

## Communications\*

To the Editor of the *Indiana Magazine of History*:

Donald Chaput's article on "The Family of Drouet de Richerville: Merchants, Soldiers, and Chiefs of Indiana" (June 1978, page 103-116) is very welcome in this aspect of the study of Indiana and American history.

But it convinces me there is need for greater understanding of the Church's involvement in the lifestyle of that period. Footnote 52 on page 112, for instance, is a case in point. According to the *Registre de la Paroisse de Sainte Anne du Detroit*, Vol 2, 1704-1780, p. 819, the four children of Joseph Drouet, Sieur de Richerville, were baptized on May 14, 1773; but Cyprian Tanguay, Volume I, 127, reports these included the twins girls Charlotte and Anne who were both born on March 14, 1773.

Reading on in the parish register there can be found another boy named John-Baptist baptized within months, claiming the same father and a different mother who recorded as Richerville's wife.

Why is this in the register? Since the "Indian" lands were inherited via women the birth of twin daughters to Richerville must have been an inspiration to legitimize them by the christening. An old French custom, well-known, was to baptize children on their birthdate lest they die in the wilderness without the saving waters. At a convenient time the ceremonies were supplied, and still can be today, as the practice continues, in the nearest parish church where the friends and relatives could witness the christening ceremonies and the record be written down. Thus, Father Gibault records the baptism in Sainte Anne's *Registre*, it being the only parish church around Ft. Wayne other than Vincennes.

Furthermore, it is plain Richerville is not married to these children's mother. The French plainly says the infants were born "avec une Miamise avec laquelle il habite depuis plusieurs années." Even today, to refer to a couple "living together" is telling. This "Miami woman," according to Bessie

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K. Roberts in *Richardville*, p. 2 (a booklet of the Fort Wayne Public Library, n.d.) is identified in Henry Hay's *Journal* as the sister of "Chief Pacanne" Roy, a grandson of Pierre and Marguerite Ouabankikoue Roy, also Detroiters. This sister, Tacumwa or Marie-Louise Roy, is Joseph Drouet's "Miami woman". She is *not* Little Turtle's older sister (as Chaput suggests on page 113). This can be understood when one realizes Richardville had taken as his paramour a girl with prominent Detroit relatives; hence she is passed off as "a Miami woman." Also, the "Indians" of the Miami Nation, as Bert Anson and others explain, referred to all their relatives as sisters and brothers, not having words for cousins and so on that would be our English meaning.

The Roy couple had another daughter also named Marie-Louise who married Alexis Trottier dit Beaubien de Ruisseux. She was born 1708 and died 1735; she is confused with Tacumwa sometimes, since the Widow Richardville (Tacumwa) is recorded to have also married an Alexis Beaubien. She spent a lot of time working for John-Baptist's interests, however. This is in both the Detroit and Vincennes registers.

Finally, John-Baptist "born under an apple tree" near the village of Lalabiche, Fort Wayne, in 1761 was later known as The Wildcat (Pishewa). According to Vesper Wilkinson's compilation of the "Descendants of Francis Godfroy" in the Miami County Historical Museum, his son Bird-Eyed and three daughters were related to James Raridan Godefroy via Catherine's marriage to Francis LaFontaine.

So much for this clarification.

*Anthony J. Prosen*

To the Editor of the *Indiana Magazine of History*:

Dr. Prosen's major point, that I failed to understand why the baptismal entries were in the Detroit registers, remains a mystery to me. As an historian I cannot often use such phrases as "must have been." I have not the slightest proof, nor theory, as to why Father Gibault entered the facts in the Detroit registers. Dr. Prosen's suggestion may be correct. However, distance, and travel plans would also have to be considered. What if Father Gibault was leaving soon for Kaskaskia; would he still enter the births there, or would he prefer to enter them at the closest parish, Detroit?

Two other points raised by Dr. Prosen have been covered in the article. I do not state that Richerville was married to anyone. On p. 112 I wrote of "Joseph's relationship with

Tecumwah." He also mentions that Jean-Baptiste was known as "the Wildcat (Pishewa)." I did mention this, in the top paragraph on p. 114.

I admit that Tecumwah's background is not as definite as I suggested. She does appear to be related to Little Turtle, but the degree of relationship is questionable. For example, Bert Anson (p. 178) leaves the question open; the *John Tipton Papers*, XXIV, 323n., states that she was a sister of Little Turtle. When the Richerville papers first came to public notice, in *Magazine of American History*, XXIV (July, 1890), 45-51, the author examined them, printed excerpts and documents in full, and concluded that Tecumwah was the daughter of Chief Aque-nosh-qua and that she was a sister of Little Turtle.

It is not clear to me what point Dr. Prosen is raising in his last paragraph. The inter-relationships of the Richerville family with the Godfroys and Lafontaines is well-established, and well-known.

It is obvious that Dr. Prosen is familiar with many of the individuals mentioned in my article, and I appreciate having his comments. His point about the pride, and mystery, about twins is especially interesting, and perhaps I can gather more cases to see how this principle worked on the frontier.

*Donald Chaput*

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## Book Reviewers

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