

78th Highlanders and Quebec *Habitant* Women, 1757-1763?

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Introduction:

The British, 78th Fraser Highlanders were raised and deployed to British North-America to fight in the French & Indian War of 1757-1763. Arriving in Halifax, Nova Scotia in September of 1757, the Regiment showed 1,100 men and 130 supernumeraries.¹ Composed of Highland Scottish men who spoke little or no English, they relied on their native Scottish-*Erse* to communicate. On 17 Oct 1757, the Regiment showed a muster of 1,135 all ranks, and 110 women, and 39 children,² the difference in other ranks was due to desertions and disease. The women were mostly enlisted-wives acquired in Scotland or Ireland, and a few “camp-followers”.

Camp-followers is a term that requires definition beyond the often misapplied generality of ‘prostitute’. Camp-followers were women who followed the army because of commitment to a soldier, possibly with children; being a part of a suttler-vendor’s or wagon-master’s operations serving the army,³ such as daughter or wife; or a woman attracted by the adventure and travel of active-campaign. The wives and camp-followers were necessary adjuncts to the military by providing necessary labor and services of cooking, washing, mending-uniforms, and occasionally nursing services. As a general rule, they were limited to the ratio of about 6 per company of 100 men. This more observed in the breach than compliance.

Additionally, female children “of the Regiment”, as they matured, undoubtedly helped their mothers with military work, some undoubtedly becoming paramours and wives of soldiers. Additionally, officers and well-to-do soldiers such as gentleman-volunteers may have had ‘female-servants’. It was not unusual that a wife carried on the rolls of a regiment, whose husband was killed in combat, might marry another soldier, often of that regiment.

British Regulations limited the number of women that could be attached to a Regiment “on the strength”, meaning that those allowed women were fed from army rations, and entitled to barrack-housing, but in field conditions, they were entitled to stay within the encampment. However, otherwise no provision was made for wives or lovers to accompany the men, and

¹ A ‘supernumerary’ was a man allowed to accompany and fight with the Regiment, his position being in-addition to the authorized Regimental strength. Having ready access to supernumeraries provided a ready-reserve of replacements along on campaign. Supernumeraries should be distinguished from ‘gentleman-volunteers’, who were gentlemen of some means who had volunteered to serve on campaign, and though ‘taking their mess’ with the officers, were unpaid, hoping to obtain appointment to an officer vacancy caused by death or illness. Ian Macpherson McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains: The Highland Regiments in the French & Indian War, 1756-1767*, Vols. I-II, (Fleischmanns, New York, Purple Mountain Press, 2006), I: 13-14, 54, 57 (hereinafter McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*).

² McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 55.

³ Military jurisdiction for punishment was extended to wives and camp-followers for punishment for violation of regulations in the field. A common offense was suttler or civilian women selling liquor to soldiers when prohibited. Punishments were rather draconian: being whipped publicly, and then driven from the Regiment, forfeiting any ration-allowance. The banishment of a woman from the Regiment placed her in special peril, as there was no system by which she could obtain sustenance and lodging.

official British policy was established by 1685, that no soldier might marry without his captain's express-permission.⁴ Despite the substantial benefits they provided to the army, British Army official-position was that women were a hindrance, their numbers limited and discouraged.

The Highlanders were uniformed in the traditional Highland costume of belted-plaid, bonnet, sporran, and their traditional weapons of Highland broadsword, dirk, pistol, and flintlock. Using Major Clephane's 78th Company as example, the average age of the enlisted-man was 18.4 years, and only two of them met the minimum requirement of height, 5 foot, 4 inches, required for enlistment in British line infantry regiments.⁵ The Fraser Highlanders, like other Highland regiments raised at the time, did not contain a majority of "brawny giant warriors", they were generally teenaged-laborers, cottars, or weavers, and they had no previous military or battle experience.⁶ They were raw-youth.

Highland enlisted were brave, proud, not sophisticated or worldly, staunchly Protestant, and they reveled in their wear of the traditional Highland costume. Conversely, upon formation of the 78th, a number of men in other regiments, promotable to sergeant, had to be transferred to the Fraser Highlanders because they spoke *both* Erse and English, and could translate and instruct on orders received in English.⁷

Some officers and senior NCOs were educated, spoke English, and some French, and had prior useful work-experience. The Lieutenant-Colonel of the Regiment was Simon Fraser, Former Master of Lovat, who was a practicing Scottish and English barrister. Gentleman-volunteer James Thompson had familial experience with building construction and engineering, which he would later put to good use as Overseer of the works in the construction of the Quebec Citadel. The Fraser Highlanders would be deployed and garrisoned mostly in Quebec between 1757 and 1763.

Scottish Highlanders were not completely unknown to Quebec before the French & Indian War. Sam Allison notes that there were Highland Scots living in New France, besides some relocated or banished Jacobite soldiers. Allison cites the case of a Quebec notary record of 1752, five years before the Fraser Highlanders appeared on the scene, where a David Somers married a Marie Thompson, both originally from the town of Dundee, Scotland.⁸

One element that resonates in many references to the Frasers at Quebec is the assertion that during their seven years deployment in Quebec, during conflict and later peaceful-occupation, the Regiment obtained assimilation and acceptance into the general population. Not surprisingly, this assumption included that Highlanders co-mingled with French-Canadian women to produce

⁴ Holly A. Mayer, *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution*, (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 7-9, (hereinafter Mayer, *Camp Followers and Community*).

⁵ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 54.

⁶ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 33-34.

⁷ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 25.

⁸ Sam Allison, *Driv'n By Fortune: the Scots' March to Modernity in America, 1745-1812*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2015), 77, (hereinafter Allison, *Driv'n By Fortune*).

a number of offspring, through marriage or casual relations, that formed one of the original seeds of Scottish-root in that province.

An example of this generalization is made by historian Robert C. Dexter in 1923, which is reflected in many historical works, without significant examination, which I would hope to more fully explore in this article.

*[Indians] ...with whom the French from the very beginning mingled their blood freely, and a less important accretion of Highland Scotch, the offspring of soldiers of the garrison who were attracted by the comely daughters of the St. Lawrence.*⁹ [Underlining added].

In 2010 editors Earl Chapman and Ian McCulloch published the complete anecdotes of Grenadier Sergeant James Thompson (1733-1830) of the Fraser Highlanders who was present as a part of the Regiment during their entire British Quebec-Campaign.¹⁰ Thompson took his discharge in Quebec and remained for the rest of his long-life, providing a unique window into regimental-life on campaign, providing mostly accurate and some likely-apocryphal, but humorous, anecdotes.

However, apropos to the subject of this article, Thompson was married twice in North America, but unfortunately little is known of his first wife, she being neither named, nor the names of any of his alleged six children provided. The only reference contained in the Anecdotes is the statement from editors Chapman and McCulloch that Thompson married “shortly after the war [1763?], likely to a *Canadienne* as there would have been few British women in the garrison at that time.”¹¹ This article will test that conclusion.

Former Fraser Highlander Thompson, now widower, was by March of 1780 aged 47, courting the niece of the wife of Miles Prentice, former Sergeant of the 43rd Foot (Kennedy’s), a Ms. Fanny Cooper, age 22. Fanny was born Dec 1758 at Lake Kerry, Ireland, and was visiting her aunt, Mrs. Price, in Quebec, the Price family having also determining to stay and settle in Quebec after the conclusion of the French & Indian War. Fanny and James Thompson were married in Dec 1780. In Sept 1782 their first child was born, the first of eight, six of whom lived.¹² In retrospect, I hope to answer how likely it was that Grenadier Thompson’s first wife was a *Canadienne*?

