

Beyond the C11 Series: Approaches and Sources for the Social History of New France

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This will be no more than a rough sketch of some of the new sources and recent approaches being used to write the social history of early French Canada.¹ It is called "Beyond the C11 Series" because that body of colonial records in the French National Archives has been the most influential source for the history of New France as a royal colony. Defined as the "general correspondence from Canada and dependencies," this series of letters and memorials from colonial officials is divided into C11A for North America in general, C11D for Acadia, and so on. The collection is usually read along with the B Series, letters sent from the Ministry of the Navy and Colonies and related agencies in France, as well as with documents from the other government branches concerned with the overseas empire.

The value of the official correspondence as an historical source was first acknowledged in 1744 by Father Charlevoix in his *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France*. The documents, he wrote, "have been of great use to me . . . as guides . . . These same dispatches . . . are, moreover, the real source whence I have drawn all that concerns the political and military government of New France." The same might have been said by historians from that time until the 1950s. The richness and variety of information gathered by the colonial bureaucracy made this series a natural starting point for researchers. Thanks to the Public Archives of Canada, partial transcripts and microfilms of the official correspondence were available in Ottawa. In the last three decades the dependence of scholars on these records has lessened and the information obtained from them is used more critically. Earlier historians tended to accept the administrators' priorities as a measure of historical importance and, with some allowance for the bias of individual officials, their perspective. Historians such as Francis Parkman were already predisposed to emphasize military and political events and so the preoccupations of the administrators became the great issues of the history of Canada from 1663 to 1760. Many subtle but profound social changes, however, were not acknowledged by contemporary writers. Moreover, historians did not allow for class as well as

1 Serge Gagnon's article, "The Historiography of New France, 1960-1974: Jean Hamelin to Louise Dechêne," in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, XIII: 1 (spring 1978), 80-99, provides a more comprehensive summary of recent trends in the writing of history.

personal bias as a determinant of what was written; expressions of paternalistic idealism were accepted as a statement of government priorities.²

To appreciate the persistent dominance of the CII Series as a source, look at the publications of two of the most innovative writers since the Second World War. William John Eccles has transformed the view that English-speakers have had of the French regime. In *Frontenac: The Courtier Governor* (1959) and subsequent books he relied primarily on the CII Series and related government documents. As a consequence, the subject matter of his books is not very different from the contents of the works of Francis Parkman, whose Anglo-Saxon jingoism Eccles loathes.

Where, then, is the innovation in Eccles' books? It is in his critical scholarship, his wariness of anachronism, and his emphasis on the links between colony and mother country. Dr. Eccles used the CII Series with more discrimination than was exercised by François-Xavier Garneau and Parkman, whose books were considered definitive accounts of New France for nearly a century. The reputation of their heroes, Governor Frontenac and General Montcalm, is enthusiastically demolished by Eccles, whose mentor, Edward R. Adair, was also an iconoclast. Our admiration is directed from the great men of the past to the nameless rural folk of New France and the Amerindians, whose skills in war and diplomacy are extolled. This sympathetic portrayal of the humble Canadien and the North American Indian owes something to Eccles' childhood friendships with French Canadians and a natural compassion for the underdog, but it also has a scholarly justification. In the preface to *France in America* (1972), W.J. Eccles wrote that the historian "has to view the past through the eyes of the people of the past age and culture he studies, to judge men and their actions by the values of their own time." Dr. Eccles' studies at the Sorbonne in Paris may explain that other aspect of his approach: the treatment of the colonies as an extension of the parent nation, not as detached frontier

2 Since the family was the basic social institution, people of the French regime customarily used it as an analogy for other human relationships. The idea that the king was, metaphorically, the father of his subjects fits into this general pattern. It is important to recall that the model family was patriarchal; the property and civil rights of dependents were subject to the authority of the father. He was obliged to see to their essential needs and they, in return, owed him their submission. The judiciary of New France did regulate the sale of bread and beef to ensure that these vital foodstuffs were cheap and wholesome. This "paternalism," however, included an awareness that if these foods were wanting in quantity or quality, public unrest would result as it had in France.

