

The life of Urbain is best summarized in an article by Robert Graveline in the DESCENDANTS, Vol. 1, No. 2, the official publication of the Urbain Baudreau Graveline Society.

URBAIN BAUDREAU GRAVELINE

"Urbain Baudreau dit (1) Graveline, son of Jean Baudreau and Marie Chauveau, was born and baptized in 1631 or 1633. Records available are not uniform on these dates.

In 1652, when Urbain was 21 (or 19), the colony in Montreal, which was then known as Ville-Marie, had few more than 100 persons and was on the verge of extinction due to incessant attacks by the Iroquois Indians who lived in the area. The Governor General of the colony, M. de Maissonneuve, decided that he must recruit more people for the colony or return with the original settlers to France. But M. de Maissonneuve was not a quitter. He journeyed to France to meet with M. Jerome le Royer de la Dauversiere, co-founder of Montreal, even though he never left France. Their meeting took place in the city of La Fleche, approximately 100 miles southeast of Paris. Urbain at the time was living in the suburban village of Clermont and was among the 153 young men recruited. On May 20, 1653 he signed a contract agreeing to serve the colony of Montreal for five years. He would serve in the defense of the colony against the Indians and would help clear the land. The annual salary was 75 pounds of which he received 48 pounds in advance.

The group boarded the ship St. Nicholas on April 30, 1653 at the port of St. Nazaire. After a few days at sea the ship began to take water and had to return to port. When they sailed again on July 20th, 42 of the 153 young recruits failed to appear, obviously fearing for their lives as a consequence of their first sailing. According to the records of Sister Marguerite Bourgeoys, a heroine of the colony, it was a very difficult crossing. The ship was small and met several storms at sea. Furthermore it had been previously infected by sick persons, and many of the passengers became very ill. In spite of the efforts of people like Sister Marguerite Bourgeoys and Urbain, who nursed the sick, eight more recruits died on the journey. On September 22, 1653, after a little more than two months at sea, the ship reached Quebec City. As the ship approached port it struck a submerged object -- perhaps a huge rock -- and began to sink. All the passengers and their cargo were rescued, but the ship partially submerged, had to be burned to clear passage for future ships.

Notwithstanding, there was great rejoicing in Quebec City for several days at the arrival of these new colonists. Church bells rang. Te Deums

were sung in the cathedral and a carnival atmosphere permeated the colony at the joy of receiving new members to help the colonists defend themselves against the unknown dangers in the new continent. Yet, immediately there was a controversy: which colony would they join -- Quebec City or Montreal? The Governor General of Quebec City wanted to keep 100 strong young men for his colony. After all, why send them off to Montreal only to have them killed by the Iroquois? At this point M. de Maisonneuve rallied to the defense of Montreal with the reminder that he had personally crossed the ocean twice for the purpose of bringing these recruits for the colony of Montreal. The decision finally had to be made by the authorities in Paris and at last on November 16, 1653, Montreal was favored so the new colonists, including Urbain, descended the river to Montreal.

In 1658, when his five years were finished, Urbain returned to France, but in 1659 he came back to Montreal to settle permanently. He was chosen to be a corporal in the Holy Family Militia for the defense of the colony in 1663. From 1663 to 1667 he was an elected Trustee and Procurator for the Colony of Montreal, a post similar to being Mayor of a city.

On October 20, 1664, at the age of 33, Urbain was married to Marguerite (Mathurine) Juillet, the 15 year old daughter of Blaise Juillet who had arrived in North America 20 years earlier, and who was killed by the Iroquois in 1660.

On Notre Dame Street near the present Bonsecours Chapel Urbain bought two lots in 1687. Here he built his in-town home. In 1689 he lived at the Hills of St. Francis on the east side of Montreal where he had added four acres to land he already owned. This was utilized for farming purposes.

In December of 1689 he purchased from M. de Hautmesnil land on the east side of St. Gabriel Street between Notre Dame Street and St. Therese Street, which he later sold to his future son-in-law, Pierre Ducharme, and which is occupied today by the building of the Quebec Provincial Archives directly opposite the Auberge St. Gabriel, which was laid out in 1672 and is the oldest Inn in North America.

Urbain died on January 28, 1695, a wealthy man for his time, and one who never received the recognition in Canada's history that he deserves for his self sacrifice on behalf of the early colony.

In 1696 Urbain's widow returned from the country to live in their town house and in 1708 she transferred the estate to their third son, Paul, with the understanding that he would care for her for the remainder of her life. By this time we presume that Gabriel, the oldest son, was engaged in commerce along the Mississippi River and that Jean-Baptiste, the second son, was living in what is now Mobile, Alabama, of which he was one of the founders."