⁹ Robert C. Dexter, “French-Canadian Patriotism”, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 28: page 696, No. 6 (May, 1923), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/2764577>, accessed 8/29/2020.

¹⁰ Earl John Thompson & Ian Macpherson McCulloch, editors, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army: James Thompson, Gentleman Volunteer 1733-1830*, (Montreal, Robbin Brass Studio, 2010), (hereinafter Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*).

¹¹ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 27.

¹² Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 45-47.

One source indicates that it could have been a fire that killed all six children,¹³ though Thompson's first wife likely died from breast-infection following pregnancy, in the latter-half of 1777.¹⁴

Editors Chapman and McCulloch of Thompson's anecdotes, indicate that for Protestant Highlanders, the path to marriage solemnization faced a critical obstacle in the complete opposition by Catholic parish-priests and Bishop. They suggest that most Protestant-Catholic unions were entered into without benefit of clergy, but some children were apparently baptized, albeit with the clerical notation that the child was "illegitimate".¹⁵

Though, undoubtedly there were women who would accept living with a man without benefit of clergy, as a generalization it seems that taking up with a Protestant would have resulted in the ostracizing by many in the woman's extended 'Catholic family', which would have been especially difficult in rural *habitant* Quebec-society.

Of the Fraser Regiment, one-hundred and seventy sergeants, corporals, drummers and rank and file of the 78th opted to take their discharge in America, of whom some eighty went south to settle in New York in the Mohawk Valley, or parts of western Vermont.¹⁶ By this estimate, approximately one-hundred Highland soldiers remained in the vicinity of the then Province of Quebec post-1763. To what extent did they intermingle with the resident population?

***Habitant* defined, and the 78th Fraser's in Quebec:**

For purposes of this article, "*habitants*" were the people of French origin that generally settled and farmed along both shores of the St. Lawrence River generally from Montreal to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Thus, I am referring to French-Canadian women who were the common-folk of rural parishes and towns, regardless of whether they or their spouse were exclusively employed in agricultural work, including those employed in some kind of shop-work, or small commercial-enterprise.

The country-folk, *habitants* of Quebec spoke and understood exclusively French.¹⁷ Certainly, there were some few that spoke First-Nation Indian tongues, and even a very few that spoke English, including British hostages that had been abducted to Canada from New England before 1760. One unique example is Esther Wheelwright abducted in a raid against Wells, Maine, who

¹³ Peter Black, "The Last Veteran of the Plains of Abraham", Legion: Canada's Military History Magazine, 30 Sept 2009, available on line, accessed 9/15/2020.

¹⁴ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, fn105, page 36.

¹⁵ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 26-27, citing Marie Fraser, Clan Fraser Society of Canada: <http://www.clanfraser.ca/78th.htm>, accessed 8 Aug 2009.

¹⁶ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 26.

¹⁷ "The French Language in Quebec: 400 Years of History and Life Introduction", page www.cslf.gouv.qc.ca/publications/introduction, accessed 9/19/2020

became an Ursuline Nun and rose to the position of Mother Superior of her Order in Quebec City, dealing with the British after Conquest.¹⁸

However, Eighteenth century life for most Quebec *Canadiennes* was no bed of roses. Most *habitant*-women received little education, were expected to marry, and large families were the norm, mandated by Catholic religious mores, and the practical necessity of many hands on small, family-farms. Nevertheless, spousal-mental and physical abuse was not unknown, especially fueled by alcohol as contributing cause, or for some wives, escape.

Wives were considered without equal rights to their husband, subservient, and generally a woman's "good-reputation" was one of her guarded assets, lost at her peril. Women married very early, fifteen or sixteen was not unusual, and the mortality of the times being what it was, it was not unusual that a wife might remarry several times.

Generally, "wife" was the primary occupation for women, with few other possibilities such as a religious vocation as Nun, Sister, novice, or alternatively 'spinster'.¹⁹ There were very few single women who lived alone other than elderly spinsters or widows who had some familial assets, but most lived as a part of an extended French-Canadian family of relations.

French-Canadian social life centered on the family and relations, the Catholic Church and its Mass, feasts, and holidays, and town market-place. With the British Conquest of all of Canada in 1760 came peaceful occupation and community guard-duty.

The British Garrison in Quebec was a key military location in which large numbers of troops were stationed with their regiments for long periods of time. However, the effects of a well-established Garrison town-economy, general social interaction between occupiers and occupied, and development of a vibrant military-civilian social network, simply did not yet exist by the time that the Fraser Highlanders were recalled to Scotland for disbandment in Dec 1763.²⁰

Larry Ostola has written a comprehensive article addressing the Quebec "British Garrison" that existed between the Battle of the Plains (Sept 1759), and final British withdrawal in 1871. The principal fortification known as the Citadel did exist in 1759 but only as a wooden structure. It was not until American threats of re-invasion after 1776 that serious construction was commenced, ironically under the supervision of former Grenadier Sergeant James Thompson as Overseer supervising German Auxiliaries as laborers. Continued work was spurred by the War of 1812, continuing until first completed about 1820.

The point is that though the marketplace and taverns did come to be an important part of the fabric of community in which officers and men of the Quebec Garrison integrated with civilians

¹⁸ Julie Wheelwright, *Esther Wheelwright: Puritan Child, Native Daughter, Mother Superior*, (Toronto, Harper-Collins Publishers, Ltd., 2011).

¹⁹ In the 18th Century British-Canadian legal documents, a 'spinster' was a single woman generally between the ages of 23 and 26; thereafter single women were referred to in English as 'thornbacks'.

²⁰ Earl John Chapman, "Ordered Home... To Be Broke: The Disbandment of Fraser's Highlanders", *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Winter 2010, Vol. 88, No. 356, pages 291-293.

as described and observed by John Lambert, his observations were of 1806-1808 Quebec, some 33 years after the Fraser Highlanders had departed.²¹

*Here may be seen men, women and children...colonels, captains, and private soldiers all promiscuously huddled around the Habitant cart... A curious sort of jargon is carried on in the market place between the French who do not understand English, and the English who do not understand French.*²²

Further, Lambert observed:

*...very few of the country people who frequent the markets in the towns return home sober...,*²³

Lambert's observations are prescient because they suggest that the habitant-vendors were distinguishable from the throngs of soldiers and urban dwellers of mixed races, albeit often taking to drink after their days' outing.

There were significant differences between men and women in regard to concepts of chastity in French Canada, and morals, generally with a wife owning responsibility for her 'chaste-reputation' to her parents, husband, and children, as well as obligations of conjugal fidelity. This contrasted with men, where Andre Lachance has shown that by the end of the French Regime (1760), there was seeming 'grand tolerance' for male patronized prostitution, the involved women forever marked as 'infamous'.²⁴

In rural Catholic-Canada, a woman's reputation was sacrosanct, but once compromised, it marked her as the center of gossip, especially if it involved alcohol and suspected sexual improprieties. In fact, it was a woman's 'reputation', that determined the lens through which men, whether civilian or military, officers or enlisted viewed women.

In New France there had been a limited class of elegant, better-educated,²⁵ well-off French-women, daughters, widows, or wives that had either married into wealth, or were seeking to court a wealthy or important military officer or *hommes d'affaires* (businessman) as husband. For many of these, their principal avocation, if not occupation, was in attending the social gatherings that represented British 'high-society' after Conquest, of balls, parties, and gatherings.

