 9, 1965, to the City Council and estimated the work required at about \$400,000, including \$55,000 for the restoration of the mill alone. The City concluded that it would need the financial support of the government.

During the years that followed, the mayor and councillors multiplied the steps taken with the authorities to obtain support and funding. A report was submitted in February 1967 to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, which cautiously showed its interest without promising funding. In the following weeks, the renewed representations made to the local MP did not give hope for a solid endorsement.

On Monday, April 10, 1967, the daily newspaper *Le Soleil* published an article by Florent Plante taking stock of the project and the lack of public funding. *Le Soleil* headlined "Notre-Dame de Lorette – Council May Have to Abandon Major \$400,000 Project." On Wednesday, May 3, 1967, in the same newspaper, we learn of the



demolition of the procession chapels that were to be integrated into the development project of the Robitaille estate. The city council resolved to demolish them "having received no favorable response about the historic site."

On May 30, 1967, in the chronicle *Autour de la capitale* of the same daily newspaper, we read that "the renovation of the Robitaille estate is unanimously desired on the part of the council, the intermediate bodies and the citizens themselves". Indeed, the League of Citizens of Lorette had formally given its support by evoking the unanimity of the citizens for the project.

Finally, the City Council officially ended the adventure by a resolution on October 16, 1967.<sup>24</sup> The architect's contract was terminated, and the case was closed, as were the procession chapels that were meant to be preserved. The ruins of the mill remained a few more years before being irreparably leveled in 1973.

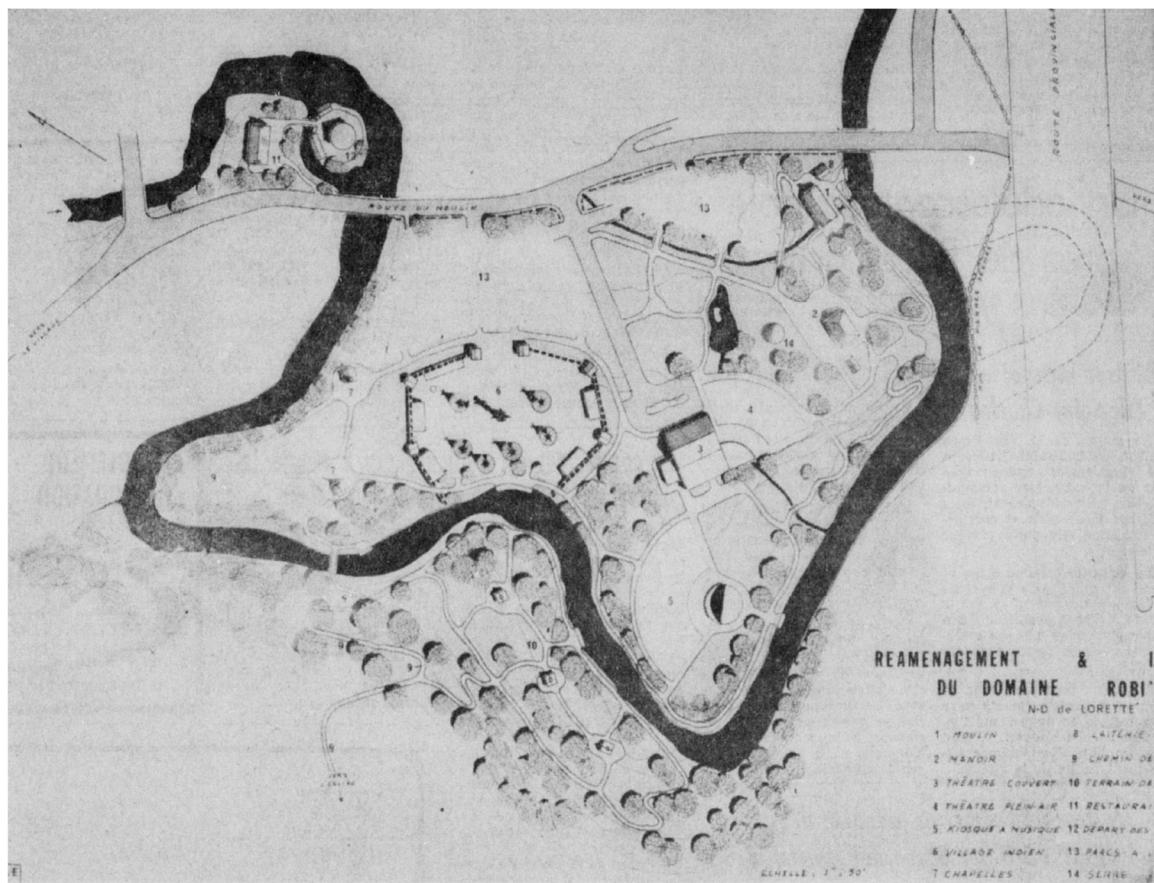


Figure 32- Illustration of the redevelopment project published in *Le Soleil*. The mill is located at the top right near the junction of the road and the river.

<sup>24</sup> By a sad coincidence, we learn the same day, in the newspaper *L'Action*, the death at the age of 67 of Miss Juliette Robitaille, daughter of the late Eugène Robitaille, during his lifetime miller and grain merchant.

## Chapter 10 – What's Left

After the demolition of the ruins of the mill in 1973, the estate was subdivided and put up for sale. From the very location of the mill, the town of L'Ancienne-Lorette has drawn a street that surrounds the peninsula of the estate, and which now bears the name of Rue du Domaine-du-Moulin. Two dozen single-family residences have been erected there.

Today there is no visible trace of the mill, not even a commemorative plaque.

For those who want to visit the Domaine, however, it remains a worthy construction that detonates in this environment of new upscale suburbs.

At 1283, rue du Domaine-du-Moulin, stands a large house from another time, proud with its refined facings and its bright red roof, on cadastral lot 189.

This all-wood bourgeois house is decorated with a central turret in front that attracts the eyes.



Figure 33- 1283, rue du Domaine-du-Moulin (photo by the author)



Figure 34- In this photo (circa 1960) from the SHAL archives, we see the barn of the estate with, in the background, the back of the house of the estate before it was returned.

This house would have been built around 1855 for Jean Hamel, then new owner of the mill and estate. When Jean Hamel sold the mill to Victor Robitaille in 1860, the transaction included the additions Jean Hamel had made to the estate, which explains why having paid 1000 livres for the property in 1852, he sold the whole thing for 1900 livres in 1860.

It was Victor and his family who occupied this house from 1860. Victor would have added the central turret

around 1880, probably to give more prestige to the house. Moreover, the house is, even today, often nicknamed the Robitaille Manor.

