

Teague Cornelius O'Brennan (c1636-1687)
[aka Thècle Cornelius Aubry dit Thècle]

The First Irish Immigrant to Canada
(Jim's 9 X great-grandfather)

Many Canadians who have Irish ancestry assume that their immigrant ancestor arrived around the time of the Irish Famine. And they are usually correct. However, in Canada there are many descendants of an Irish immigrant who arrived almost two hundred years earlier.

Teague O'Brennan was known to be in Ville Marie [Montréal] as early as 1661.¹ It is accepted by many historians that he was the first Irish immigrant.² Exactly when he arrived is not known, but it is likely that he was among the soldiers sent by the King of France to assist in the colonization of New France.

How did an Irishman find himself in the French military? In the mid 1600s, Oliver Cromwell was waging war in Ireland. The Irish army surrendered in 1652, and about 30,000 soldiers were given permission to go to France or Spain.³ Many of these men joined the French military, where they learned the language and customs of their adopted country. The term "Wild Geese" is often used to refer to this group. Their Irish names were recorded by French-speaking enumerators and priests, and became almost unrecognizable as being of anything other than French origin.

The name was recorded in many ways: Thècle Cornelius (1667), Thècle Aubry (1673, 1676), Jean Cornelius Aubri (1675), Thècle Cornellus (1677), Thècle Aubri (1679), Thècle Obry (1681), Jacques Thècle Aubry (1681), Thècle Cornelius (his death in 1687), Pierre Aubry (at his daughter's marriage twenty years after his death). The descendants of Teague's only surviving son are known by the surname "Aubry", and most printed sources refer to him as "Thècle Cornelius Aubry dit Thècle".

The Gaelic form of Teague is "Tadhg" and it is pronounced somewhat like TYEG; other English variations are Tad, Thaddeus, Theodosius, Theophilus and Tim.⁴ Thus, "Tec" is not an illogical interpretation. Teague's marriage contract, made a few days before his marriage indicates that he did not know how to sign his name, although his bride did.

Teague/Thècle's marriage on 10 September 1670 is recorded in the parish registers of Notre-Dame-de-Québec. He was about thirty-four years old, identified as "Tec Aubrennam", the son of Connehour Aubrenam [Connor O'Brennan] and Honorée Iconnehour [Honora O'Connor]. His bride was Jeanne Chartier, about thirty years old, the daughter of deceased parents Pierre Chartier and Marie Gaudon. Jeanne was from the Paris parish of St. Honoré. She was a "Fille-du-Roi" and brought a dowry to the marriage of 650 pounds, including 50 pounds from the King of France. Tec was said to be of "la paroisse de St. Patrice de la ville Diasonyhouillean en Irlande".

¹ Jack Aubry, "Diving into the Gene Pool: A *Citizen* reporter's ancestral search ends with a revelation in a Kilkenny graveyard, *The Ottawa Citizen*, Sunday, July 1, 2001

² An exhibit (20 March 2009 – 10 April 2010) entitled "Being Irish O'Quebec" was mounted at the Musée McCord Museum, in Montreal. "Tadhg Cornelius O'Brennan" is one of those featured as probably the first Irishman to arrive.

³ Anne and David Kennedy, *An Outline of Irish History* (Belfast: C.J. Fallons (London) Ltd., n.d.), p. 82

⁴ Online database "Irish Names from Ancient to Modern" (<http://www.namenerds.com/irish/trad.html>) accessed 5 April 2009. Site managed by Norah Burch, Boston MA, 2007.

One descendant has an interesting interpretation for why Thècle's marriage occurred in Québec City rather than Montréal, which was closer to his home in L'Assomption..

“While it's not known how often he tried, it took him seven years from the arrival of the first Filles-du Roi ship to land a wife. Cornelius wasn't taking any chances. Rather than wait for the boat to arrive in Ville Marie, he went to Québec City to get first pick. It was a good strategy. On July 31, a boat, which had sailed from the Port de La Rochelle arrived with 120 Filles du Roi. That same day, Cornelius O'Brennan met Jeanne Chartier...”⁵

Jeanne Chartier was one of several hundred women recruited, between 1663 and 1673, by the King of France to become wives to the men who wanted to remain in New France. While a definitive number cannot be determined, historians have compiled lists from existing records and have estimated there were about 800 such women, who became known as “Les Filles du Roi” [Daughters of the King]. These women came from various parts of France, and, for the most part, were not wealthy. The few that apparently were of the upper-class were impoverished, and lacked the dowries to marry in France within their class. Most of the women were orphans and also had limited opportunities to marry in France. The King's promised dowry of at least 50 pounds to each and free passage to the new world must have been incentive enough for them to embark on such an adventure, and influence them to promise to marry when they arrived in New France. Although many of the French soldiers returned to France after their tours of duty, many decided to become permanent residents, marry and have families in the new country.