²¹ John Lambert, *Travels through Lower Canada and the United States of North America in the years 1806, 1806, and 1808*, (London: Richard Phillips, 1810), page 83.

²² Lambert as quoted in Larry Ostola, "The British Garrison", in *Military History of Quebec City 1608-2008*, 198, (hereinafter Osteola, "The British Garrison").

²³ Lambert as quoted in Osteola, "The British Garrison", 216.

²⁴ Andre Lachance, *Crimes et Criminels en Nouvelle France*, (Montreal, QUE: 1984), 57-58.

²⁵ 'Education' for a privileged young woman in the 18th Century, in Quebec, was very much a product of the times and was done by placing young women in Catholic-run boarding-institutions, with substantial cost to parent or guardian, staffed by Nuns and the Catholic clergy. Focus was generally given to Catholic religion, 'readings', learning useful domestic skills like clothing construction, needlepoint, cooking, and penmanship. The objective was to generally prepare a woman for her role as wife and mother, or a religious vocation.

These women did not include the *habitants*, and of course these women shunned the common soldier, either British or especially the Savage-appearing *Ecosse* (Scot). Conversely, some 78th Highlanders seemed to have been very prolific in their recourse to the institution of marriage as in the case of Sergeant Lauchlan Smith, who was said to have entered into five marriage-contracts, and he eventually became the owner of a seignury in Quebec.²⁶ Though it is also the case that all of these marriages occurred after he took his formal discharge from the Fraser Highlanders.

As will be seen, attraction may have been one thing, a relationship whether leading to marriage or not, may have been quite another while in uniform.

Scottish-Highlander and British officer attitudes toward women:

British officers' and other ranks' views of women in the eighteenth century are an especially broad topic, but it can be summarized as views that the individual held before entering military service, contrasted with those there acquired.

For Scottish Highland men and women of the eighteenth century, there were certain labels readily attached to women's voluntary or involuntary, romantic, or sexual-association with men. They included: 'gentle woman' or 'genteel lady', wife, 'kept-mistress', 'lyby', 'common strumpet', and prostitute.²⁷ These terms reflected the common vernacular throughout Great Britain, Scotland, and Canada. Leah Leneman's article on recourse under Scottish Law to prove mutual-consent, M/F relationships which constituted *defacto* marriage under Scottish law, speaks to 18th century attitudes and prejudices across these descriptor terms.

The status of 'wife' was one mandating the ability to be so introduced to respectable society, with its attendant rights, but also general obligations of fealty and subordination to her husband. Lineman identifies that among eighteenth century Scottish men there was the 'perception' that Scottish law made it all too easy for a woman to prove she was a 'wife', rather than mistress, and thus entitled to support or compensation.²⁸ The statistics of petitioners' success rate proves the error of this 'popular mis-perception'.

Leneman also notes that the records substantiate that "in a military culture [especially of overseas deployment] it was quite easy for a 'gentleman' to maintain a longstanding relationship with a woman without being married."²⁹ This brings us to the chain of command attitude of the British Army about women, including Scottish officers deployed overseas in Highland Regiments, and especially Quebec.

²⁶ Allison, *Driv'n By Fortune*, 162.

²⁷ Leah Leneman, (1999), "Wives and Mistresses in Eighteenth Century Scotland", *Women's History Review*, 8:4, 671-692, DOI: 1080/09612029900200224, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612029900200224>, accessed 3/6/2019, (hereinafter Leneman, *Wives and Mistresses in Eighteenth Century Scotland*).

²⁸ Leneman, "Wives and Mistresses in Eighteenth Century Scotland", 674.

²⁹ Leneman, "Wives and Mistresses in Eighteenth Century Scotland", 680-681.

James Dennison's Masters' thesis focused on the "Experience of British Army, Women-Followers", during the French & Indian War in North America (1754-1763).³⁰ Throughout the eighteenth century, the British Army and chain of command limited the numbers of women, and 'enlisted-wives', who accompanied the army on foreign deployment. Though there was variation, women following the British Army on campaign were limited to about six per company of 60-100 soldiers.³¹ These few were provided victualing from military stores but in return were expected to provide general washing, cooking, uniform-mending, and occasionally, nursing services to the whole regiment.

They were exposed to some of the same risks of battle, but more exposure to sickness than soldiers, and their social milieu was limited to a camp-society, where male patriarchal values and norms, especially of suspicion and harassment by misogynistic officers, prevailed. British officers often saw women as a corrupting influence on their troops, softening them, and introducing additional worries and concerns that distracted them from their focus and war-fight spirit.

Thought a 'necessary evil', soldiers were discouraged from marrying without prior command approval, the violation of which could expose a soldier to harsh punishment, as mandated by General Wolfe.

Grenadier Sergeant Thompson tells the tale of being billeted in a private home in Stratford, Connecticut the winter of 1757-1758, in a home owned by Thomas Ivers, rope-maker. Ivers allegedly had a daughter, recollected by Thompson to be then about twelve. Ivers proposed that Thompson should quit the Army, and when the daughter was of proper-age, marry her and become partner in the rope making business.

Thompson begged off saying that "he couldn't think of such a thing without getting the permission of Colonel Fraser, Commander of the Regiment." Ivers not to be dissuaded approached Col. Fraser, and was told such was prohibited by regulation.³²

Chaplain Macpherson of the 78th Highlanders addressed 'women contacts' in Quebec in his letters, post 1760:

We have the good fortune of being in the neighborhood of three or four Ladies of good quality, and we have them over to dine and Sup with us, ending with a dance. The French Ladies though witty and Sprightly are given in their conversations to the Double Entendre, to such extent that I could little imagine I could decently stay in their company and I imagine they were little better than your old acquaintances at Lacky Japps.... The Major [Abercrombie] and Sandy Campbell [Captain Alexander Campbell] "have been

³⁰ James Dennison, "The Experiences and Contributions of Women Following the British Army During the Seven Years' War", (2018), Major Papers, 9, <https://scholars.uwindsor.ca/major-papers/9>, accessed 3/6/2019, (hereinafter Dennison, "Women Following the British Army").

³¹ Mayer, *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community During the American Revolution*, 10; Walter Hart Blumenthal, *Women Camp Followers of the American Revolution*, (Salem, NH: Ayer Co. Publishers, Inc., 1994), 50; in accord, Ostola, "The British Garrison", 194.

³² McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 128-129, Anecdote No. 13.

laying Close Siege to them for many Months”, but as yet, without victory.³³ [Underlining added].

The references to Quebec women made by the Chaplain of the Highlanders runs the gamut from ‘Ladies’ to prostitute bar-flies similar to the parameters of terms used in Leneman’s article on 18th Highland male attitudes on ‘wives and mistresses’. However, it appears that despite male braggadocio even for a Chaplain, these “suggestive French-ladies” were holding on to their virtue. It seems likely that among the pious-Catholic, *habitant* single-women, there would be even less hanky-panky with Highland common-soldiers, not as polished, sophisticated, nor as ‘attractive’ as their Highland superiors.

