

## DAUGHTERS OF THE KING



## CHAPTER 2

### The King's Daughters



Before 1660, the first girls who came to Canada looking for a husband were known as "*filles des marier*," or marriageable daughters. They were few in number and often made their own way, paying for the passage by a contract of indenture. After 1663 the French royal authorities became concerned with the peopling of the colony. The King himself directed the recruitment of young women of good quality for this purpose. Hence the appellation, "*Les filles du roi*" or "*Daughters of the King*," called by many, "*The King's Girls*." (1)

In the early days the recruitment concentrated on "*demoiselles*;" girls with a good background and even a little education, suited for military officers and men of property. Also, the initial recruitment were mostly city girls from Paris and surrounding suburbs. This did not work out too well. The King's man in the colony, Intendant Jean Talon, was obviously responding to the demands of the habitants, when he asked Minister Colbert to send out "*strong, intelligent and beautiful girls of robust health, habituated to farm work*." Indeed, the bachelors wanted strong partners who could do their share of the work. A not uncommon sight in those days before draft animals had been bred in sufficient numbers, was that of the wife pulling the plow and her husband pushing with one hand, while holding a musket at the ready in the other. It is no coincidence then that most of the girls came from the farm country of Normandy and the Ile-de-France. (2)

Having been selected by recommendation from her parish priest, the girl was promised a dowry by the King. It came to 50 livres if she married a soldier or habitant, or 100 livres if she married an officer. But what did the girl receive before leaving

France? The one thing all the girls had in common was poverty, hence a real need to be outfitted. The author is indebted to Raymond Douville and to J.D. Casanova, who wrote in 1964, noting these details: (3)

*"To this statutory grant (the dowry cited above) other essential expenses were added. The first disbursement was set at 100 livres: 10 for personal and moving expenses, 30 for clothing, and 60 for the passage. In addition to the aforesaid clothing, the following: a small hope chest, 1 head dress, 1 taffeta handkerchief, 1 pair of shoe ribbons, 100 sewing needles, 1 comb, 1 spool of white thread, 1 pair of stockings, 1 pair of gloves, 1 pair of scissors, 2 knives, 1,000 pins, 1 bonnet, 4 lace braids, and 2 livres in silver money. On arrival the Sovereign Council of New France provided the girls with some clothing suitable to the climate and some provisions drawn from the Kings warehouse."*

The men eagerly awaited the arrival of the girls and the selection process was a hurry up affair. Nevertheless, the girl could pick and chose, often to the point of exercising her prerogative a few times over. When the match had been made, the newly married couple was given 50 livres to buy provisions, plus an ox, a cow, 2 pigs, a pair of chickens, 2 barrels of salt meat, and 11 crowns in money. This was supposed to give the newlyweds a start. (4)

Thus provided for, some 852 of these King's Daughters arrived in New France during the ten year period from 1663 to 1673. These ladies comprised about 17% of the total population of New France, estimated at less than 5000 souls during this same time. The bracing climate of Canada was said to be particularly advantageous to women. Dollier de Casson wrote from Montréal: (5)

*"Though the cold is very wholesome to both sexes, it is incomparably more so to the female, who is almost immortal here."*

Even though many Frenchmen married Indian girls, the squaws did not have many children; but not so the King's Daughters! Intendant Talon reported that in 1670 most of the girls who had arrived in 1669 were already pregnant and that in 1671 nearly 700 children were born by them. Without exaggeration, it can be said that these women created a nation, from which millions of us have peopled both Canada and the United States.

Joy Reisinger gives the province of origin of 770 of the daughters as follows: (6)

Ile-de-France	277	Maine	6
Normandie	120	Touraine	5
Unknown	67	Lyonnais	3
Aunis	56	Guyenne	3
Picardie	38	Angoumois	2
Poitou	33	Artois	2
Champagne	31	Nivernais	2
Orléans	29	Geneva (Switz)	2
Burgundy	20	Franche-Comté	1
Beauce	15	Limousin	1
Saintonge	15	Perche	1
Brittany	11	Provence	1
Brie	7	Cambrai (Bel)	1
Anjou	6	Flanders (Bel)	1
Berry	6	Hamburg (Ger)	1
Lorraine	6	London (Eng)	1

Other French Canadian historians, ie, Gustave Lanct (7); Benjamin Sulte (8); Archange Godbout (9); and Gérard Marchelosse (10); disagree as to these numbers. Their estimates run all the way from 732 to 961.