The way Thècle's birthplace was recorded by the priest (and by the notary who witnessed the marriage contract) has caused problems for his descendants who have attempted to find the actual location in Ireland. The consensus of most researchers is that it may be Dysart-on-the Dinen, in County Kilkenny. It is generally accepted by these researchers that County Kilkenny was the origin of most O'Brennan families, and some maintain that if you say “Dysart-on-the Dinen” rapidly with an Irish accent, it sounds similar to what the French records show. The actual birthplace will probably never be proven, as there are no surviving Catholic parish registers for the time period, and the marriage contract and marriage itself are the only known reference to Teague's birthplace.

According to a descendant, Thècle was first a labourer and soldier, then a coureur de bois and later a farmer and trapper. He is first found in 1661 as an employee of Urbain Tessier. Urbain's farm was located in what is now downtown Montréal—stretching along part of St-Jacques and St-Urbain Streets.⁶

On 24 March 1661⁷, several men were working on Urbain Tessier's farm (outside the city walls) when a group of about 250 Iroquois attacked them. After the battle was over, ten of the workers were unaccounted for; they had been kidnapped. This group included both Urbain Tessier and Thècle, his employee. A few days later, the bodies of four of the men were found, and it was not known where the other six had been taken. On May 5th, officials in Montréal undertook proceedings to sell the possessions of three of the captives to settle their debts; Thècle was one of these debtors. An inventory of his possessions was valued at 54 pounds, but his debts were 61 pounds. The inventory further reveals

⁵ Jack Aubry, “Diving into the Gene Pool: A *Citizen* reporter's ancestral search ends with a revelation in a Kilkenny graveyard, *The Ottawa Citizen*, Sunday, July 1, 2001

⁶ There is a plaque in Montréal high on the wall of a nearby building indicating the location of this farm.

⁷ Proven by church records

that he was owed 70 pounds, and was living in the household of Jean Gervaise. ⁸His possessions included a red cap, a porcupine belt, a shirt with a tie, two combs, a mirror, and a small safe with a key.

In June, Urbain's wife gave birth to their seventh child, and when the baby's baptism was recorded, the priest wrote that it was not known if Urbain was dead or alive.

The men were still missing in July, and one of the Jesuit priests, Rev. Simon Lemoyne, undertook to negotiate with the Iroquois for their release. He was successful, and in October several prisoners were released, including Thècle. In a declaration made to the Ville Marie fabric council, several of these newly-released prisoners testified about their period in captivity.

“Tècle Cornelius, an Irishman, declares that when he was a prisoner at Onnontagué with several others, Pierre Cauvin had testified to him that in case of death, he gave all his property to the Church.....”

After their marriage, Thècle and Jeanne settled on a farm on Ile Ste-Thérèse in the Parish of Ponte-aux-Trembles. They later moved to Lachenaie on the north shore of the Saint Lawrence River. Of their seven known children, four died before reaching adulthood. There are descendants from their oldest daughter Madeleine-Thérèse by her two husbands, and also from their son Francois.

A census of New France was taken in 1663 and has become known as Canada's first census. At the time, among the 3,035 residents there were only six persons who were not of French origin, and Thècle was the only one from Ireland. Other non-French men were from Scotland, England, and Belgium. All had lived in France for some time before their arrival in New France, likely as members of the French military, like Thècle.

Thècle was not enumerated in the 1666 census in any settlement, but “Corneille Thècle” is listed as a coureur-de-bois on an expedition to Lake Superior.

In the census of 1667, he is enumerated as “Tècle Cornelius” an unmarried 29-year-old domestic servant in the home of the André Demers family in Montréal. By the next census in 1681, Thècle and Jeanne were established at Lachenaie. They were both said to be 45 years old, and had four living children. Their six-year-old son Jean-Cornelius was not mentioned, possibly indicating an unrecorded death.