Evidence that the crown manifested the loving and indulgent kindness that one might expect from a modern Canadian father is hard to find. Those who emphasize royal paternalism rather than royal authoritarianism tend to extract government actions from their religious context. Roman Catholicism has always placed charity to the unfortunate among the good acts that lead to salvation. The establishment of Poor Boards in Quebec and Montreal in the last decade of the seventeenth century, by order of the Sovereign Council, is said to be a shining example of royal paternalism in action. Close inspection of the 1688 order reveals that practical considerations and religion were, as motives, more important than paternalism. The document spoke of the problem of unlicensed beggars and appointed parish curates to chair the boards. The funds disbursed by the boards were to come from poor boxes in the churches and from parish collections, not from the crown. Most revealing of all is the stipulation that "in taking up collection from each resident of the parish . . . care must be taken not to be too insistent. Everyone must be left free to practice charity according to his devotion." For the entire order in translation, see Y.F. Zoltvany, ed., *The French Tradition in America* (New York, 1969), 70.

settlements. “Whatever throws light on France during the old regime,” he wrote, “reflects on the colonies.” It is an obvious truth, yet not so obvious as to prevent earlier writers from dealing with New France in isolation and from lauding Intendant Talon when he was simply carrying out the policies of his master in France, Jean-Baptiste Colbert.

Jean Hamelin’s *Economie et Société en Nouvelle-France* (1960) appeared a year after the publication of *Frontenac: The Courtier Governor*. Looking at my tattered, marked-up copy – bought for two dollars in the 1960s! – I remember the excitement of first opening this book; it was a revelation. Hamelin’s skepticism about received interpretations was refreshing, but it was his methodology that was most impressive. Historical statistics, neatly conveyed in graphs and based on a large accumulation of data, had more authority than the statements of literary historians. Before Hamelin, history in French Canada was still a branch of literature and interpretations depended as much on rhetoric as they did on evidence. The eclectic, literary historian goes over a number of documents; he decides what is true or typical, and then cites a piece of testimony in support of his judgement. For him, it is sufficient to repeat Louis Franquet’s observation in 1752 that soldiers and habitants drank a brandy “eye-opener” in the morning to prove that alcoholism was widespread in the colony. With the quantitative approach – say, using hospital registers of the Quebec *Hôtel-Dieu* to extract a few hundred cases of illnesses treated – one could identify the average or typical with greater certainty and then cite an example that conforms to the stated norm.

Twenty years later, we can see that many of Jean Hamelin’s bold assertions were wide of the mark. This was due to the sources he used. For example, the census of 1681 is used as though it were a dispassionate listing of all the trades in the colony; comparison with the notarial and judicial records reveal that the census-takers were particularly interested in crafts with a military application and that they might not record other trades. Jean Hamelin often admitted that he had not consulted the notarial archives and that they might tell another story. To his credit, he gave Canadian historians a technique that could be applied to new material in order to test or modify his own conclusions. My analysis of some 650 notarized apprenticeship indentures³ was inspired, in part, by Hamelin’s *Economie et Société en Nouvelle-France*. The conclusion, however, rejected his statement that the colony suffered from a chronic and general shortage of skilled labour. His methodology is emphasized because Hamelin’s footnotes repeatedly give CIIA as the origin of his evidence; most of his sources were traditional ones. Had Jacques Henripin’s equally innovative work in Canadian historical demography, *La Population canadienne au début du XVIIIe siècle* (1954) not been published in France and addressed to demographers, his influence on historians in Canada would

3 “Manual Education and Economic Life in New France,” *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 167 (1977), 125-168; this article develops ideas first expressed in “Apprenticeship Indentures: A Key to Artisan Life in New France,” in *Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers, 1971* (Ottawa, 1972), 30-82.

have been as great as that of Jean Hamelin. Today, neglect of someone such as Henripin is not as likely since the lines between academic disciplines have been dissolved.