Lieut.-Col. Ian McCulloch has prepared a lengthy mini-biography of the officers of the Highland Regiments present in America based on their regimental seniority. In Vol. II of his *Sons of the Mountains*, he lists 90 officers of the 78th or Fraser’s Highlanders including Chaplain, Adjutants, Quartermasters, and Surgeon.³⁴ The following breakdown is relevant to this article:

Indicated Married: 1: Lieut.-Col. Simon Fraser, Commanding Officer, was sent to Portugal in 1763, when he was married. 2: John Fraser of Culbokie married Marie-Claire Fleury Deschambault in 1765, a *Canadienne*. 3: John Nairn married Christiana Emery at Quebec, 1769. 4: Donald McBean of Faillie married 1st Ann McBean who was deceased 1754. 5: Sir Henry Seton married Margaret Hay of Drumelzier, Scotland, 1770. 6: John Dubh Fraser, aka J. McTavish of Garthbeg, unknown wife. 7: Simon Tenakyle Fraser KIA left wife Jean Gray in Scotland. 8. Hon. Cosmo Gordon. 8. Hugh Fraser [2], returned to Scotland with family. 9. Lauchlan MacPherson of Breakachy married Christian Cluny. 10. John MacPherson [2], had daughter Jane McPherson, no indication of wife or if married.

KIA in North America: 17 Officers, Baillie, Fraser of Inverallochy, Donell Gorm Macdonell, Ross of Calrossie, Ch’s Macdonnell, A.R Campbell, Cuthbert of Castlehill, McNeil of Barra, Hector MacDonnell, A. MacDonnell, Murray of Glencarnoch, Simon Tenakyle Fraser, John Campbell [3], Simon Fraser [7], W’m Robertson, , Malcolm Fraser [2], Kenneth McCulloch

Died of illness in N. America 1: Cameron, 4th of Dungallon.

Deceased, stated as “unmarried”, but surviving the F & I: 6 Officers: Clephane, Campbell of Dunoon, J. McPherson, J. Campbell, Macdonell of Lochgarry, Archibald Fraser of Culkobie.

There are a number of officers who survived the F & I but no indication given in McCulloch whether they were married.

1: A. MacLeod, died 1772, “allegedly poisoned by a jealous husband”³⁵

³³ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 267-268.

³⁴ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, II: 81-109.

³⁵ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, II: 89.

Though the information is too incomplete to make many conclusions, it would appear that only wife named by McCulloch having a clearly French-Canadian surname was John Fraser of Culbokie who married Marie-Claire Fleury Deschambault in 1765, a *Canadienne*.

More Than A Good Story, 1759-1760?

In another Thompson anecdote, which in the author's view stretches credibility, Highland soldiers placed in close proximity in Quebec to nursing-sisters might create problems. In Anecdote No 28, Thompson related the sad tale of Sergeant John Wilson of the 78th Highlanders and Sister St. Gabriel.³⁶

Wilson was seriously wounded in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham where General Wolfe defeated General Montcalm in 1759. Placed in hospital, he was assigned a young Nun who ministered to his physical-recuperative needs, such that he eventually was able to walk with crutches. By spring of 1760 he was able to go out to the alleys and byways, though cold it must have been! He then volunteered to take his duty-post in battle when General Murray was forced to again fight the French in April 1760, marching out of the walled-city to confront forces under De Levis. That battle is known as the battle of Ste. Foy or Sillery Woods.

Wilson was killed in the battle, and when Sister St. Gabriel learned of this calamity, she swooned and was put under doctor's care. Upon examination, she allegedly was determined to be pregnant, and though she made no such admission, it was strongly suspected that Wilson was the father.

Allegedly, according to the Thompson anecdote, Sister St. Gabriel was threatened with torture to disclose the father, and later a 'recommendation' reached by a Council of Nuns that Gabriel be "smothered" which was approved by the Bishop. As the tale continues, General Murray was duly approached for his consent, which he rejected out of hand, threatening the Nuns that he would batter their Convent with artillery unless they ceased any such threats against Sister St. Gabriel.³⁷

This threat was effective, and Sister St. Gabriel was not only allowed to deliver the child, but still rose to a position of prominence and responsibility within her Order. The plot then thickens, fast forward years later to when Thomson now a civilian, was charged as Overseer of the construction works of Quebec fortifications, and he had occasion to often visit the nunnery and give advice on necessary improvements to their buildings. In the course of events, he struck up a "friendship" with Sister St. Gabriel.

In 1774, Thompson was sent on some official duty to Fort Chambly, over 150 miles distant from Quebec (City). There he met with an older woman who invited him to her home, asking if he was willing to carry a letter back to Sister St. Gabriel? Thompson indicated he would, and then a young man appeared who Thompson thought "the spitting image of Wilson". Thompson duly delivered the letter, and Thompson and St. Gabriel never spoke of the matter again, though apparently continuing to see each other for a few years, until the Sister died.

³⁶ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, Anecdote 28, pages 203-209.

³⁷ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 205-206.

Thompson called her a “friend”, but widely publicized the story and in fact it was one often requested to be told and re-told by Governor General Dalhousie, when Thompson was invited to a number of formal dinners, some for that very purpose.³⁸

Parenthetically it should be noted that among Thompson’s other anecdotes are several that include ridicule of the Catholic clergy for their own transgressions and hypocrisy.³⁹ It is therefore difficult to determine whether this story was meant to be told as allegory, or containing any elements of truth other than the existence of Sister St. Gabriel *and some kind of relationship with James Thompson?*. Yet in fact, there was a Sister St. Gabriel that died at age 46 in 1787.⁴⁰

For purposes of this essay, the “story” likely proves the existence of religious prejudice among even the better educated and senior NCO’s of Fraser’s Highlanders, illustrating the fact that this would be a major stumbling block against extensive relations between Highlanders and Catholic-women *habitants*.

A “Certain” Reputation Preceded the Regiment:

The entire 78th Highlanders were originally first deployed to Halifax, NS arriving late Aug 1757. They only remained nine weeks there before being recalled to New York and in that short time the Regiment was beset with almost universal dysentery and “bloody flux” such that 25 officers, 300 sick-incapacitated, another 200 ill, and 20 deaths resulted.⁴¹ It is unlikely there were female liaisons formed in Halifax, N.S., for the short duration of the Regiment’s first posting.

On 17 Oct 1757 the Regiment embarked for New York, arriving on 23 Nov after encountering many storms, but the men were immediately to be transferred to sloops for a short sail across Long Island Sound, and then to march to Connecticut where the companies would be split up and billeted in winter quarters. Winter quarters in Connecticut would last from 30 Nov until 30 March 1758.

³⁸ Editors Chapman and McCulloch note that Governor General Dalhousie had an aversion to priests and the involvement of the Church in the politics of the Province, not working to court that influential hierarchy. Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 307-309.

³⁹ Anecdote No. 18, the extortion by the clergy to obtain payment for dispensation otherwise prohibiting service of various foods during Lent to the Protestant Highlanders; the public drunkenness of the same Curate at a wedding; and again the same priest allegedly seen *in delicto* with a married woman “in the fields”. Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 226-228.

⁴⁰ There are two other speculative possibilities that should be at least mentioned. Former Grenadier Sergeant James Thompson was very protective of the honor and pride of his service and that of his Regiment. Is there the possibility that St. Gabriel was raped and the anecdote was a shading of the truth? The contemporaneous to 1759-1760 *Knox Journal* goes out of its way to indicate that the Nursing Nuns were always scrupulously correct with their patients, and could not be accused of flirtatious activity. Yet, in the Wilson-St. Gabriel anecdote, Thompson leavens the story by stating that when he was admitted to the nunnery he observed the nuns being playful, “...they thought nothing of showing their legs... and it has often occurred in my presence that they have torn off their veils and other parts of their dress, but this, you see, was all in the way of fun.” Could there be the possibility that Thompson became enamored with Sister St. Gabriel, and if he was either rebuffed or embarrassed, did this give rise to the anecdote that portrays a living-Sister unfavorably based on the mores of the day? Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, Anecdote 28, pages 206-207.