Thècle died at the approximate age of 51, was buried on 24 November 1687 from the church at Pointe-aux-Trembles. Jeanne, widowed at 47, was left with her surviving children: 16-year old Madeleine, 14-year-old Marie Catherine (who died four months after her father), 11-year old Jean-Baptiste, and 10-year old Francois. Jeanne's death in October 1695 is recorded at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Montréal.

Their eldest daughter Madeleine was Jim's 8 X great-grandmother; the line of descent is detailed on the next pages.

⁸ Urbain Tessier and Jean Gervaise were brothers-in-law, both married to Archambault women. These couples are both ancestral couples.

GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

Generation A

1. **Connor O'Brennan** was born in Ireland and married Honora Connor in Ireland. They were the parents of one known child:

+ 2. i TEAGUE¹ CORNELIUS O'BRENNAN, born about 1636, in Ireland, married 10 September 1670 at Ville Marie, New France, Jeanne Chartier.

Generation One

2. **Teague Cornelius O'Brennan**, [known in New France as **Thècle Cornelius Aubry**], born about 1636 in Ireland, married 10 September 1670, at Ville Marie (Montréal), Jeanne Chartier, daughter of Pierre and Marie (née Gaudon) Chartier, of the Parish of St-Honoré, Paris. Thècle died at his home at Ste-Therese and was buried 24 November 1687 at Pointe-aux-Trembles; Jeanne died at Montréal and was buried on 30 October 1695. Known children of Thècle Aubry and Jeanne Chartier were the following:

+ 3. i **MADELEINE THERESE AUBRY**, baptized 8 August 1671, at Notre-Dame-de-Montréal, married (1) 14 November 1696 at Varennes, Jean Capel dit Desjardins; married (2) 24 November 1700 at Montréal, Olivier Laine dit Laplume.

4. ii MARIE CATHERINE AUBRY, baptized 20 August 1673, at Notre-Dame-de-Montréal, buried 22 March 1688 at Montréal.

5. iii JEAN CORNELIUS AUBRY, baptized 23 January 1675 at Pointe-aux-Trembles, And died before 1681.

6. iv JEAN BAPTISTE AUBRY, baptized 26 May 1676 at Pointe-aux-Trembles. No further information.

7. v FRANÇOIS AUBRY dit THÈCLE, baptized 31 October 1677 at Pointe-aux-Trembles, married 23 September 1708 at Notre-Dame-de-Montréal, Marie-Jeanne Bouteiller, daughter of Jean and Marie (née Morin) Bouteiller, and died 29 January 1752 St-Laurent, Ile-de-Montréal. Francois & Marie-Jeanne were the parents of thirteen known children, born between 1709 and .1729

8. vi GENEVIEVE AUBRY, born 11 October 1679 Pointe-aux-Trembles, buried there 5 November 1679.

9. vii ETIENNE AUBRY, born 6 February 1681 Repentigny, died 28 February 1681 Repentigny.

Generation Two

3. **Madeleine Therese Aubry**, baptized 8 August 1671, at Notre-Dame-de-Montréal, married (1) 14 November 1696 at Montréal, Jean Capel dit Desjardins, son of Nicolas and Marie (née Bonhomme) Capel; Jean died before 1700. Madeleine married (2) 24 November 1700 at Notre-Dame-de-Québec, Olivier Laine dit Laplume. He died 22 February 1730 at Québec; Madeleine was buried 30 October 1695 at Montréal. Madeleine² Aubry and Jean Capel dit Desjardins were the parents of three known children including:

+ 10 i SUZANNE CAPEL, baptized 11 August 1694 Notre Dame-de-Montréal, married 3 September 1708, Montréal, Pierre LeCompte dit Lafleur.

By her second marriage to Olivier Lainé, Madeleine Aubry was the mother of six additional children.

Generation Three

10 **Suzanne Capel**, baptized 11 August 1694 Notre Dame-de-Montréal, married 3 September 1708, Montréal, Pierre LeCompte dit Lafleur, son of Pierre and Marguerite (née LePrince) Lecompte. Suzanne died 17 February 1750, Lachine, and Pierre died 17 May 1759 at Les Cèdres. Suzanne³ Capel and Pierre LeCompte dit Lafleur were the parents of ten known children including:

+ 11 vi CHARLES LECOMPTÉ dit LAFLEUR, born 3 August 1722 Montréal; married 6 May 1750 Bellevue, Marie-Genevieve Lalonde, daughter of Guillaume and Marie-Madeleine⁹ (née Allen) Lecompte.