At an undetermined date, the residence had to be moved and turned over because initially it faced the river but now turns its back on it.

The files of the city of L'Ancienne-Lorette make it possible to follow the occupation of the house. We know that it was the property of the brothers Joseph and Eugène Robitaille, after the death of their father Victor. In 1954, the house belonged to the farmer Jules Robitaille, son of Eugène.

In 1955, we know that Cécile Robitaille, daughter of Eugène lived there.

In 1956, the Marcotte directory allows us to know that the occupants of 49 rue du Moulin are: Alice, Anna (organist), Cécile and Jules Robitaille (farmer), all children of Eugène.

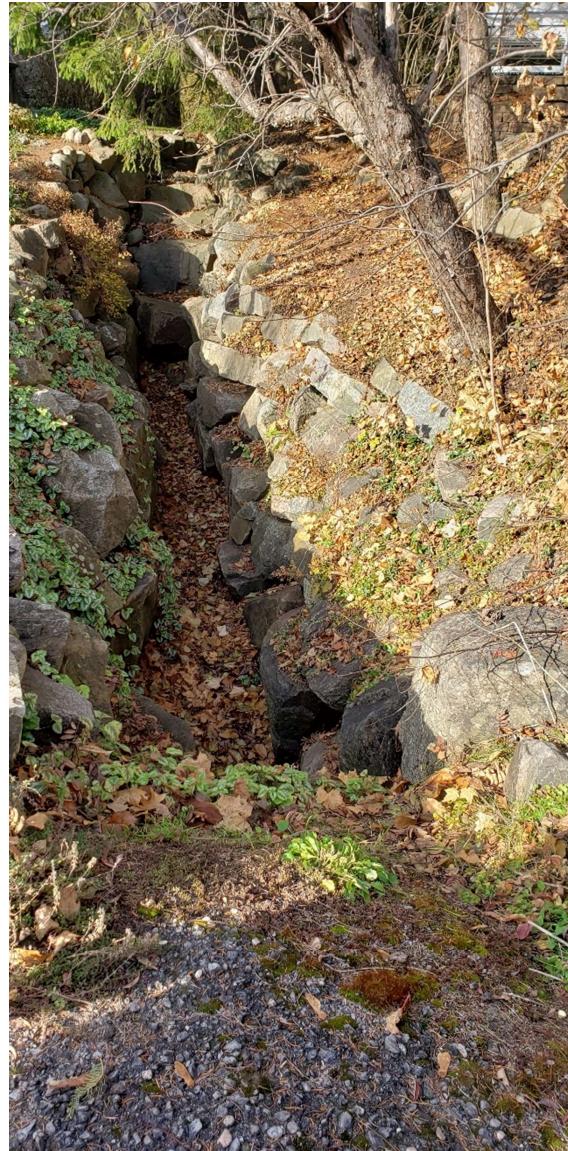
Jules died in 1966, he lived at 1500, rue du Moulin.



## Remnant of the induct channel

After the demolition of the mill, along the route of the water supply canal, the new occupants have developed their land to their liking, and several seem to have backfilled the canal. Presumably, in those cases, the watercourse was channeled into an underground pipe. In some places, however, the eighteenth-century work has been maintained and even carefully landscaped.

We can cite as an example, the property located in front of the Robitaille manor where we can still clearly see, from the street, the induct channel, in its last meters before arriving at the now-disappeared mill.



*Figure 35- Photo by the author*



This map of the domain is taken from Google Maps. The area in blue illustrates the part of the estate between the old mill road and the Lorette River. In yellow, the approximate location of the mill. The original estate also included a piece of land beyond the road. (in red, the location of the Robitaille Manor)

The Robitaille Mill

## Epilogue

Thus ends the history of the Robitaille mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette.

The mill, like the church of the hamlet, was for a long time, for two centuries and more, a place of convergence for the whole community of the surroundings.

First a seigniorial property of the Jesuits, then repossessed by the Government, then sold to individuals, the mill has had its day. Rendered obsolete by the evolution of the market and technologies, it was abandoned, gradually collapsed and, after a final effort in vain to try to preserve it, it was definitively leveled.

The only survivors of the adventure are the manor adjoining the mill and which served as a residence for the Robitaille millers and their families. There are also some traces of the water supply channel and the remains of the two causeways that harnessed the river until recently.

There are still, for some time, the memories of the local elders who saw the last days of the mill, who visited the manor, who dipped their feet in the river Lorette retained by the dams of the mill and who still dream of restoration.

May this document anchor for posterity the value that this mill may have had for so many generations of honest citizens and devoted millers.

## Appendix A – Mediography

- The book **L'Ancienne-Lorette**, by Lionel Allard
- Le *Bulletin des Recherches Historiques* – January 1968 (documents about on the mills of St-Gabriel preserved in the Archives)
- Québec City Newspaper *Le Soleil*
  - The short clip of April 2, 1949 (p.12), which draws the chronology of the mill
  - The article of Sept 18, 1949, on the sad fate of the fallen mills
  - The article of April 10, 1967, on the imminent end of the Domaine Robitaille project
- Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec:
  - File E21,S64,SS5 containing the documents relating to the management of Jesuit property
  - Photos (postcards) by Pinsonneault
  - The images of the mill in the collection *Inventaire des Œuvres d'art effectué par Gérard Morisset*, Cote: E6,S8,SS1
  - The Marcotte Directories of Québec City
- The parish registers of L'Ancienne-Lorette (for genealogy) through Ancestry.ca, FamilySearch.com and BAnQ,
- RDAQ website – "Remonter aux sources"
- The *Journal de L'Ancienne-Lorette*, January 2012 (page 8) and March 2017 (page 31)
- *Cap-aux-Diamants* #78, summer 2004 – article by Dominique Laperle on the miller's trade in New France *Tournent les moulanges* [online] <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/7240ac>
- McCord Museum, some Pinsonneault maps MP-0000.1183
- Société d'histoire de L'Ancienne-Lorette, private communication