The revision of the social history of New France will involve the re-threshing of old grain, such as the administrative correspondence. The new flail will certainly be the methodology associated with the *Annales* school of historiography in France. Hamelin had applied the techniques of this school to the history of Canada. So named because of their association with the journal *Annales, Economies, Sociétés*, the French historians of society were inspired by the structural analysis used by sociologists, anthropologists and ethnologists. Some go as far as to describe themselves as “sociologists of the past” although the fragmentary and incomplete evidence available to historians is not suited to techniques developed for use with living informants. At best – sources permitting – one can ask the same questions posed by social scientists.

Histories of the *Annales* school and its disciples are not narratives dominated by great individuals; they present a “global view” of a past society with emphasis on the living conditions and collective mentality of the majority. The hero is replaced by the common person and humanity is divided into social types. Human life is said to be shaped by the interaction of impersonal factors such as climate, geography, and long-term trends in population growth and the economy. Dramatic events, such as insurrections and famines, result from the coming-together (*conjoncture*) of several long and short-term factors. By implication, individual decisions are accorded a small place in the historical process. The mapping of long-term trends requires a patient accumulation and computation of facts and figures, frequently with the aid of an electronic computer. The books of *Annales* historians are liberally sprinkled with statistics, graphs and charts; this obvious feature is the one that is copied by historians who also wish to be regarded as social scientists.

The French origins of the *Annales* approach and its promise of giving history the apparent certainty of a social science, explain why this methodology was readily-accepted at Quebec universities and why it pervades French language publications about New France. The religious, legal and social traditions of French Canada are those of a unitary society and, as a consequence, there is a willingness to believe that there can be an exact and certain knowledge of the past. English Canadians, who are the products of a pluralist society, are more prepared to admit that truth is a relative thing. In Quebec the dictum of the French historians, Adeline Daumard and François Furet, that “scientifically speaking, there is no social history but quantitative history”⁴ has been taken to heart. Serious history must have all of the trappings of a social science; one dare not publish a paper without some statistical tables and graphs. At first, quantification was naïvely applied to unlikely subjects. With only a dozen or so persons, André Lachance in *Le Bourreau au Canada sous le Régime français* (1966) felt obliged to present the executioners’ initial age and period of service in tabular form, along with the averages down to a fraction of a percentile. I blush to admit that I have no computer printouts of my own, though my wife’s pocket calculator has allowed me to place a foot on the threshold of modernity.

4 *L'Histoire sociale: sources et methodes* (Paris, 1967), 16.

As a subject, society in New France is well suited to the quantitative approach. The lower classes were semi-literate and left few private letters and diaries that express popular values or describe everyday activities. With few potential readers, no one could be persuaded to establish a printing press in the colony. How I envy the historians of New England with all those introspective Calvinist scribblers to choose from. With the people of New France, quantitative analysis of impersonal material is essential to disclose common patterns of behaviour and widely-held beliefs. The raw material for large-scale analysis, whether in population records or in legal documents, is abundant. Fortunately, necessity and opportunity coincide.

Since the publication of Cyprien Tanguay's *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes* in 1871, family historians have used the church registers of baptisms, marriages and burials to follow the lives of their sainted ancestors. Genealogy seemed to rival "the revenge of the cradle" as the most popular indoor activity in pre-1960 French Canada. Genealogists' publications make it easy to find the vital statistics of anyone born in a *Canadien* parish before 1800. It was only when the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* asked me to write entries about Protestant English-speakers that I realized what a wonderful aid the Roman Catholic parish registers had been to me.