⁴¹ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 53-54.

The billeting of the Fraser's in the towns of Stratford, Norwalk, Fairfield, Milford, and Stamford was not without some disquietude as they were there billeted in private homes. Though residents were compensated for housing Highland soldiers, there was always additional expense for bedding, firewood, candles, cider, and the innumerable kitchen implements of small pots, spoons, and cutlery that were lost, damaged, or 'borrowed'.

Additionally, soldiers were not prevented by their sergeants or officers from conducting marksmanship against public and private weathervanes and steeples. Highland soldiers did occasionally over-imbibe with predictable fights, slurs, and perceived salacious comments against local women-folk, even if the substance of *Erse*-comment could not be precisely translated.

The lasting recollection of Connecticut townsfolk of the Fraser Highlanders was likely cast by an incident that occurred on the evening of 29 Jan 1758. A Grenadier-Sergeant Alexander Fraser, friend of Thompson, whose name we will see again, was involved in the killing of a sergeant of the guard. Both Fraser and the decedent Macky had been to a *Hogmanay*, end-of-year celebration, at another soldier's residence where alcohol was likely consumed by both. Fraser thought it his duty to check on the guardhouse later that night, where Macky was there acting-sergeant.

Insults were traded and Macky attempted to arrest and detain Fraser. Allegedly, Macky struck Fraser's head with the hilt of his broadsword, and then Fraser attempted to flee or retreat. Macky pulling Fraser's long hair, was about to administer another blow when Fraser pulled out his dirk and struck over his shoulder, piercing Macky's neck, killing him. Testimony indicated Sergeant Fraser was allegedly a dutiful soldier, Macky, now dead, less-so.

Though the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. Simon Fraser wished to resolve the matter by application of military law, the Connecticut Attorney General learning of the killing thought it should be tried as a criminal murder charge, before civilians of the community. Sergeant Alexander Fraser stood trial for murder, and all of the Highland witnesses including Sergeant Fraser claimed that they could not understand or speak English, only *Erse*. Lieut.-Col. Fraser then offered to act as 'translator' of questions put to his men, as well as answers translated for the benefit of the jury. The result was that Alexander Fraser was acquitted of murder based on his claim of "self-defense".

The Attorney General of Connecticut accused Col. Fraser of "shading the testimony and translations", but the acquittal stood.⁴² In general, it would be a fair statement that the civilian women of Connecticut likely had little to do with the Highlanders in the four months they were

⁴² Allegedly, Thompson claims that Lieut.-Col. Fraser was so incensed by the Attorney General's suggestion that he had attempted to "shade the truth of testimony given by his Highlanders", that Fraser asked the Judges to stop the trial so that Col. Fraser could challenge the States Attorney to a duel. *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, Anecdote 12, pages 130-131. This in my view is a bridge too far.

there, based on their perceived reputation of being boisterous, uncouth, with violent-conduct, re-enforced by the public trial of one of their members for murder.

As an aside, on 16 April 1758 just before the Highlanders were scheduled to take transport from Boston to return to Halifax, N.S., the wife of Private Daman Ware of the 78th died leaving an infant child. No accommodation nor arrangement could be found for retaining the child within the Regiment, and it was placed in the Alms House in Boston, coming to both the attention and now responsibility of the Boston Selectmen.⁴³

‘Murder She Wrote’: A True Story⁴⁴

Prior to re-call of the Regiment for disbanding, between 1761-1763, five companies of the 78th were located within Quebec City, and the remaining companies distributed to the towns of Berthier, St. Vallier, St. Michel, St. Pierre, and St. Thomas.⁴⁵

Highlanders were billeted on the local populace, and many had acquired sufficient French language facility to be able to converse with their hosts, but there must have been wide variance in facility of spoken French.⁴⁶ Despite the Highlanders’ previous work as ‘shock-troops’ for General Wolfe,⁴⁷ they were “accepted” into rural French-Canadian society, developing communal relationships, often assisting farmers by working in the fields to take in their harvest.⁴⁸

⁴³ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 65-66, fn12, page 81.

⁴⁴ The following Transcript of the first Court Martial of Marie-Josephte Corriveau exists at *Documents Concernant La Corriveau* available on-line, (http://pistard.banq.qc.ca/unite_chercheurs/description_fonds?p_angsid=200702122255012358&P&p_fonds=1000&p_centre=03Q&p_numunide=2010, first accessed 7/7/2018). *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Centre d'archives de Québec, Collection Centre d'archives de Québec*, P1000, S3, D435, 128 page collection of Research Notes on “La Corriveau”: (p.1) typed biographical notes about Marie-Josephte, and Rev. Father Glapion, confessor of Joseph Corriveau; (pages 2-11) article by James MacPherson Le Moine, “Marie-Josephte Corriveau, A Canadian La Farge”, c. 1863; as appeared in *Maple Leaves*; (page 12) a newspaper clipping entitled, “Le process de la Corriveau”, dated 28 Feb 1939; and (pages 13-128) a copy of the proceedings of the Corriveau Court Martial Trial Transcript (including typist’s copy and Photostat of the manuscript,) of the original transcript preserved in the Imperial War Museum in London, (hereinafter Research Notes, or *GCM transcript*).

⁴⁵ Research Notes, 3.

⁴⁶ In the History of L’île D’Orleans, P.G. Roy presents the case of Irish-priest, Monseigneur Burke detailed to become pastor to serve one of the rural parishes on the Island near Quebec (City) in 1787. Burke was allegedly fluent in English and French, and presumably Latin and Irish-Gaelic, but his service was marked by humor in that his French pronunciation was so poor, that he would often in the middle of sermon, or marriage ceremony, turn to one of his parishioners asking that, “You say it in French better than me”, and the parishioner would turn to communicate to the assembled. P.-G. Roy, *L’île D’Orleans*, (Quebec: Ls. A. Proulx, 1928), 217.

⁴⁷ See generally, Matthew C. Ward, “Crossing the Line? The British Army and Application of European Rules of War in the Quebec Campaign,” in *Revisiting 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Perspective*, Philip Buckner and John G. Reid, eds., (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 44-68. The 78th Highlanders together with Rangers were ordered to burn substantial housing and food stocks along the banks of the St. Lawrence to punish the *habitants* for continued support to the French. The Highlanders were used against the civilian French-Canadian population.

⁴⁸ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 265; Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 220-221.

Acceptance to the *Canadiens* of Highlanders meant different things: There can be little question that religion formed a difficult if not impossible wall to breach; language though less of a barrier was still a mark of class and education, or lack thereof; and a soldier's career was not predictable and for lower-ranks, theirs was close to bare-subsistence. Highlanders, more than most were clannish and their social relations were focused on "clubbing" around brotherhood and endeavors such as Masonry, games of sport such as curling, and the camaraderie of the pub, generally excluding foreigners. There was little that appealed to a French-Canadian young woman looking for commitment and family-life.

