Chapter 3

VIOLINS HEARD IN CANADA

Elizabeth Couillard/Jean Guyon

Quebec was under English occupation when **Elizabeth** **Couillard** was born on 9 Feb 1631. Her parents, Guillaume Couillard and Guillemette Hebert, and her grandmother Marie, the widow of Louis Hebert, were the only family to remain when the English Kirke brothers captured the city and its 65 residents[[1]](#endnote-1)1 in 1629. Their home, the original Hebert house on a cliff, was still the only private dwelling in Quebec until a year after Elizabeth's birth.

Elizabeth was raised in a cosmopolitan household. There were 10 Couillard children; two Indian girls, Charite and Esperance; a Negro boy, Olivier Le Jeune, who was given to her parents as a gift; and several other servants.

She was 14 years old when she married **Jean Guyon du Buisson** on 27 Nov 1645. They were married in the small Recollet chapel built in 1615 next to the Habitation. Two violins were played at the wedding; they were the first violins heard in Canada. Father Barthelemi Vimont, the superior of the Jesuits in New France, was present at the nuptials.

Elizabeth was 73 years old when she died on 5 April 1705. She was buried two days later at Chateau Richer, where her husband had been given a grant of land in 1650. They apparently moved to Chateau Richer between 1662, when daughter Marie was born in Quebec, and 1665, when daughter Genevieve was born at Chateau Richer.

**ELIZABETH COUILLARD4**; (GUILLAUME and **GUILLEMETTE HEBERT3**) b. 9 Feb 1631 in Quebec, under English occupation; m. Jean Guyon du Buisson 27 Nov 1645 in Quebec; buried 5 Apr 1704, Quebec.

**JEAN GUYON du BUISSON**; (JEAN and MATHURIN ROBIN, m. 2 June 1615 at St. Jean, a village of the district of Montagne, diocese of Chartres ou Sees, Perche, Orne[[2]](#endnote-2)2); b. 1 Aug 1619 in Montagne, Perche, France; d. 13 buried 14 Aug 1694 at Chateau Richer, Quebec; royal surveyor.

Children of this marriage were:

1. Marie-Madeleine Guyon; b. 23 Aug 1647 in Quebec; m. 1661 Adrien Hayot.

2. **JOSEPH GUYON du BUISSON5**; b. 10 Sept 1649 in Quebec; m. 1674 Genevieve Cloutier.

3. Francois-Xavier Guyon; b. 15 Oct 1651, Quebec; m. 1683 Marie Clestus (Clotus).

4. Guillaume Guyon; b. 17 Nov 1652 in Quebec; m. 1688 Jeanne Toupin.

5. Nicolas Guyon; b. 13 Feb 1655 Quebec; d. 6 Feb 1685 Chateau Richer.

6. Jean-Francois Guyon; b. 1 Jun 1658 Quebec; d. 10 Mar 1676 Chateau Richer.

7. Catherine Gertrude Guyon; b. 10 Aug 1660 in Quebec; m. 1682 Denis Belleperche.

8. Marie Guyon; b. 4 Sept 1662 Quebec; d. 18 Mar 1688 Chateau Richer; burial vault 19 Mar 1688.

9. Genevieve Guyon; b. 20 May 1665, Chateau Richer, m. 1690 Nicolas Doyon.

10. Charles Guyon; b. 27 Sept 1667 at Chateau Richer, a twin; burial vault 10 Mar 1676.

11. Elizabeth Guyon; b. 27 Sept 1667 Chateau Richer, a twin.

12. Pierre Guyon; b. 19 Jul 1670 Chateau Richer; m. 1694 Angelique Testu (Tetu dit Dutilly) in L'Ange Gardien; burial vault 2 Oct 1697.

13. Anne Guyon; b. 15 May 1674 Chateau Richer.

Settlement at Quebec did not begin in earnest until after the English left in 1632. In 1634, a second wave of French immigration began when Robert Giffard, an apothecary and surgeon from Perche, secured a seigneury near Quebec and left for New France with his family and a number of recruits to settle in the New World.

On the ship commanded by a Capt. De Ville was 15-year-old Jean Guyon. Jean was traveling with his father, Jean Guyon; his mother, Mathurine Robin; and several brothers and sisters: Simon, Claude, Denis, Barbe, Marie, Marie (the second) and Michel. (Some historians claim the elder Guyon came to Canada alone or with his eldest sons, then sent for his wife and family about a year later; some claim there were seven children, not eight.)