## Appendix B – Chronology

- 1711 - The population demands that a mill be built in L'Ancienne-Lorette.<sup>25</sup>
- 1717 - In July, Pierre Alain and Drolet begin to develop the river for the mill.
- 1718 - January: Laurent Duboc already had at work a team of renderers for the mill.
- 1718 - March-April: The lime provided by Chevalier arrives. Price, 580 pounds.
  - April 20: The promenade delivers a carload for a sum of 200 pounds.
  - April 22: Jean-Chs Hamel brings a large supply of stone and receives 40 pounds.
  - August 8: Laying of the first stone of the mill. A lead plate is put at the bottom of the window, through which the tree is brought in, and on the side of the hill.
- 1718 - End of December: Noël Alain, the first miller, begins to make flour. He practised this profession until his death (28 Feb. 1726). He is committed to 2/5 of milling to himself and 3/5 to the Jesuit Seigneurs.
- 1726-04 - Louis Déry runs the mill with the condition of receiving 1/3 of grinding and leaving 2/3 to the Jesuits.
- 1743-04-10, Rental of the mill by the Jesuits to Louis Déry.
- 1748-12-03, Death of Louis Déry I
- 1749-04-24, Anne Riopel, widow of Louis Déry renounces the community between her and the deceased because it is more expensive than profitable. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3351506>)
- 1752-04-05, Extension for another nine years of the lease of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette, by Father Gabriel Marcol, superior of the Jesuits, to Louis Déry, flourer. (Sanguinet, notary. Shipping.)
- 1755 - Second mill of the village. Father Floquet, prosecutor of the Jesuits, built a two-storey mill on the other side (south) of the road. (This is the current mill). The frontispiece stone reads "1755 – P Floquet".
- 1778, Louis Déry must pay 350 minots of wheat (his term is April 6) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3146586>) -page 69
- 1779, Louis paid 300 minots including 2 minots for the sacramental bread
- 1786-08-20, Death of Louis Déry II. Implicitly, his son takes over.
- 1791, Louis Déry III has the mill for 200 minots of wheat, starting on September 1, 1791 (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3146586>) -page 71
- 1797-07-25, Farm lease of the flour mill of the seigneurie of Saint-Gabriel (L'Ancienne-Lorette), by Father Casot to Louis Déry for 9 years. (Planté notary's registry.) 200 minots of wheat in kind (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/archives/52327/3151299>  
<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151302>) (D1296)
- 1799-09-06, Copy of a plan by Plamondon, surveyor defining the land where the banal mill of Ancienne-Lorette is installed. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3146516>)
- 1799-10-15, Concession of two lots near the mill by the Jesuits to Louis Déry. (Price 400 pounds) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3152013>) (D575)
- 1800-07-24, Visit of Berthelot to the Jesuit mills of the region. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149814>) (D1183)
- 1801-08-01, Minutes of the Commission requesting an estimate for the repair of the grindstones. The feeds were inspected by William Gibbard (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148107>) (D690-28)
- 1801-08-26, The grindstones were inspected by William Gibbard who estimated their replacement at 45 pounds. Louis Déry offers to repair them for 12 pounds if he is provided with the necessary stones. (D690-29) The purchase of stones and repair are allowed. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148110>) (D690-30)
- 1803-11-26, Received by Louis Déry 24 livres from Michel Berthelot for repair of the mill causeway (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148608>) (D244)
- 1806-02-01, Statement of account of Louis Déry for repair of the mill causeway (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151337>) (D1327)
- 1806-08-06, Announcement of the sale of the lease of the mill in the Quebec Gazette. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3062610>)
- 1806-09-02, Letter from Berthelot to Pyke to announce the result of the auction: Becker won the auction with a bet of 300 Pounds (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151306>) (D13)
- 1806-09-05, Extract from the Minutes of the Commission requesting the preparation of the lease. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148336>) (D74)
- 1806-09-11, Inventory which notes the situation of the Communal & Seigneurial Mill of the fief St-Gabriel, Ancienne Lorette. (Notary Charles Voyer) (Christian Becker. Shipping.) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151297>) (D1291)
- 1806-09-12, Letter from M. Berthelot, agent of Jesuit property for the district of Québec to Christian Becker, miller of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette who asks Becker to produce the requested bonds. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151404>) (D1388)

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<sup>25</sup> Entries in blue are taken from *Le Soleil* newspaper of 1949-04-02 (page 12) which draw a chronology of events relating to the mill.

- 1806-09-12, Letter to Becker concerning the inventory and the bonds to be presented (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151404>) (D1388)
- 1806-09-13 and 1806-12-09, Protests by C. Becker against M. Berthelot. Mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette. (Voyer, Public notary). Christian Becker, master miller, does not want to assume the repair costs
- 1806, Gilles Maguire and Joseph Stide dit Anger, master blacksmiths, testify to the causes of the damage to the mill that went unnoticed in the inventory of Voyer (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151311>)
- 1806-10-23, List of urgent repairs to be made to the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette, by Christian Becker. (Charles Voyer, notary. Shipping.) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151311>) (D1303)
- 1806-10-30, Minutes of the Commission requiring Becker to present his collateral (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148183>) (D690-97) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3151487>) (D15)
- 1806-12-29, Letter from Michel Berthelot to George Pyke to inform him that Becker was ordered to sign his lease and present his collateral but that he did not appear and that he instead sent a summons
- 1807-03-04, Minutes of the Commission which finds Becker's shortcomings and appeals to the President (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3147984>) (D690-104)
- 1807-09-05, Carpenter Joseph Alin confirms Becker's claims about the poor condition of the mill (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151424>) (D1403)
- 1807-09-05, Minutes of the representations of Joseph Alin, carpenter, and Christian Becker, miller before Jenkin Williams, judge of the Court of King's Bench in the district of Québec, on the state of repairs to the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette.
  - Four individuals testify to the state of the mill when Becker took possession (it seems that Déry took everything that was not attached and even tore off some items such as doors.) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148970>) (D603)
- 1807-09-11, minutes of the Commission which tells us that the President has entrusted the case to his prosecutors (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148005>) (D690-123)
- 1807-09-19, Christian Becker, complains that he was cheated... (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3146992>) (D1620)
- 1807-12-31, Report of the Attorney General who says he sued Becker for 500 pounds (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3147910>) (D642)
- 1808-01-16, Residents say they are satisfied with the quality of the mill and flour (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3151335>) (D1325)
- 1808-01-18, Petition of Christian Becker of Lorette to His Excellency Sir James Henry Craig about the poor state of the mill (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151402>)
- 1809-02-17, minutes of the Commission which reports that the Governor supports the recommendations of the Commission to await the judgment of the Court of King's Bench (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3148022>)
- 1809-04-29, Commission makes recommendations to Governor (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3147050>)
- 1809-07-29, Becker's proposal for a 21-year lease by erasing past debts (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3147026>) (D1651)
- 1809-09-02, Repossession of the mill by the Commission after the judgment against Becker (What to do with vegetables in his garden?) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3147032>)
- 1809-09-05, George Pyke, Secretary of the Commission, enjoins Michel Berthelot to carry out a notarized inventory of the mill by requesting the presence of Christian Becker (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151518>) (D17)
- 1809-09-09, Summons made by Michel Berthelot, agent of the Jesuit property, to Christian Becker, residing in St-Augustin near the passage of the Cap-Rouge River, to present himself to the inventory of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3152035>) (D595)
- 1809-09-15, Letter from Berthelot to Pyke to transmit the new notarial inventory of the mill. We learn that Louis Déry acts temporarily as guardian of the mill (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151570>) (D18)
- 1809-10-03, Call for tenders for rental of the mill (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3151407>) (D1390)
- 1809-12-04, Minutes of the Commission which relates that Christian Becker from Cap-Rouge and Louis Déry propose for the lease of the mill. Louis Déry would have the best offer... 9-year lease
- 1809-12-09, Minutes of the Commission for approval of the lease to Déry. The lease will run from 1809-09-02 to 1818-09-02 for £154.10 per year (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148032>)
- 1809-12-20, Signing of the lease for 9 years with Louis Déry, notary Planté
- 1812-03-17, Louis Déry tells Michel Berthelot business is bad and that he will not be able to pay the annuities due and asks to terminate the lease (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3151416>) (D1397)
  - In the accounts ([https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149830?docref=jVGWWWhYk5TVxz\\_EqC6sUkg](https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149830?docref=jVGWWWhYk5TVxz_EqC6sUkg)) we see the payments made from semester to semester by Louis Déry
- 1812-03-18, Berthelot transmits the request of Louis Déry to the Commission (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3147114>) (D1730)