Generation Four

11 **Charles LeCompte dit Lafleur**, born 3 August 1722 Montréal; married 6 May 1750 Bellevue, Marie-Genevieve Lalonde, daughter of Guillaume and Marie-Madeleine (née Allen) Lecompte; Charles died 30 May 1768, Soulanges. Charles LeCompte and Marie-Genevieve Lalonde were the parents of eleven known children including:

+ 12 i SUZANNE LECOMTE dit LAFLEUR, born about 1751, married 25 July 1768 at Soulanges, Charles Leduc, son of René and Marie-Elisabeth (née Fortier) Leduc.

Generation Five

12 **Suzanne LeCompte dit Lafleur**, born about 1751, married 25 July 1768 at Soulanges, Charles Leduc, son of René and Marie-Elisabeth (née Fortier) Leduc. Suzanne LeCompte and Charles Leduc were the parents of twelve known children including:

+ 13 i MARIE-SUZANNE LEDUC, born 8 August 1769, Ile Perrot, married 24 April 1786 Ile Perrot, Augustin Lefebvre dit Laciseray. Marie-Suzanne died about 1852.

Generation Six

13 **Marie-Suzanne Leduc** born 8 August 1769, Ile Perrot, married 24 April 1786 Ile Perrot, Augustin Lefebvre dit Laciseray. Marie-Suzanne died about 1852. Marie-Suzanne Leduc and Augustin Lefebvre were the parents of eight known children including:

+ 14 viii EUPHROSINE LEFEBVRE, born 3 September 1799, Beauharnois County, married (1) 11 October 1819 Ile Perrot, Louis Laberge, son of Charles and Marie-Victoire (née Pitre) Laberge; married (2) 20 February 1855, St-Louis-de-Gonzague, Charles Roy.

Generation Seven

14 **Euphrosine Lefebvre**, born 3 September 1799, Beauharnois County, married (1) 11 October 1819 Ile Perrot, Louis Laberge, son of Charles and Marie-Victoire (née Pitre) Laberge; married (2) 20 February 1855, St-Louis-de-Gonzague, Charles Roy. Euphrosine Lefebvre and Louis Laberge were the parents of twelve known children including:

⁹ Marie-Madeleine Allen was born 1 May 1692 in Deerfield, Massachusetts, and had been captured in an Indian raid. Her original name was Sarah, the daughter of Edward Allen and Mercy Painter. Her name was changed at her baptism in 1705; she was raised as an adopted daughter by a French family

- + 15 ii EUPHROSINE LABERGE, born 31 July 1820, Beauharnois County, married (1) 10 July 1837, Beauharnois, Michel Longtin, married (2) 16 June 1874, Beauharnois, Moise Dandurand.

There were no children the marriage of Euphrosine Lefebvre and Charles Roy.

Generation Eight

15 **Euphrosine Laberge**, born 31 July 1820, Beauharnois County, married (1) 10 July 1837, Beauharnois, Michel Longtin, son of Michel and Archange (née Hunault) Longtin; married (2) 16 June 1874, Beauharnois, Moise Dandurand, son of Joseph and Francoise (née Argan) Dandurand. Euphrosine Laberge and Michel Longtin were the parents of nine known children including:

- + 16 vi MARIE-EUPHROSINE LONGTIN born 4 April 1850 Beauharnois County, married 28 February 1870 Beauharnois, André Gendron. Marie-Euphrosine died 28 August 1931 Montréal.

There were no children from the marriage of Euphrosine Laberge and Moise Dandurand.

Generation Nine

16 **Marie-Euphrosine Longtin**, born 4 April 1850, Beauharnois County, married 28 February 1870, Beauharnois, André Gendron, son of Pierre and Judith (née Lalonde) Gendron; Marie-Euphrosine died 28 August 1931, Montréal. Marie-Euphrosine Longtin and André Gendron were the parents of six known children including:

- + 17 ii MARIE-CLARA GENDRON, born 27 July 1872, Beauharnois, married 30 August 1891, Valleyfield, Joseph-Cléophas Carrière; she died 25 August 1920 Lebre, Saskatchewan.