The elder Jean Guyon, the son of Jacques Guyon {died before 29 Sept 1623, married before 15 Apr 1583} and Marie Huet {buried 26 Feb 1626 at St.-Jean de Mortagne, France}, was a master mason who was born 18 Sept 1592 at St.-Aubin de Tourouvre, district of Mortagne, diocese of Chartres ou Sees, Perche, France. His wife, Mathurine Robin, was probably the daughter of Eustache Robin and Madeleine Aymard of Mortagne.[[3]](#endnote-3)3

Facsimile of the signature of Jean Guion du Buisson, taken from *Your Canadian Ancestors*, found in the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

(A Jean Guyon, described as "a gentleman of high degree," was part of Jacques Cartier's second trip to the New World in the mid-1530s but his relationship to Jean Guyon du Buisson's family hasn't been determined.[[4]](#endnote-4)4)

The ship on which the Guyons traveled left Dieppe, France, the end of May and arrived in Canada the summer of 1634. Some historians place the date as 8 Aug 1634; others claim the ship landed 4 Jun 1634.

**This engraving depicts early Quebec. It was found on a Web page devoted to the heritage of Jean Guyon.**

Also on the ship were Zacharie Cloutier, a master carpenter, with his wife and five children; and Marin Boucher, with his wife and three children.[[5]](#endnote-5)5

The Guyons settled at Beauport. When the elder Guyon received a land grant from Giffard near the Riviere du Buisson, he became a titled lord and assumed the surname.[[6]](#endnote-6)6 Although by trade he was a mason, the elder Guyon also acted as a notary and drew up the first contract of marriage in Canada, for Robert Drouin and Anne Cloutier, daughter of Zacharie Cloutier. The contract is the oldest preserved in Canada.

The elder Jean Guyon was a fervent Catholic and his name is attached to many works of charity. He participated in many religious works and demonstrations. In the Jesuit Journal, priests wrote this about the order of procession of the Fete-Dieu, which is Corpus-Christi Day: "It was suggested by our Father Liegeois that we should preserve the honor of craftsmen and show our high regard with a parade. In this procession, the two founding fathers of the colony, Zacharie Cloutier and Jean Guion, marched first in line. Two bell-ringers marched in front, and then the banner. He who carried it had headgear made with flowers in it. The cross followed, carried by a young man of 20 years dressed in alb {priest's vestment} and trim; on each side were two children in altar robes. Then came placards, six in all, one for each group of tradesmen: carpenters, masons, seamen, toolmakers, bakers and brewers. On the sign of Jean Guyon, the mason's sign, there were a hammer, compass and ruler. And from that time on in Canada, these placards were the emblems of each of the different trades."

On 18 Oct 1653, the elder Guyon donated his house and garden to the church of St. Jean de Mortagne in Perche with the condition that he and his wife would be listed as contributors or benefactors. In January 1651, he sent the Jesuits in Quebec a capon and a partridge as New Year's gifts.[[7]](#endnote-7)7

On 30 July 1646, the elder Guyon went on a visit to the Lord of Beauport and rendered homage to him, according to the old feudal customs. In an engraving that still survives, he is on his knees in front of his Lord du Beauport's house, giving him thanks.

The elder Jean Guyon died 30 May 1663 at Beauport and was buried 31 May 1663 in Quebec. His wife died 16 Apr 1662 at Beauport and was buried the next day.

The younger Jean Guyon inherited his father's fief Dubuisson. Trained perhaps by Jean Bourdon or Martin Boutet, both of whom were surveyors, he became the first surveyor to learn his trade in Quebec. He was already in practice on 12 April 1662, with the title of surveyor for the seigneury of Notre Dame-des-Anges. In 1667, he came to style himself "king's surveyor in this colony."[[8]](#endnote-8)8

On about 14 Nov 1646, Jean Guyon and Joachim, a Christian Indian, while passing the long point as they canoed in the St. Lawrence River, were surprised by a gust from the Northeast. The canoe came near upsetting. "They jumped into the water, but being covered with ice, and the savage clothed more lightly than the Frenchman, the savage died on reaching shore and the Frenchman had a narrow escape."[[9]](#endnote-9)9

**Jean Guyon kneels to show homage to Boulle for Beauport, his feudal superior, on 30 July 1646. The ceremony was meant to show respect for the French crown, which enabled Guyon to retain his fief of Buisson. The engraving is from Old Regime in Canada, by Francis Parkman, Vol. 3, Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1905.**

Jean Guyon the junior died 13 Jan 1694 at the age of 74. He was buried the next day at the Notre-Dame de la Visitation of Chateau Richer.

1. Edgar McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 3rd ed. (C. 1947, 1959: Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969) P. 35 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Rene Jette, Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles du Quebec, (1982: Les Presses de L'Universite de Montreal) P. 548 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Rene Jette, *Guyon, Jean*, Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles du Quebec, 1st, 1983 ed.: P. 548 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Thomas B. Costain, *The White and The Gold* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1954) P. 28 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Marcel Trudel, *New Colonists for the St. Lawrence, The Beginnings of New France* - 1524-1663, 1973 ed.: P. 184 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. George W. Brown, Dictionary of Canadian Biography (Toronto, Ontario, University of Toronto Press, 1966) Vol. 1, P. 359 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Ed: Reuben Gold Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Burrows Brothers Co., 1896) Vol. 27, P. 113 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid, P 360 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid [↑](#endnote-ref-9)