To locate the "strays," such as immigrant bachelors or the few Protestants in New France, who are absent from the church registers, there are several detailed censuses of the colony and its towns from 1666 onward. The nominal censuses of the 1600s and those for the town of Quebec have long been in print. Some come from the C11 Series. In the tradition of Jacques Henripin, who used Tanguay's digest of the parish records, a team of demographers under Hubert Charbonneau at the Université de Montréal had applied sophisticated statistical techniques to the nominal censuses to compensate for omissions, duplication, and errors. In one case their work confirmed statements made in the C11 Series. From the disproportionately low number of males aged 25 to 29, relative to females in the same age group, listed in the 1681 census, the demographers found that colonial officials had probably not exaggerated the loss of manpower to the fur trade.⁵ The demographers' work with the long-familiar parish records and censuses is an example of how old grain can be re-threshed to yield more reliable information about past society.

It has been said that the French would no more undertake an important act without using a notary than they would think of dying without the *viaticum* or extreme unction. This was equally true of their Canadian cousins. The legacy of this reliance on notaries consists of hundreds of boxes filled with seigneurial deeds, service indentures, marriage contracts, land sales, debt acknowledgements, bequests and estate inventories drawn up during the French regime. Since the nineteenth century, genealogists have used individual deeds for family histories. Robert-Lionel Séguin has published extracts from notarial documents that reveal

5 Hubert Charbonneau, Yolande Lavoie and Jacques Légaré, "Le recensement nominatif du Canada en 1681," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, No. 7 (April 1971), 77-98.

aspects of material life. These deeds were to make an agreed course of action legally-enforceable and they were made for private reference. They are, therefore, more reliable than the casual impressions of outsiders as evidence of social behaviour. Because each type of act is fairly uniform, the variable bits of information can be easily identified and tabulated. Thus notarial records are well suited to the quantitative approach. In comparing the notarized ship sales at Louisbourg with the official reports of vessels bought from the English colonials, it is apparent that the colonial administrators were concealing the failure of local shipbuilders to meet outside competition. In the CIIB Series it was reported that in 1733-34 twenty-five ships were bought for nineteen built locally; the notarial deeds, however, recorded forty-seven purchases, most of them from New Englanders.

The value of notarial deeds for the writing of social history was revealed in 1940 by Isabel Foulché-Delbosc,⁶ but nearly a quarter century passed before these archives were extensively used by historians. Perhaps it was the nature of the deeds as well as their inaccessibility that deterred researchers. The language of the acts is repetitious, formal, and colourless. The texts written in the 1600s are often difficult to read. Whereas the official correspondence was usually copied in a rounded copperplate, notaries and court recorders (who were often notaries) sometimes used a cursive, clerical hand that was full of abbreviations. Moreover, until the late 1960s the notarial archives of the French regime were kept by the superior courts in the province of Quebec. The court employees were usually very busy with other matters and historical researchers – except at Trois-Rivières – were limited to six or nine deeds a day. The documents had to be ordered from inventories that were prepared with more attention to surnames than to the nature of the act itself. I also recall one attendant who, in his inebriation, could not always find the requested deeds. Since the provincial archives and its branches have assumed custody of the notarial files, researchers have been freed from many of the frustrations associated with the former arrangement.

The notarial archives have been used very effectively by Louise Dechêne to reconstruct society on Montreal Island in her book *Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle* (1974). She used the global approach and the methodology of the Annales school; the book is based on a thesis presented at the University of Paris. Professor Dechêne's argument is that New France became an economically self-contained, farming society before the conquest of 1760. This is a refutation of the popular notion that the colony was, essentially, a fur-trade society. In the 1970s less-gifted scholars also attempted to extract statistics from the notarial deeds. The most common failing of modern researchers is that they tend to treat information gathered in an earlier age as though it were compiled with present-day exactitude. In short, there is a premature application of quantitative methods without an appreciation of the limitations of the evidence being quantified.

6 "Women of New France (Three Rivers: 1651-63)," *Canadian Historical Review*, XXI: 2 (June 1940), 132-149. In the article she described "the notarial and law court records" as "available sources for the social historian which have as yet been little used and which serve to throw considerable light upon colonial domestic life."