The Grenadier Company of Fraser Highlanders, comprising some 60-70 men, was billeted at Saint Vallier, and Grenadier Sergeant James Thompson indicated that he was stationed there for some eleven months continuously.⁴⁹

Chaplain Robert Macpherson was attached to Major James Abercrombie's HQ Company in Quebec City, Abercrombie being Commanding-Officer (CO), 78th Foot. Macpherson wrote his cousin in Scotland in Dec 1761, describing the situation that then confronted the Highlanders:

*Our Men and officers look fair and Blooming and live more at their Ease than any Regiment ever did in time of War before; ... the Poor Canadian lives more plentifully and much more delicately than most of the Sir Baills [landed gentry] in the Highlands. The Soldiers live with them but am sorry to tell you tho' they pay nothing for Vittals [victuals], most of their Money is spent on women and Wines.*⁵⁰ [Underlining added].

There seems little doubt that 78th Highlanders in rural Quebec had little to do other than guard-duty when stationed in small communities and were not immune to the opportunities posed by either flirtatious women or those of somewhat "easy virtue". Further, as Sergeant Thompson noted, "I now had pick'd up as much of the French language as to understand almost everything that was said to me, and I myself could manage to gabble tolerably [well]."⁵¹ [Underlining added].

But Grenadier Sergeant Thompson was not the run of the mill enlisted soldier, as he came from a family with means, was well-educated, and had developed a high sense of personal pride and honor. There is no reason to believe that Thompson would have recourse to 'women of low reputation', but the same may not be the case for most of the unworldly youths of the regiment.

Ostola specifically addresses the question of female prostitution in Quebec 'servicing the Quebec Garrison', finding that there were incidents of "soldier diversion" that came to the attention of authorities in 1766, 1777, 1796, 1816 (house of ill-repute), 1835 (brothel), and 1837 ('disorderly house'). The 1766 case involved two soldiers of the 52nd Foot that entered a house and attacked a woman when they could not find 'Betty'.⁵²

⁴⁹ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 229.

⁵⁰ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, I: 266.

⁵¹ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 220, 229.

⁵² Ostola, "The British Garrison", 217-218.

Conversely, the only slightly similar incident involving the 78th Frasers was in Sept 1759 when soldiers of the 78th at Point Levi, across the St. Lawrence from Quebec City, “robbed and abused French women”, the women being able to identify their assailants only by the reference, described as “*les gens sans culottes*” [Highlanders without breeches].⁵³ It is unknown what if any other abuses the women may have suffered, and also whether any Fraser Highlanders were subsequently identified and punished.

During the years of 1759 to 1764 during the *Regime Militaire*, there was no civil law enforcement authority within Quebec, and under General Murray as occupying power, he enforced criminal and civil jurisdiction by recourse to application of military Courts-martial to both military and French-Canadian civilian personnel. Most offenses were minor and referred to either the local, French-Captain of militia,⁵⁴ or possibly a British commanding-officer in the parish in which his company was billeted. Other serious matters were referred to a General Courts-martial that rarely imposed a capital sentence.

One example that is relevant here, was in 1763 there was a killing of a man named Dodier in St. Vallier, Quebec, where the 78th Grenadier Company of Fraser’s Highlanders were billeted. Dodier was the second husband of a woman named Marie-Josephte Corriveau. Because a Grenadier-sergeant of the 78th Highlanders, Sergeant Alexander Fraser,⁵⁵ acquitted murderer, was living in proximity to the Dodier farm, he had the opportunity to examine the Dodier body the morning it was discovered, and his suspicions were aroused.

Sergeant Fraser complained to his commander, Major Abercrombie, that Dodier had not been killed by a rearing horse as alleged by his wife and her relation, but was killed by human-hand. He alleged that the face and skull of Dodier had been pierced by a dung-fork. The Major authorized the body of Dodier to be disinterred from his grave and examined by the Regimental Surgeon, who in due course agreed that it was an “unnatural death”.

This led Maj. Abercrombie to conduct an investigation and interview witnesses and he finally determined that the local Captain of militia, Jacques Corriveau, cousin of wife, had conspired

⁵³ See generally Michael R. Gadue, “*Les Gens Sans Culottes*”- An Intersection of Culture and Language, and History in War”, *Military Collector & Historian*, Vol. 71: 25, No. 1, (Washington, D.C., Spring 2019). That article supports the thesis that the 78th Highlanders in Quebec during the French & Indian War generally wore no underwear under their kilts, though “culottes” in French of that age referred to breeches, not underpants *per se*.

⁵⁴ General Murray preserved the French system of Militia Captains who were the appointed leader of their parish community, knowing that the few who continued to oppose British rule and control could be removed. However, by and large they were effective to provide a continuation of French civil law and minor criminal prosecution, undoubtedly being a measure that “softened” British Conquest and occupation, making the population more acceptable of British soldiers billeted in their midst.

⁵⁵ The same Grenadier Sergeant Alexander Fraser who was the subject of a murder charge and trial in Stratford, Connecticut the winter of 1757-1758. There Fraser got into an affray with the acting Sergeant of the Guard, and in the scuffle, Alexander Fraser plunged his dirk over his shoulder into his fellow-Highlander killing him. The Attorney General of Connecticut determined to prosecute him for murder. At trial, all 78th Highlanders who were witnesses and now defendant Sergeant Fraser claimed they could only speak and understand *Erse-Gaelic*. As a result, Lieut.-Col. Simon Fraser, Officer-Commanding 78th Highlanders, offered and served as translator for all Highlanders. The Attorney General accused Simon Fraser of “shading the evidence”, but in any event the jury acquitted Grenadier Sergeant Alexander Fraser. Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 125-132.

with the parish Curate to orchestrate a cover-up of the murder. The matter was referred to General Murray as Governor General in charge of administering the Courts-martial system against Quebec civilians charged with serious crime. A charge was brought against Marie-Josephte and her father, he for the murder, and she as an accessory.

The military trial was held before twelve British garrison officers, three of whom were 78th Highlanders, and in due course father and daughter were both found guilty. Relevant here is the fact that Major Abercrombie had been the official before the murder, who had been tasked to arbitrate constant civil disputes between Marie's father, Joseph Corriveau and her husband, Dodier, in which the two constantly fought, including frequent physical assaults and mutual threats to kill each other.

At trial, it was established that poor relations existed between Marie-Josephte and her husband Dodier. He was a physically abusive husband, and she took refuge in alcohol. But it also was established that she had suborned locally-billeted Highland-soldiers, to beat-up her husband over a contrived disagreement. Additionally, there was testimony, that she was a 'flirtatious-type', slyly courting the relationship of at least one local resident of St. Vallier, and being suggestive to several of the Highlanders.

Abercrombie had also been approached before the murder by Marie-Josephte, asking that he approve her marital-separation from Dodier about Christmas-time 1762.⁵⁶ Likely, she claimed spousal abuse as a basis, but Abercrombie "ordered" Marie-Josephte that she must return to Dodier.⁵⁷ Whether Abercrombie legally had the authority for involvement in such marital matters is debatable, but Abercrombie likely made General Murray aware of the request, and acting favorably upon it could have challenged the generally supportive relationship that Murray had worked to cultivate with Church officials.

Further, Sergeant Alexander Fraser testified at Court-martial, that in Dec 1762 Marie-Josephte had importuned him, promising "she would do anything to oblige him", if he beat-up her husband over the contrived dispute.⁵⁸ One can't help but wonder if Sergeant Fraser might not have taken an advance on her promise, even *if* he was not otherwise conspiratorially involved?