- 1812-05-09, Louis Déry asks for the termination of his lease, offers to cede two plots of land that were ceded to him (sold) by the Jesuits in 1799 to reintegrate them into the Mill Estate and proposes to take over a new lease for a reduced rent of 100 pounds per year (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148069>)
- 1818-01-29, Louis Déry (III) offers to take over the lease for another 9 years – there seems to be floating in the auction, (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151418>) (D1399)
- 1818-01-xx, The Commission agrees to redo the lease of Déry with reduction of the rent but by recovering the two plots of land (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3146974>) (D160)
- 1818-02-09, The mill lease is offered for sale in the Quebec Gazette (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3062610>)
- 1818-08-28, Transaction between the Jesuit Property Commissioners and Louis Déry, concerning the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette and the surrounding land. (In front of Michel Berthelot, notary.) Louis gives back his land to the Government (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3151312>) (D1304)
- 1818-09-02, The Commissioner accepts the termination of the lease of Déry and the preparation of a new lease of one year. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3148338>) (D741)
- 1819-05-17, The mill lease is offered for sale in the Quebec Gazette (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3062610>)
- 1819-08-19, The mill lease is offered for sale in the Quebec Gazette (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3062610>)
- 1820-04-13, The mill lease is offered for sale in the Quebec Gazette (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3062610>)
- 1820-09-02, Draft minutes of the Commission which accepts Louis Déry's proposal for a new lease and authorizes the preparation of documents. Déry is 199 pounds late? (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3147437>) (D216)
- 1820-09-06, Letter from George Ryland to William Campbell concerning the granting of a new lease of the mill to Louis Déry. In preparation for a new lease, they are worried about the rents due by Déry and want to ask that he mortgage his property to guarantee the payment of his expenses. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3152256>) (D82)
- 1820-10-28, Lease of the banal mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette, ceded by the Jesuit Property Commissioners, to Louis Déry, miller, residing in L'Ancienne-Lorette, seigneurie of St-Gabriel. (Archibald Campbell, notary.) The annual lease would be £90
- 1821-08, Statement of account of Louis Déry for work and materials at the mill (redone roof and small causeway) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3151353>) (D1341)
- 1823-07-15, Detail of repairs required to the main mill causeway by Louis Déry (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151378>) (D1364)
- Without date, around 1824, Louis Déry presents a bill of 150 louis for the rehabilitation of the mill's large causeway (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151377>) (D1363)
- 1825-08-12, Bill by Louis Déry for masonry repair at the mill (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151363>) (D1350)
- 1826-06-05, Report of John Henderson to the Jesuit Property Commission on the state of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette, after the work done by Louis Déry, miller. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151397>) (D1381)
- 1826-06-06, Robert Christie, agent of the seigneurie of St-Gabriel, confirms in a report to the Jesuit Property Commission, that of John Henderson, dated June 5, 1826, on the work carried out at the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette, by Louis Déry.
- 1828-02-08, Bill by Louis Déry to the Jesuit Property Commission, for work and materials at the Jesuit mill (Ancienne-Lorette mill). Louis Déry statement of account for works (D1358)
- 1829-09-07, Louis Déry accepts the conditions of a new 7-year lease (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3151392>) (D1377)  
see also <https://advitam.banq.qc.ca/notice/271314>
- 1830-04-10, Lease of the banal mill of Ancienne-Lorette, seigneur de St-Gabriel, granted by John Stewart, commissioner of Jesuit property, to Louis Déry, miller. (In front of notary Archibald Campbell. Two certified copies). (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3151320>) (D1311 and D1312)
- 1834-08-06, Financial transactions between Louis Déry and the Jesuit property commission (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3151374>) (D1360)
- 1834-08-08, Account of the Jesuit Property Commission with Louis Déry, miller of the mill of Ancienne-Lorette.
- 1836-10-11, Lease of the banal mill of the seigneurie of St-Gabriel in L'Ancienne-Lorette, granted for 7 years by J. Stewart, on behalf of the Jesuit Property Commission, to David Crosbie Towner, miller, residing in Quebec for 69 pounds a year. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151323>)
- 1836-11-29, (Acknowledgment of debt) Commitment, before Louis Panet, notary, by Louis Déry, miller of the mill of Ancienne-Lorette, to John Stewart, commissioner of the Jesuit Property, for the sum of one hundred livres current, for rent of the said mill, in accordance with his lease and on mortgage of his property. Seigneurie of St-Gabriel. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3151324>)
- 1837-04-01, Request of David C. Towner, tenant of the banal mill of Ancienne-Lorette, seigneurie of St-Gabriel, for urgent repairs to the mill. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151389>)
- 1838-11-20, Report of Louis Marchand, miller of Batiscan, on the state of various mills in the district of Quebec. The mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette is in the worst shape (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149443>)