In *Les Apprentis Artisans à Québec, 1660-1815* (1977), Jean-Pierre Hardy states, with convincing precision, that the average age of a Quebec apprentice was 16 years and eight months. This figure, however, is based on the responses of people who rarely knew their exact age, a fact evident in the censuses which show a disproportionate number of persons whose ages are round numbers: 30, 40 and so on. The writer's figure does not seem to allow for the mature, self-indentured apprentices who seldom gave their age to the notary. Here too and in other works we find statistical tables without an explanation of the significance of the figures; it is not clear whether the researcher felt that the meaning of the tables was self-evident or whether he was unable to explain the findings.

The interpretation of raw statistics requires a good knowledge of the culture and institutions of the old regime. Such a grounding is also necessary to enable to historian to pose intelligent questions of the evidence. The effective use of new techniques still requires background knowledge and the traditional skills of the historian as evaluator of evidence and as articulate expositor. Of course, one can always hope that the researcher has enough literary skill to be able to communicate the findings to the reader in an entertaining fashion.

It is very hard for the best of historians to fully divest themselves of modern preoccupations, as W.J. Eccles recommended. In *Habitants et Marchands* Louise Dechêne found that in her sample of 250 estate inventories there was a great variation of wealth within each occupational group and that assets did not necessarily correspond with social rank. Rather than abandon the twentieth century notion that prestige and property had to be connected, Professor Dechêne disparaged her sample and estate inventories for their incompleteness. She did see that personal debts indicated a relationship between rank and consumption patterns. In an essay published in 1975, based on a smaller sample of inventories and marriage contracts, I argued that personal expenditure conformed to established rank, which was independent of a person's actual wealth.⁷

There is in the Annales methodology an economic determinism that is self-validating. Quantitative historians are attracted to prices, wages, and financial records because such information is eminently quantifiable and, being based on a common monetary standard, comparison of these facts is easy. Cultural trends are difficult to quantify and, given the materialist values of the present, they tend to be discounted. Like Chaucer's Pardoner, whose "theme is yet, and evere was, *Radix malorum est Cupiditas*," Canadian practitioners of the Annales methodology tend to relate all human actions to the economic context. On the other hand, we know that cultural values, religion, and political ideas can be an equally potent spur to human behaviour. Lawrence Stone has shown that in the English-speaking world companionate marriage and affective individualism appeared before industrialization, the presumed source of social "modernization." It may be leaning too far in one direction to credit an aristocratic and military ethos with having given dynamism to society in New France, as W.J. Eccles argues, but such cultural imperatives deserve, at least, equal consideration with economic factors.

7 "Rank in New France: Reconstructing a Society from Notarial Documents," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, No. 15 (May 1975), 34-53.

The profit motive was certainly a major issue in the debate of the 1950s and 1960s about the existence of a native bourgeoisie in New France and its fate after the British conquest. This debate over a group that was seldom well-defined or documented revealed more about the economic frustrations of modern French Canada than it did about New France. To be fair, this historical discussion did stimulate further studies into colonial trade and those who were engaged in commerce during the French regime. The talents of more than a half dozen historians have been attracted to this subject.⁸ The most thorough pieces of research that has resulted from this convergence of interest is Dale Miquelon's *Dugard of Rouen: French Trade to Canada and the West Indies, 1729-1770* (1978). Using the records of three inter-related business enterprises as well as the official correspondence, Miquelon has traced the operations of the metropolitan merchants trading with the colonies. To date, no one has convincingly refuted the claims made in the official correspondence that merchants based in France controlled the wholesale trade of the colony and even overshadowed the Canadians in retail commerce. As the book's title suggests, trade with Canada was a very junior branch of the lucrative commerce with the French West Indies. Professor Miquelon is primarily concerned with the problems of credit and capitalization, yet he does note the religious fatalism or Christian resignation that carried the merchants through times of hardship.