An alphabetical listing of The King's Daughters provided herewith: (11)

Catherine  
DESFOSSES  
Françoise  
DES GRANGES  
Louise  
DESHAIES  
Marguerite  
DESHAIES  
Marie  
DESJARDINS  
Françoise  
DESMARETS  
Catherine  
DESMARETS  
Étiennette  
DESPERNAY  
Marie-Anne  
DESORTES  
Françoise  
DESPRES  
Madeleine  
DESPRES  
Marguerite  
De Ste-FOY  
Marguerite  
DESTOUCHES  
Agnes  
DESVEAUX  
Marie  
DEVALLOIS  
Catherine  
DEXARD  
Jeanne  
D'OCQUIN  
COURT  
Anne  
DODIER  
Jeanne  
DODIN  
Anne  
DOIGT  
Ambrosine  
D'OLLERY

Anne  
D'ORANGE  
Barbe  
DORIAN  
Simone  
DORIBEAU  
Catherine  
DOUCINET  
Isabelle  
DROUET  
Catherine  
DUBICOURT  
Jeanne  
DUBIE  
Françoise  
DUCORPS  
Jeanne  
DUBOIS  
Marie  
DUCHARME  
Catherine  
DUCHEMIN  
Marie-Anne  
DUCHESNE  
Barbe  
D U C O R P S dit  
LEDUC  
Jeanne  
DU COUDRAY  
Marie  
DU FAYE  
Françoise  
DU FIGUIER  
Hélène  
DUFRESNE  
Jeanne  
DUMONT  
Barbe  
DUMONT  
Julienne  
DUMORTIER  
Madeleine  
DUMOUSTIERS

Madeleine  
DUPRE  
Françoise  
DUPUY  
Catherine  
DURAND  
Catherine  
DURAND  
Élisabeth  
DURAND  
Françoise  
DURAND  
Suzanne  
DUROSAIRE  
Espérance  
DUSSON  
Marguerite  
DUVAL  
Françoise  
DUVAL  
Madeleine  
DUVAL  
Michelle

E

ELOY  
Antoinette  
ELOY  
Marguerite  
ENFRE  
Françoise

F

FABREQUE  
Madeline  
FAUCON  
Marie  
FAUCONNIER  
Jeanne  
FAURE  
Louise  
FAUVAULT  
Jeanne

FAYET  
Anne  
FERET  
Catherine  
FERRON  
Marguerite  
FIEVRE  
Catherine  
FIRMAN  
Marie-Anne  
FLAMAND  
Nicole  
FLECHET  
Anne  
FLEURE  
Marie-Anne  
FLEUREAU  
Marie  
FONTAINE  
Marguerite  
FOSSE  
Jeanne  
FOUBERT  
Anne  
FOUCQUES  
Marie  
FOURIER  
Catherine  
FOURIER  
Jeanne  
FOY  
Marguerite  
FRESSEL  
Isabel  
FRESSEL  
Jeanne  
FROST  
Louise

G

GAILLARD  
Marguerite  
GAILLART

Marguerite  
GALAIS  
Anne  
GALET  
Anne  
GALLIEN  
Thérèse  
GAMBIER  
Marguerite  
GARGOTTINE  
Louise  
GATEAU  
Catherine  
GAUTHIER  
Marie  
GAUTIER  
Jeanne  
GENEST  
J.-Léonarde  
GENTREAU  
Anne  
GEOFFROY  
Anne  
GEOFFROY  
Marie-Marthe  
GEREMIE  
Françoise  
GILLES  
Jeanne  
GIRARD  
Anne  
GIRARD  
Marguerite  
GIRARD  
Marie  
GIRAUD  
Anne  
GITON  
Marie  
GOARD  
Mathurine  
GOBERT  
Madeleine

GODEBY  
Anne  
GODEQUIN  
Jeanne  
GODILLON  
Élisabeth  
GOISET  
Anne  
GOMOND  
Madeleine  
GOSSARD  
Noëlle  
GRANDIN  
Jeanne  
GRANDIN  
Marie  
GRANDJEAN  
Adrienne  
GRANDJON  
Madeleine  
GRANGER  
Catherine  
GRATON  
Mathurine  
GRAVOIS  
Marie  
GRESLEAU  
Marie  
GRIMBAUT  
Anne  
GROISARD  
Jeanne  
GROSLot  
Madeleine  
GROSSEJAMBE  
Françoise  
GRUAUX  
Jeanne  
GUEDON  
Marie-Anne  
GUENEVILLE  
Jeanne  
GUERRIERE