- 1839-08-10, Agreement between John Stewart, commissioner for the administration of Jesuit property, and David Crosbie Towner, miller, by which the latter obtains a reduction in the rent of the mill of Ancienne-Lorette, seigneurie of St-Gabriel. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151326>) (D1317)
- 1842-12-28, Invoice for a millstone: 21 livres (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149019> )
- 1843-06-20, Estimate of repairs to be made (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3151386>)  
The authorities, agents of the Jesuit property, were led to launch a major project to restore the mill which started in the spring of 1844 and was completed in December.
- 1844, Major renovation project. Robitailles work there
  - Payroll (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149844>) In  
the payrolls of the mill (construction work), several entries from July to November for work of Johny Rubitoy, John Rubitoy (and horse) or (for drawing 2 loads from town) Johey Rubitoy, Jow Rubitow, Johny Rubitoy teamster 13 loads Jow Rubitoy is a labourer in September, a joiner in November. There is a Jame(?) Rubitoy, carpenter in October
  - In September 1844, Jean Robitaille signed as a witness during payments to Gabriel Belleau, Jacques Drolet, Jow (Joseph) Plante and others.
  - The final statement of expenses as of December 31, 1844, is approximately 595 pounds. We learn that it is Towner who coordinates the work, and that Charles Robitaille has provided a *latch* for 1 shilling and 5 pence. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3149847>)
- 1844, Lease project by Towner for 7 years (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3152377>)
- 1845, We see in the newspapers of the time (spring 1845) an advertisement that offers a lease of the newly renovated mill.
- 1845-06-21, The Governor refuses to hand over to Louis Déry, former miller of the banal mill of Ancienne-Lorette, seigneurie of St-Gabriel, the debt of one hundred pounds which he has been charged since he abandoned the lease of the said mill. (Following a request of July 24, 1844?) (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151381>) (D1367)
- 1845-03, Towner (March 4), Becker (March 3), Bouthillet, Fluet (March 3) make an offer for the lease of the mill for 7 years.
- 1845, Towner obtains the lease
- 1849-03-17, Letter from Bouthillier to Panet which confirms that Towner had the lease in 1845 but that it is necessary to withdraw it. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151412>) (D1393)
- 1849-04-30, Farm lease of the banal mill of Ancienne-Lorette, seigneurie of St-Gabriel, granted for three years by James Hervey Price, commissioner of Crown Lands to Jean Robitaille, residing in L'Ancienne-Lorette. (In front of notaries Philippe Huot and Louis Panet) Annexed: list of six acts relating to the said mill. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3151328>) (D1319)
- 1850-01-10, Death of Louis Déry III
- 1852-05-19, Received 6 deeds about the property of the mill (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3151376>) (D1362)
- 1852-05-21, Receipt issued for the supply of 6 deeds on the mill property (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/archives/52327/3151309>) (D1301)
- 1852-04-27, *La Minerve* - auction announcement for a 21-year lease of the mill of L'Ancienne-Lorette
- 1852-04-29, Book containing details relating to the award of the 21-year lease of the mill of Ancienne-Lorette, seigneurie of St-Gabriel, taken by F-X Labrie for 40 livres (Joseph Debigaré made an offer for 39 livres). (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151409>)
- 1852-07-15, Auction for the sale of the mill. Déry wins but withdraws. Jean Hamel gets the mill for 1000 pounds. (<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151410> )
- 1852-09-20: Contract with the notary Louis Panet for the sale of the village mill to Jean Hamel
- 1860-01-18: Victor Robitaille buys the mill of the village...  
<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3770537?docref=MfKif1L9qlNJ3RGvBmEe0g>

## Appendix C – Bouthiller Letter

(Free translation of a 2-page letter found at <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca:443/patrimoine/details/52327/3151412> )

Honorable L<sup>s</sup> Panet, Québec City

Crown Lands Office  
Montréal, March 17, 1849

Sir

I received your two letters dated 13 of this month. As Towner will owe nearly £100 in arrears on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and he has not been able to sign his lease or provide a deposit, there is no need to hesitate to take over the mill. Before authorizing you to continue the lease in favour of the Robitaille brothers, I would like to know what the conditions are, and whether it would not be more advantageous to offer it to the competition, by a request for tenders. My intention is not so much to have a high rent as to relieve the Crown of the considerable expenses it is obliged to make from time to time, for the mills. Perhaps it would also be better to rent for 21 years. If the mill is in good order, one must easily find people who will give a good price, and will take care of all the big and small repairs, and put the mill back at the end of the lease in the same condition as received as Falardeau is obliged.<sup>26</sup> If you believe that neither of these methods should be followed, prepare your draft lease to the Robitailles and please send it for the Commissioner's approval and signature. The original and a copy registered for the preservation of mortgages, must be at the expense of the tenant. This copy will remain in your hands. Does Towner have any properties? What are you going to do with him? It is also necessary, as a precautionary measure, that you make him acknowledge in writing that he abandons the mill, before renting it to another one. I will take this opportunity to point out to you that it is necessary to follow the injunctions of the Order in Council of February 21, 1848, which rules that in the future you must not allow arrears to accumulate, as well as the Department expects that being on the premises, you will inform it from time to time of the state of the various special properties (?) owned by the Crown both in Québec City and in the seigneuries, such as mills, farms, cellars etc. accompanying this report with such suggestions that you will believe necessary to make the administration of this Property less expensive, and to bring in the revenues more regularly.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant

G. Bouthiller<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Jos. Falardeau was the miller at the mill of Jeune-Lorette (St-Ambroise).

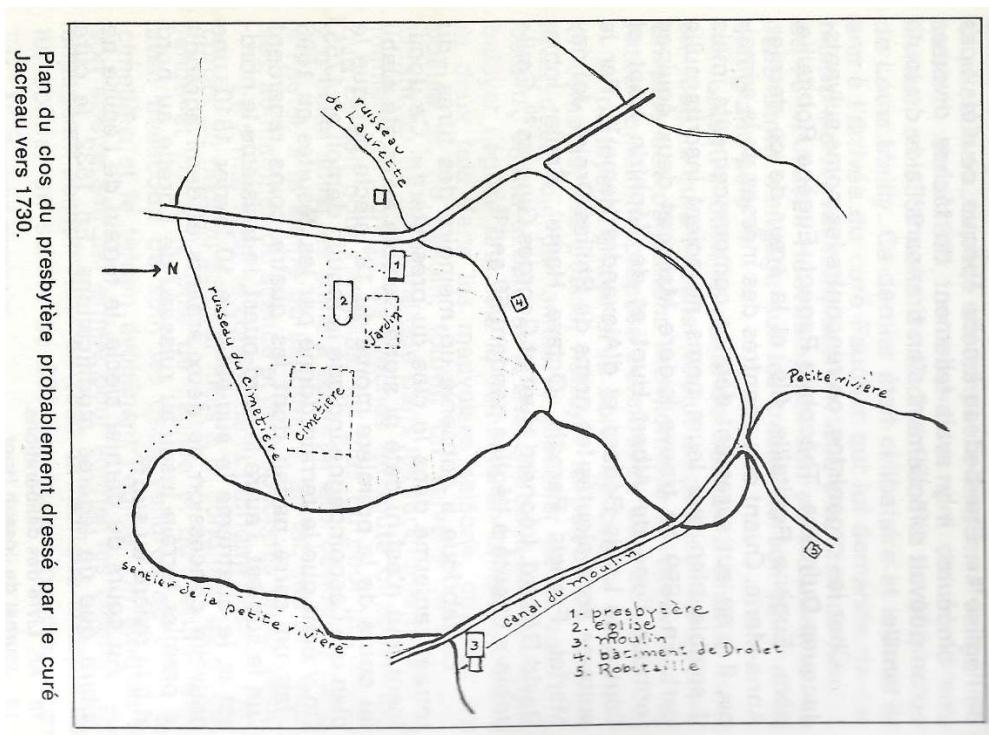
<sup>27</sup> G. Bouthiller was then Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands.