In the first Courts-martial trial, Marie-Josephte was convicted as accessory, her father Joseph found guilty of the murder, he to be hung. In a startling development, Joseph Corriveau made known through his confessor that he was not directly responsible for the murder of Dodier,⁵⁹ but that his daughter had killed her husband. A new trial was convened and in one day, Marie-Josephte was tried based on her confession, and *she was now sentenced* to be hung.

⁵⁶ Court-Martial Transcript, page 23.

⁵⁷ Idem.

⁵⁸ Court-Martial Transcript, page 7.

⁵⁹ The evidence suggested that Joseph Corriveau had merely helped his daughter move the body of her husband to stables after she hit him with the poll of an ax. The dung fork skull piercings were likely administered later, possibly by another?

Marie-Josephte was hung at the *Buttes a Neveau* on the Plains of Abraham on 18 April 1763, and her body remained encased in its metal gibbet,⁶⁰ displayed at the public cross-roads of *Pointe Levis* until 25 May 1763, and was then buried. On 8 Aug 1763, His Majesty's Pardon was executed for Joseph Corriveau, her father. And thus, Marie Josephte Corriveau entered Quebec legend as "La Corriveau".

This vignette of rural Canadian life involving the Fraser Highlanders does have some nasty, if *sub-rosa* implications. Clearly, by the standards of the day Marie-Josephte would be considered a "bad and immoral woman", but the involvement of several Fraser's in what might have been the failure to allow separation from husband and forced reuniting, may have shared some blame for the predictable outcome.

Further, the fact that the Corriveau's had participated in a cover-up and attempt to deceive and lie to Maj. Abercrombie certainly became known and remembered by the three 78th Highlanders sitting as jurors in the first Courts-martial, as well as the same three and an additional fourth added for the second trial. One can't help but wonder if Sergeant Alexander Fraser was more involved than his testimony revealed?⁶¹

But there is another element present in the case. On one level the 78th Highlanders were heavily involved in the detection, investigation, and prosecution of Marie-Josephte for murder. Simplistically, they were upholding law and order and prevented a clearly guilty person or persons from getting away with the crime. So why wouldn't this singular event in the criminal history of the *Regime Militaire* be the subject of one or more anecdotes told by James Thompson?

The answer I believe must lie in the fact that there were aspects of the case that reflected poorly upon the honor or reputation of the Frasers. The reader will recall, Sergeant Alexander Fraser was almost a one-man investigator that had prompted the dis-internment of Dodier's body, leading to the Regimental Surgeon's opinion of "unnatural death", and filing of subsequent charges. Further, Sergeant Fraser was the "best friend" of James Thompson, and in fact Thompson had lent his dirk to Fraser which was used in the killing of Macky in the Connecticut Guardhouse. Possibly, non-reference was a method of allowing the matter to fade away.

Highlanders In Occupation:

Jeffrey Campbell has compiled an on-line roster of the names, ranks, and women carried on the victualing rolls of the 78th Frasers for each of the fourteen companies during July and August

⁶⁰ One of many interesting aspects of the case was the sentence of Marie-Josephte, being sentenced to be gibbeted, or hung in a specially constructed metal cage, her body publicly hung and allowed to decay. The reason for this was that under the law of England, a wife guilty of killing her husband was guilty of a "treason" against him, and this harsh unusual punishment imposed. Though rare, there had been others convicted and gibbeted in Quebec during the *Regime Militaire*.

⁶¹ The entire incident of the Corriveau Case and involvement of the 78th Highlanders is the subject of a 40 some page paper by the author, Michael R. Gadue, "The Quebec Court-Martial, Execution, and Gibbeting of Marie-Josephte Corriveau 1763: Military Justice, or *Non?* With Subplot of Highland Regimental Involvement", as yet, unpublished.

1763. Though there may be some errors, Campbell notes that the “list comprises some 900 names, and serves as the regiment’s discharge roster of the regiment at the approximate time of its disbandment.”⁶²

The figures and names of women on the rolls are instructive. There are only 29 named-women listed on the rolls of all fourteen companies that were entitled to victualing rations. The surnames of the women are all without question Scottish, as per the following list: Buchanan, Campbell, Fraser, Gillis, Hunter, McCulloch, (4) McDonald, McDonnell, McGregor, (2) McIntosh, McKenzie, McMillan, McNichol, McPherson, Monro, (2) Noble, Purdy, Ross, Sinclair, and (2) Stuart. In addition there was a Ms. Wass listed. There are several that are identified as wives of named soldiers but the majority don’t show any such formal status.

It would appear that the conclusion is unavoidable that Fraser’s Highlanders did not marry or acquire female camp-followers of French-Canadian background admitted to the rolls of the Regiment before they left Quebec, or before some few took their discharge to settle and remain in Quebec. In fact, Jeffrey Campbell prefaces each company roster with the statement, “Soldiers serving under General James Murray were forbidden from marrying the local French ladies.”

The contrast between the women entered on the rolls of the 78th Frasers upon first landing in Nova Scotia 17 Oct 1757, compared to the so-called final tally in 1763 is significant. The 1757 figure shows the Regiment was comprised of 1,135 all ranks, as well as 110 women and 39 children.⁶³ There were only 29 women for 887 men on the rolls on or about 16 Aug 1763.⁶⁴ Thus, the ratios were 110/1,135 on 17 Oct 1757 and 29/887 for wives or camp-followers on or about 16 Aug 1763. The percentage of women on the rolls decreased from .096% in 1757 to .032% in 1763 as ratio to all regimental personnel.

This is somewhat counterintuitive because one would think that the proportional numbers of required women would have remained approximately the same for necessary work even with reduced numbers of men. Secondly, post 1760-surrender of Quebec, it would seem that there would have been more opportunity and likelihood that some few Highlanders might have married or added significant others to the rolls, even if officially frowned upon.

However, all was not well with the Frasers as there is evidence that the personal standards of cleanliness and even attentiveness to care of weapons was starting to erode with soft garrison and guard-post duty. This necessitated a strict Regimental Order issued 11 May 1762.⁶⁵ Regulating and re-stating everything from haircuts, face and hand-washing, clean-shaven appearance, wear of bonnet, military courtesies due officers, and caution against the constant threat of

⁶² Jeffrey Campbell, “Fraser’s 78th Regiment of Foot, 2018”, Companies of the 78th Regiment, available on-line, accessed 9/11/2020, citing source: “Revolutionary War Rolls, 1894-1913”, National Archives Catalog, War Department, National Archives, Washington, D.C. 1947, catalog.archives.gov/id/602384.

⁶³ McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountain*, I: 55.

⁶⁴ By 16 Aug 1763 the first of three subsistence rolls showed that the 78th Foot had downsized to 36 commissioned officers, 95 non-commissioned officers, 20 drummers, and 736 privates. A total all ranks of 887, Chapman, *78th Fraser Highlanders 1763 Calendar*, 5-6.

⁶⁵ See generally, Earl John Chapman, “An Interesting Regimental Order: Quebec 1762”, *Military Collector & Historian*, (Washington: Vol 72: 39-41, No. 1, Spring 2020, (hereinafter Chapman, “Regimental Order 1762”).

unauthorized liquor sales or consumption. Tellingly, “No woman... to lay a night in the barracks”.⁶⁶

It would be speculative to suggest what prohibition this Regimental Order had on Highlander-female relations, but its need seems self-explanatory, and the Regimental Order was likely not promulgated to address real or expected hordes of naïve, French-*Canadiennes* enticed from the country-side.