Generation Ten

17 **Marie Clara Gendron**, born 27 July 1872 Beauharnois, married 30 August 1891, Valleyfield, Joseph Cléophas Carrière, son of Eustache and Marie-Josphine (née Théoret) Carrière; Marie-Clara died 25 August 1920 in Lebre, Saskatchewan, and is buried there. The five known children of Marie-Clara Gendron and Joseph-Cléophas Carrière include:

- + 18 i MARIE-AGNES-GERMAINE CARRIÈRE, born 4 June 1896, Lachine, Québec, married (1) 30 December 1922, Regina, Saskatchewan, Emil Grudnitzki; married (2) 10 February 1936 Lebre, Saskatchewan, James John Condon. Germaine died 29 March 1966 Balcarres, Saskatchewan, and is buried in Lebre.

Generation Eleven

18 **Marie-Agnes-Germaine Carrière**, born 4 June 1896, Lachine, Québec. She married (1) 30 December 1922, Regina, Saskatchewan, Emil Grudnitzki, son of Martin and Amelia (née Zimmerman) Grudnitzki; Emil died 22 March 1935, Lebre, Saskatchewan and is buried there. Germaine married (2) 10 February 1936, Lebre, James John Condon, son of Thomas and Mary (Rodgers) Condon. Germaine died 29 March 1966 Balcarres, Saskatchewan and is buried in Lebre. Marie-Agnes-Germaine Carrière and Emil Grudnitzki were the parents of seven children. The only child of Marie-Agnes-Germaine Carrière and James John Condon was:

- + 19 i Living.

Generation Twelve

19 **Living**

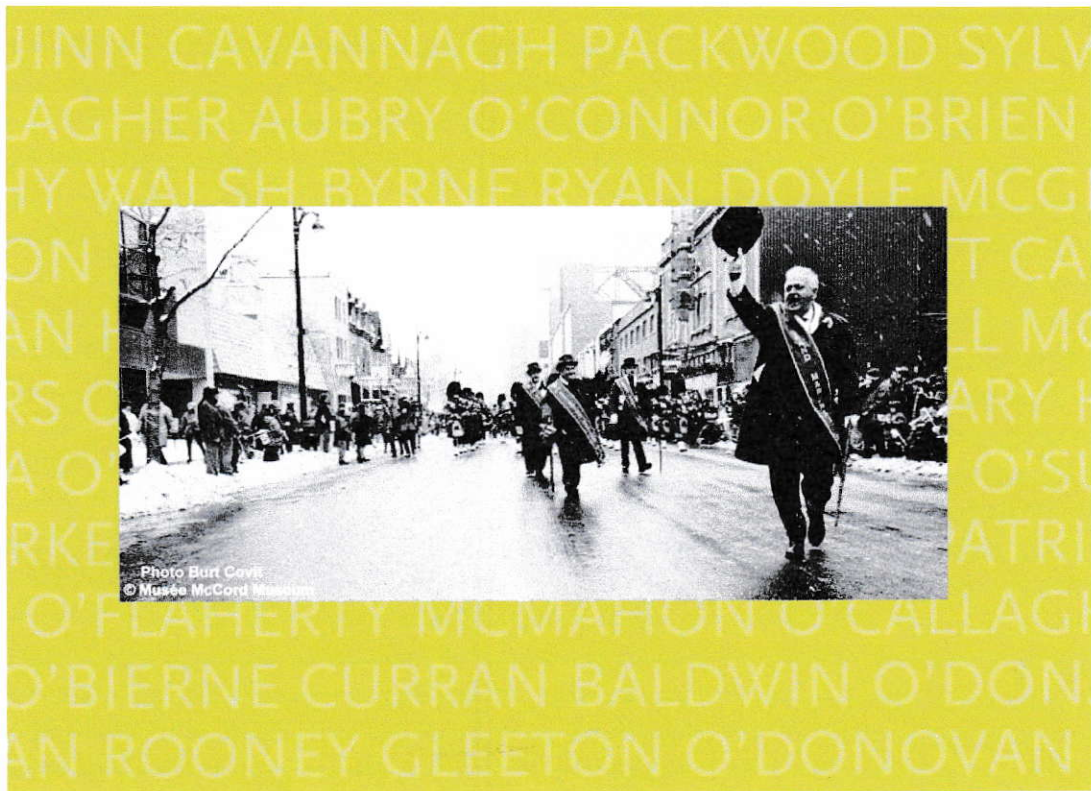
20 I JOANNE PATRICIA CONDON, born 19 October 1961, Regina, Saskatchewan;
Married on 5 May 1984 at Regina. Joanne died at Regina on 19 March 2008,
and is buried in Lebret, Saskatchewan.