## Appendix D – Family file of Jean Robitaille and Adélaïde Debigaré

**Fiche de groupe familial**

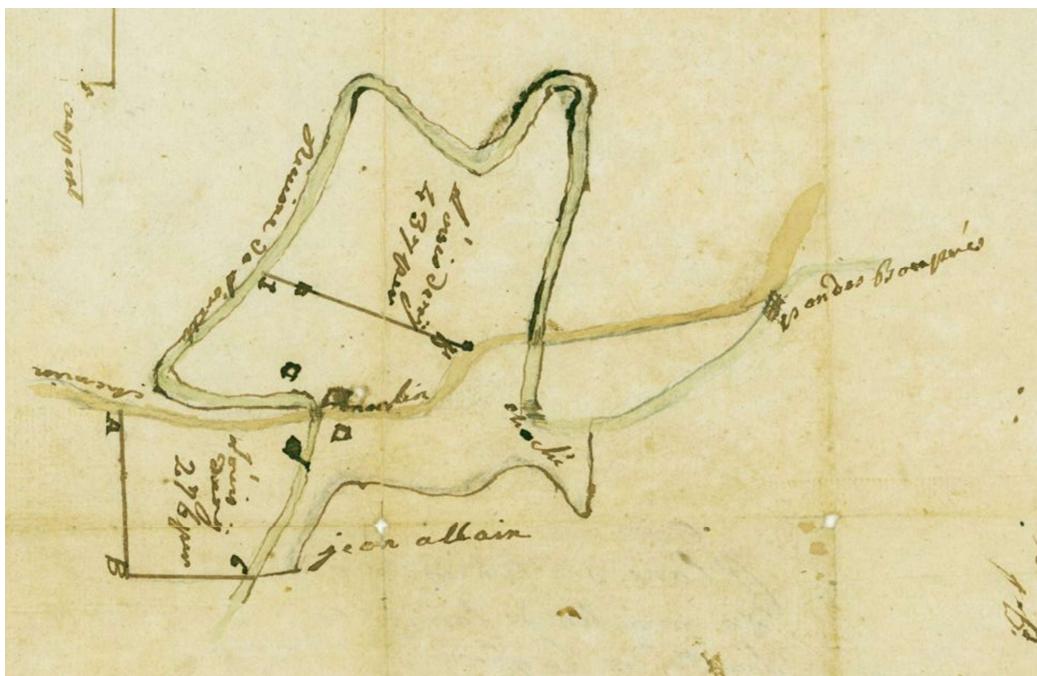
Parents du mari		Parents de la femme	
 <b>Joseph Robitaille</b> 1768 - 1856	 <b>Josephine Drolet</b> 1772 - 1858	 <b>J Debigaré Bidégaré</b> 1760 - 1837	 <b>Marie-Angélique MacLure</b> 1765 - 1846
<b>Mari</b>			
 <b>Jean Robitaille</b> <b>NAISSANCE :</b> 3 Mai 1805 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada <b>DÉCÈS :</b> 12 Août 1891 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada			
 <b>Adélaïde Debigaré</b> <b>NAISSANCE :</b> 10 Jan 1809 à Québec, Québec, Canada <b>DÉCÈS :</b> 14 Sept 1857 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada			
<b>Événements d'alliance</b>			
<b>Mariage</b> 26 Août 1828 à Québec (N-D-de-Québec), QC, Canada			
<b>Enfants</b>			
 <b>Jean Robitaille</b> Fils	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 21 Nov 1828 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 30 Avr 1907 à Québec, QC, Canada	2 Indices
 <b>Joseph Robitaille</b> Fils	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 13 Fév 1831 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 9 Fév 1909 à Québec (N-D-de-Jacques-Cartier), QC, Canada	5 Indices
 <b>Victor Robitaille</b> Fils	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 16 Août 1832 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 18 Août 1895 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	
 <b>Adélaïde Robitaille</b> Fille	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 14 Oct 1833 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 21 Juin 1897 à Montréal (Notre-Dame), QC, Canada	4 Indices
 <b>Caroline Robitaille</b> Fille	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 6 Août 1835 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 15 Jul 1870 à Québec (St-Sauveur), QC, Canada	1 Indice
 <b>Jacques Robitaille</b> Fils	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 5 Jan 1837 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 10 Mars 1921 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	7 Indices
 <b>Julie Émilie Robitaille</b> Fille	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 25 Déc 1838 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 1 Nov 1845 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	3 Indices
 <b>Marie Céline Robitaille</b> Fille	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 4 Mai 1840 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 14 Sept 1919 à Québec (Hôpital général), QC, Canada	5 Indices
 <b>Angélique Robitaille</b> Fille	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 17 Mars 1842 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 24 Nov 1907 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	6 Indices
 <b>Charles Robitaille</b> Fils	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 12 Juin 1843 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 12 Avr 1921 à Québec (St-François-d'Assise), QC, Canada	
 <b>Cyrille Robitaille</b> Fils	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 12 Juin 1843 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 2 Jul 1924 à Québec (N-D-de-Jacques-Cartier), QC, Canada	4 Indices
 <b>Rose de Lima Robitaille</b> Fille	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 9 Jul 1845 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 17 Jan 1925 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	2 Indices
 <b>Siméon Robitaille</b> Fils	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 25 Mars 1847 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 12 Août 1847 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	
 <b>Cyprien Robitaille</b> Fils	<b>NAISSANCE</b> Oct 1848 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 8 Jan 1912 à Québec (St-Roch), QC, Canada	
 <b>Élisabeth Robitaille</b> Fille	<b>NAISSANCE</b> 18 Mai 1851 à L'Ancienne-Lorette, QC, Canada	<b>DÉCÈS</b> 5 Sept 1913 à Québec (St-Sauveur), QC, Canada	10 Indices

## Appendix E – Comparative Views



1730

The mill is south of the road. The water channel is shown.