In November 1783, James Thompson as now construction overseer of the Citadel, Thompson and his wife Fanny attended the wedding of another now retired Fraser Highland Sergeant Lauchlan Smith, a now successful tradesman. Smith married one Barbara Boyton, one of Fanny Thompson’s cousins. Though this was the first of a number of marriages, it suggests few Scottish unions were with French-*Canadiennes*.⁶⁷

Conclusions:

It is not the intent of this article to make any suggestion that the men of the 78th Highlanders were any less manly, or somehow less-interested in female company during their some seven years on active campaign in Canada. Rather, they were deployed to foreign-service in a theatre where there were limited females, and at least initially the demands of campaign hardly provided the opportunity for female companionship on any level.

However that is not the case post surrender of Montreal in 1760. Between 1760 and 1763 the Fraser highlanders were often billeted in rural communities surrounding Quebec City as well as within the city in garrison, and undoubtedly had interaction with the French-Canadian population on a more relaxed and congenial basis.

Nevertheless, it seems that there would have been social, language, and religious barriers that would have been difficult to overcome in terms of meeting eligible *Canadiennes* for relationships and possible marriage. In truth, there was another source of women outside of the garrison. Both Highlanders and British soldiers did send back with great regularity to Great Britain, or even domestically in Canada for brides. This might be accomplished through the medium of relatives or friends of relations living in Quebec, who orchestrated an introduction with a woman either living in Canada, or overseas in Ireland, Great Britain, or Scotland.

There are many examples where women came to Quebec specifically to meet and possibly find a husband. Grenadier Sergeant James Thompson’s second wife Fanny is a clear example of this. But there must have been local *Canadienne* women who married British soldiers. Ostola cites two examples, though again they would have occurred after the garrison of Quebec was better established and some nine years after the Fraser Highlanders had been recalled and disbanded in Scotland:

⁶⁶ Chapman, “Regimental Order 1762), 39.

⁶⁷ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 54-55.

*In 1772, the records of the Quebec Anglican Cathedral reveal that Duncan Campbell of the 8th Regiment married Angelique Tougat, a spinster, while in 1830 Donald Baillie of the 79th Regiment wed Angelique Petitclerc.*⁶⁸

Ostola notes the difference in social class that characterized the soldiers in Quebec garrison, and the resulting social milieu in which they operated. Officers generally had entrée into the social life of the city and social events such as balls, and fetes held at the Chateau St. Louis.

Conversely, the enlisted regardless of Regiment were on a much lower social rung, caused in part by their relative poverty, but as well the negative perception that many civilians had of the army. “The society enjoyed by ordinary soldiers was of the urban popular classes, and consisted of the barracks room, fellowship at local inns and taverns, [some brotherhoods like Masonry], where interaction with either sex, British and *Canadienne*, came from similar social standing.”⁶⁹

As per example, Thompson was known to frequent ‘Simpson’s Coffee House’ which was owned by a cousin, and also former Fraser Highlander, Sergeant Alexander ‘Sanders’ Simpson, who also remained in Quebec post disbandment of the Regiment in 1763.⁷⁰ Simpson and his wife ran the Coffee House which apparently was used for meetings of the Masons, both former sergeants being members. However, there is no indication that Mrs. Simpson came from Canada and she may well have been one of the wives that accompanied her husband on campaign, coming originally from Scotland.

However, it is not the case that the 78th Fraser’s never got in trouble:

*By the end of the 78th stay in Quebec, the problem of alcohol abuse resulted in camp women no longer being served rations, there being a misogynistic perception that women were the root cause of soldierly misconduct.*⁷¹

Though even if some women shared a friendly pint, that did not totally excuse what was noticed as a problem in the Orderly Book kept by John and Thomas Nairne.⁷² One John McDonnell had taken to the company of Francois Aubic, a married, French-Canadian lady. Unwilling to part with her company he hid her in conspiracy with some of his soldier friends. The command needed to confine McDonnell and threatened him with Courts-martial to return the wife.

As the matter received no further attention in the Orderly Book, it is presumed the French Canadian wife was returned to her husband,⁷³ but this this situation mirrors an apparent repetitive scenario that Canadian artist Cornelius Krieghoff thought deserving of preserving in several of his tableaux painted as late as 1845.

⁶⁸ Ostola, “The British Garrison”, 194.

⁶⁹ Ostola, “The British Garrison”, 196.

⁷⁰ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 22.

⁷¹ Matthew P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 74-75, (hereinafter Dziennik, *The Fatal Land*).

⁷² John Nairne and Thomas Nairne, Fonds, Archives of Canada, R5991-0-3-E, MG23-GIII 23.

⁷³ Sam Allison, *Driv’n By Fortune: The Scots’ March To Modernity in America, 1745-1812*, (Toronto, Dundurn Press, 2015), 74-75, (hereinafter Allison, *Driv’n By Fortune*).

Though Krieghoff's painting were a spoof on the troubles poised in military garrison towns, it captured what was a real problem for commanders. In the *The Return of the Jealous Husband*, Krieghoff painted two versions of a Highland soldier circa 1845, caught in the home of a Quebec-habitant, as the husband returned. [Plates 3 & 4]

Sam Allison goes on to specifically address the question of extent of British military-French *Canadienne* marriages:

...records for the parish of Saint-Francois-de-la-Riviere-du-Sud show children of Andrew Ross, Hector Ross, and John MacNeil of the 78th. All three soldiers were married to Scottish women, not to French Canadians. [Generally, post-1763] many of the 78th married local women and settled down in places such as Fraserville (re-named Riviere – du-Loup).⁷⁴

Yet, while there were marriages to Scottish women in the 1760 to 1763 period, I was unable to trace any official marriages to French-Canadian brides during this time because British soldiers were not allowed to marry foreign nationals while serving in enemy countries.⁷⁵

Quebec notary records reveal that sums of money did change hands: for example, a woman by the name of Catherine Voyer, received a payment from Major John Campbell of the 78th on 23 Sept 1762, another woman, Angelique Fraser, was involved in a land sale detailed in a notary record dated 16 July 1762. Both of these transactions may have involved illegitimate children because Highlanders who wished to take financial responsibility for children born out of wedlock would have to resort to such methods.⁷⁶

Two last references: Historian J. M. Le Moine writing about “The Scot in New France 1535-1880”,⁷⁷ compiled a list of British Officers who up until 1871 had married while in Canada. That list contains over 170 British officers with the maiden name of their spouse. Among the 170 officers named there are only eleven that look to be a French-Canadian surname.

Additionally Colonel J.R. Harper in his seminal *The Fraser Highlanders* noted with specificity the names of twenty 78th Frasers that “eventually married” in Quebec, said to be to French-Canadian women.⁷⁸

The conclusion seems inescapable that during the 78th Fraser Highlanders' deployment mostly to Quebec Canada 1757-1763, there were very few if any marriages or lasting relationships entered into by Highland soldiers with *Canadienne* women, despite whatever “comely daughters of the St. Lawrence” might have graced their deployment.

⁷⁴ Allison, *Driv'n By Fortune*, 77.

⁷⁵ Idem.

⁷⁶ Allison, *Driv'n By Fortune*, 77-78.

⁷⁷ J.M. LeMoine, “The Scot in New France, 1535-1880”, Appendix xvi-xvii, *Literary and Historical Society of Quebec*, Lecture read 19 Nov 1880, available on-line, accessed, 9/14/2020.

⁷⁸ J.R. Harper, *The Fraser Highlanders*, 2nd revised and Indexed edition, (Bloomfield, ONT: Museum Restoration Service), pages 122-123.