21 ii Living

22 iii Living



Being Irish O'Quebec



**Complete texts of the exhibition
Presented at the McCord Museum
Beginning March 20, 2009.**

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2. Biographies

2.1. Tec Aubry (Tadhg Cornelius O'Brennan), about 1630-1687

An Irishman in New France

Tadhg Cornelius O'Brennan was probably the first Irishman to arrive here. Old records tell us he was born in Ireland during the 1630s and decades later lived in Ville-Marie, now Montreal. They also tell us he died in Pointe-aux-Trembles in 1687, still only in his fifties. But they are silent about his emigration.

Many 17th-century Irish Catholics sought refuge in Europe from war, bad harvests and harsh Penal Laws. Those who served in foreign armies were called "Wild Geese."

Was O'Brennan one of these "Wild Geese," who sought his fortune first in France and then in its overseas colony? We may never know.

- *Certificate of marriage between Tecq (Tècle – Thècle-Cornelius) Aubrenaue (Aubry – Aubrenane – O'Brenam), a settler residing at the Assomption River, near the island of Montreal ... and Jeanne Chartier ...*, (detail), September 6, 1670, BANQ (Centre Québec), CR301, P112.

... father of a large family

Newlyweds Tec Aubry and Jeanne Chartier settled on a farm at Pointe-aux-Trembles on the island of Montreal, then moved to Lachenaie, north of the island. By the time of the 1681 census, they owned five farm animals and five acres of land.

Tec was already an experienced farmer. He had been working on Urbain Tessier's land in 1661 when a group of Iroquois kidnapped him. Upon his release seven months later, he returned to work on farms around Ville-Marie.

The couple had seven children. The youngest, François, had fourteen of his own. Today, thousands of Aubrys can trace their lineage back to Quebec's first Irishman and his *Fille du roi* wife. Abbé Tanguay's classic genealogical reference book, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes*, documents this important founding family.

- Page from the *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes-françaises depuis la fondation de la colonie jusqu'à nos jours*, by Abbé Cyprien Tanguay, volume I, Montreal, Eusèbe Sénécal, 1871, McCord Museum, M2008X.6.3.

A coureur des bois ...

The *coureurs des bois* (literally, “runners of the woods”) epitomize New France. Ruggedly independent, these unlicensed fur traders and their Aboriginal partners helped build the new colony.

Documents detail legal agreements between “Corneille Teclé” and a group of trading partners in New France. Corneille Teclé was undoubtedly Tadhg Cornelius O’Brennan.

O’Brennan’s new French-speaking compatriots had difficulty spelling his Gaelic name. He appears in documents variously as Theclé, Teque and Tecq, Aubrenam, Aubrenane, Aubrenaue and O’Brenam. Present-day historians and genealogists refer to him as “Tec Aubry.” The Gaelic or English names of many other early Irish settlers underwent similarly surprising transformations.

... husband of a *Fille du roi*

Like the *coureurs des bois*, the *Filles du roi*, or King’s daughters, are emblematic of New France. Between 1663 and 1673, 770 young women arrived in New France – whose European inhabitants were mostly male – under the sponsorship of the French King, Louis XIV. They were sent to marry and have children. The plan worked: New France became a viable community.

At Quebec City on September 10, 1670, *Fille du roi* Jeanne Chartier, daughter of Pierre Chartier and Marie Gaudon of Paris, married “Tecq Aubrenaue,” son of Connehour Aubrenaue and Honorée Iconnehour (probably Connor O’Brennan and Honora O’Connor), of Diasony, a small village in Ireland. Tec is described as a settler from the Assomption River area. Among the wedding guests were a master armourer and the widow of a seigneur (an important landowner). Tec Aubry had traveled very far from his Irish origins.

- *Ruling drawn up at the request of Corneille Teclé, Mathurin Normandin and Robert Cachelièvre, concerning a trade agreement between them and six other partners, since deceased, who had travelled to Outaouais territory to trade, 1670*
Manuscript ledger (reproduction)
Centre d’archives de Québec de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, TP1,S28,P715
- *Record of the marriage between Tecq (Tècle – Thècle-Cornelius) Aubrenaue (Aubry – Aubrenane – O’Brenam), a settler residing at the Assomption River, near the island of Montreal, and Jeanne Chartier, 1670*
Manuscript ledger
Centre d’archives de Québec de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, CR301,P112