1799

The mill is north of the road. The causeway is noted (chochée).

Note the words *moulin* (mill) and *chochée* (causeway)

1967

The location  
of the mill  
and the water  
canal are  
highlighted.

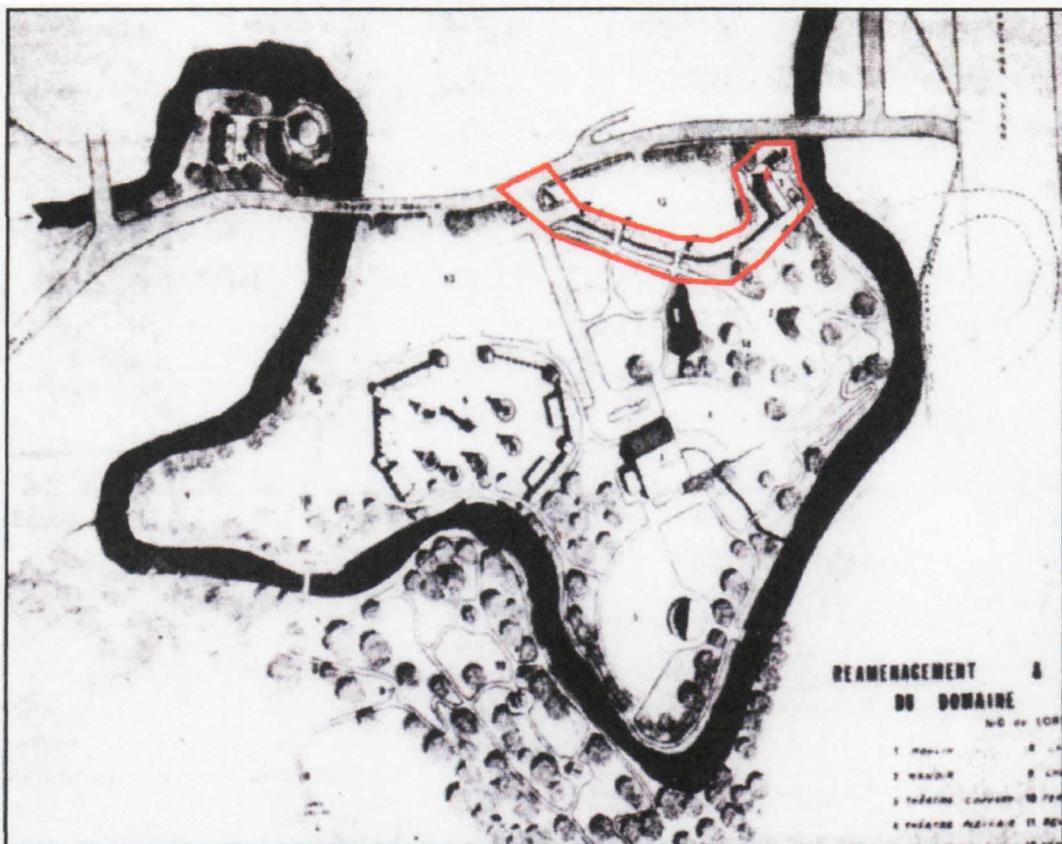
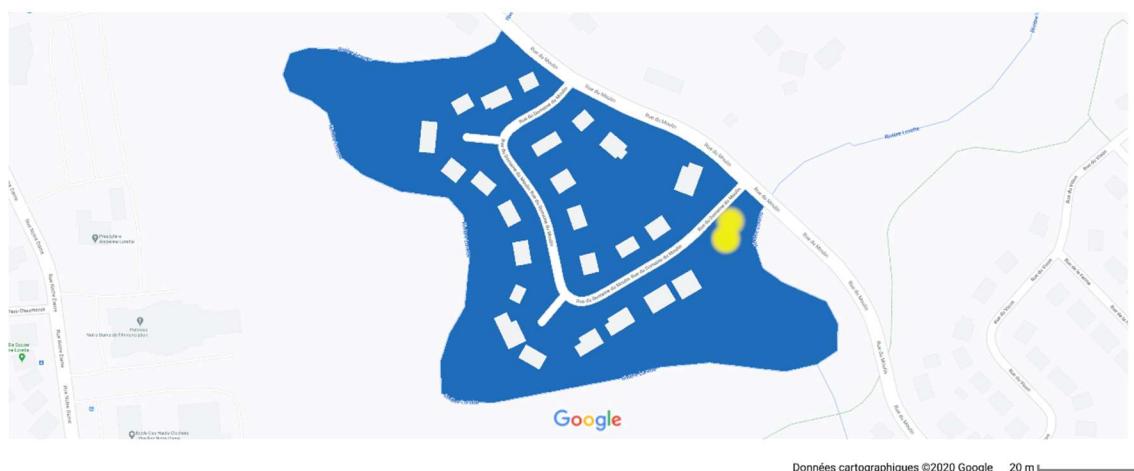


Figure 23 Projet n° 154-99-0682, plan du projet d'aménagement du Domaine du moulin (Allard 1979 : 356) (Le trait rouge indique les limites des installations du moulin, incluant le canal d'amenée. L'étoile rouge désigne l'endroit approximatif où les fondations du moulin ont été identifiées)

Google Maps Le domaine du moulin en 2020



## Appendix F – Curiosity

A careful examination of Pinsonneault's postcard #6 shows two young children in the middle of the road, on the bridge in front of the mill.



Reference websites on Pinsonneault's career suggest that the photos at L'Ancienne-Lorette were taken in 1905. According to the leaves in the trees in the photos, the pictures were taken in the spring of 1905.

Who are these children? Let's see which children could age match the profile of these two toddlers.

Victor Robitaille, the Robitaille who bought the mill in 1860 has been dead for about ten years at the time of the photo. His two sons Joseph and Eugène took over the business and lived at the Mill Estate.

Joseph had no children alive in 1905.

Eugene, on the other hand, married in 1898 and his family already counted six children by the spring of 1905.

1. Anne-Marie (February 18, 1899)
2. Juliette (April 23, 1900)
3. Eugène junior (August 18, 1901)
4. Alice (December 19, 1902)
5. Jules (January 18, 1904)
6. Victor (April 21, 1905)

The photo shows us a girl and a little boy with a cap who seem about the same age although the boy looks a little smaller.

In the family, **Juliette** and **Eugène junior** could match the profile of these two children. Juliette would be just 5 years old and Eugène would be almost 4 years old.

This enlargement of the photo also makes it possible to discern a profile on the left through the structure of the bridge. We can distinguish a face wearing a hat with a pipe in the mouth. Could

it be Father Eugène, 41, coming up to see what a photographer is doing with his big tripod in front of his mill?

## Appendix G – In the 1851 Census

In the 1851 Canadian census, the enumerator was asked to describe the mills and factories of the territory he was to cover.

We thus find a period commentary that sheds light on the situation.

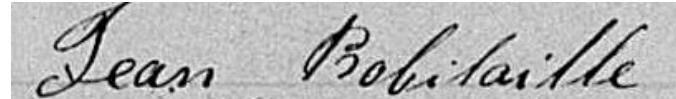
RENSEIGNEMENTS RELATIFS AUX MOULINS, MANUFACTURES, ETC., MISE DE CAPITAL, FORCE MOTRICE, PRODUCTION, ETC.		NOMBRE DES PERSONNES QUI Y SONT GÉNÉRALEMENT EMPLOYÉES.
39.	40.	
<p>Description relative au moulin de L'anc. Lorette qui appartient au Gouvernement, qui prend son eau de la Rivière Lorette qui décharge dans la Rivière St-Charles. Le dit Moulin est bâti en pierre, il a deux étages, possède deux Moulanges, une pour Blé et une autre pour Savoie, aussi un Moulin à Carder appartenant au Locataire. Mais le tout n'est pas fonctionner que dans les grandes eaux car la force commune est qu'un Moulinage à la fois, et le dit Moulin est dans un lieu éloigné où il faut faire le transport qui a l'intérieur, et depuis quelques années les habitants de la dite paroisse sont quelques fois obligés d'aller dans un autre Moulin à Carder. Deux personnes sont employées dans le dit moulin.</p> <p>Deuxième Moulin.</p> <p>Un autre moulin à Carder est à Jourles à une distance d'environ vingt arpents. Un homme seulement est employé dans le dit Moulin.</p> <p>Le Capital employé pour la construction du dit Moulin est de £ 350.</p> <p>Avec peine les revenus paye les intérêts du Capital.</p>	2	<p>Description relating to the mill of L'Anc. Lorette which belongs to the Government, which takes its water from the Lorette River which discharges into the St-Charles River: the said Mill is built of stone and has two floors, has two Grindstones, one for Wheat and another for Oats, also a Carding Mill belonging to the Tenant but the whole can only work in large waters because the common strength is only one Grindstone at a time and said Mill is in a very bad order both outside and inside and for some years the inhabitants of the said parish are sometimes forced to go to the mill nearby. Two people are employed in the said mill.</p> <p>Second mill</p> <p>Another carding and fulling mill at a distance of about twenty arpents. Only one man is employed in the said Mill. The Capital employed for the construction of the said mill is £350. With difficulty the income pays the interest of the capital.</p>

## Appendix H – Family Anecdotes

Was Jean the only one in his family who knew how to sign?

Let's go back for a moment to Father Jean, a militia captain and father of a miller family.

This Jean, born at the dawn of the nineteenth century stands out in documents for his ability to sign, a rare fact in the area at that time.



Jean was the fifth child of Joseph Robitaille and Josephte Drolet. We took all the baptismal, marriage and burial records of the family and found that Jean was not the only one in his family who knew how to sign.

Jean's older brother, Pierre Robitaille was a baker (so, interested in the business of flour...) and he married Jeanne Dery, *minor daughter of Louis Dery, miller*, in 1822. At his marriage as at the baptism of their first son Pierre in May 1822, Pierre indicated that he did not know how to sign. (By the way, Louis Dery, miller, is also the godfather of this son Pierre.) However, in July 1825, at the baptism of his third child, Pierre signed the register. He would have learned to sign late between 1824 and 1825!

In 1832, Pierre remarried with Émilie Diganard and proudly signed the marriage register.

Did Jean's siblings know how to sign?

	At his or her wedding	Baptism of the first child	Place of death
Joseph (1790-1853) <i>Farmer</i>	1824-No	1825-No; 1836- No	Loretteville
Marie Josephe (1792-1885)	1812-No		Trois-Rivières
Pierre (1800-1845) <i>Baker and Innkeeper</i>	1822-No 1832-Yes	1823-No; 1825-Yes	Baltimore, MD
Thérèse (1803-1882)	1827-No		L'Ancienne-Lorette
JEAN (1805-1891)	1828-Yes		L'Ancienne-Lorette
Jacques (1807-1887) <i>Farmer</i>	1830-No (but Jean signs)	1831-No; 1850-No	Warwick
Simeon (1809-1891) <i>Farmer</i>	1831-No	1834-No; 1853-No	L'Ancienne-Lorette
Louis (1812-1886) <i>Baker</i>	1834-No (but Jean signs) 1877-No	1835-No; 1857-No	St-Louis-de-Blandford
Marie (1814-1842)	1837-No (but Jean and Pierre sign)		L'Ancienne-Lorette
Louise (1819-1890)	1836-Yes (... and Jean signs) 1886-Yes		L'Ancienne-Lorette

This table shows that Jean remains an exception among his siblings, he knows how to sign and serves as a witness at the weddings of his brothers and sisters. His brother Pierre having learned

to write late. Note that two of Jean's brothers were bakers, it's very convenient when you have a miller in the family.

The older son (Pierre) left to settle in Baltimore. Louis went less far by moving to St-Louis-de-Blandford.

### [Did Jean's children know how to sign?](#)

Jean, whom we know a little better now, passed on to his sons this importance of education. Almost all his sons knew how to sign at their respective marriages. Sign of the times, this is not the case for his daughters because only the youngest, Élisabeth (1851-1913) knew how to sign at her marriage in 1869.

### [Debigaré, where does this name come from?](#)

While everyone in L'Ancienne-Lorette is named Hamel, Déry, Moisan or Gauvin, Jean married a girl "from Québec City" with a very different name, which undoubtedly aroused curiosity in the rural parish of L'Ancienne-Lorette.

Adélaïde Debigaré was the daughter of Joseph Debigaré and Marie-Angélique Maclure. The Debigaré, also often called Bidégaré or Bidegaray, are of Basque descent. Adélaïde's grandfather was named Pierre Bidegaré. He was a navigator, born in France in Hasparren, a few kilometers from Bayonne and Biarritz. He disappeared in November 1770 in a shipwreck near Neuville.

The Maclure are of Scottish origin but settled in New England. Jean (John) Maclure, Angélique's grandfather, was taken prisoner with wife and children by French militias in Saratoga, NY on November 17, 1745, and brought back to Québec City where he settled. When the authorities of the two colonies agreed to release and exchange their prisoners, John Maclure chose to remain in Québec.

Adélaïde Debigaré had a lot to talk about her family history. This is perhaps what seduced Jean Robitaille who married her in 1828. He was then 23 years old; she was 19.