The financial accounts of surviving religious houses in Canada have been "mined" for price and wage statistics and, until recently, their other records were the preserve of hagiographers devoted to the reputation of their own religious order or the memory of a celebrated ecclesiastic. The best-catalogued and most accessible collection of church documents belongs to the Quebec Seminary, and Noël Baillargeon has used its archives to write a dispassionate, two volume history of the seminary before the conquest. In *L'Hôpital-Général de Québec, 1692-1764* (1971) Micheline d'Allaire has shown what a variety of information can be drawn from such records by a scholar with a broad perspective and new techniques. The main focus is on the social origins of the nuns and the place of the hospice in the life of the colony, but the author comments on diverse matters such as the evolution in the food served at that institution.

The court records and laws of New France, like the censuses, are being subjected to critical re-examination and quantitative analysis. Examples of colonial legislation have been available since the publication of the *Edits et Ordonnances des Intendants, et Arrêts... du Conseil Supérieur de Québec* collection in 1803. Extracts from the registers of the Superior Council and the lower court at Quebec were published by Joseph-François Perrault as early as 1824. Laws have been a popular type of document with editors and historians who assumed, quite logically, that laws are made to be enforced and that each enactment had social consequences.

8 John Boshier, Pierre Boullé, Christopher Moore, Cameron Nish, José Igartua, and James Pritchard have published articles on commerce and the merchants in addition to the book by Dave Miquelon.

The judicial and administrative records of New France challenge that assumption. In *La Justice criminelle du Roi au Canada au XVIIIe siècle: Tribunaux et officiers* (1978) André Lachance found that the Great Criminal Ordinance of 1670 was fully enforced. In civil matters, however, general legislation was often a statement of bureaucratic hopes and it was not always put into effect. The exceptions were the principles of the *Coûtume de Paris* and specific rulings for particular places or persons; these were applied by the magistracy. It is very likely that the famous royal decree of April 1670 to foster early marriages and to reward fruitful couples was a dead letter that merely expressed Louis XIV's hope of peopling Canada without depopulating France.

The court registers and supporting documents are not only the best means for identifying the laws that were enforced, but they also offer evidence of social behaviour and popular mentality. In 1969 Jacques Mathieu showed how a quantitative analysis could extract this information.⁹ John A. Dickinson used the quantitative approach with just the statements of court costs and he confirmed that colonial justice was, by French standards, speedy and cheap – though not to the degree claimed by historians who had relied on the observations of writers during the French regime.¹⁰

The judicial records are a natural source for satisfying the modern curiosity about minorities, deviants, and rebels. André Lachance's study of criminal justice from 1712 to 1748 will be the major scholarly work in this field. To date, he has only published the part of his study that deals with the institutions of justice; his account of crimes and felons is yet to be published. A foretaste of his findings on criminality was contained in his booklet on the office of the public executioner. Louise Dechêne questioned the value of studies of deviance as long as the socially-accepted norms for behaviour in New France are unknown. Using the court actions for calumny, I suggested that, since slander is an inverse definition of what is moral and proper, such cases do reveal some of the majority standards for personal conduct.¹¹ Although criminal and civil court records deal with a select element in society, they are, given the rarity of personal letters and private journals, good evidence for reconstructing the values of early French Canada.

The prize for ingenuity in finding a new approach to society in New France goes to the historical geographer, Richard Colebrook Harris. After examining the actual patterns of human settlement in the St. Lawrence valley, along with more conventional written sources, he concluded his book *The Seigneurial System of Early Canada* (1966) with the ringing assertion that "the seigneurial system itself was largely irrelevant to the geography of early Canada, and it is reasonable to conclude that it was equally irrelevant to the way of life that emerged there." His

9 "Les causes devant la Prévôté in Québec en 1667," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, No. 3 (April 1969), 101-111.

10 "Court Costs in France and New France in the Eighteenth Century," *Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers, 1977* (Ottawa, 1978), 49-64.

11 "'Thieving Buggers' and 'Stupid Sluts': Insults and Popular Culture in New France," *William and Mary Quarterly*, October 1979, 524-547.

book is so persuasive that I sometimes wonder if I should mention the seigneurial system in my course on early French Canada. Even if this landholding system were not a shaping force in society before 1760, Marcel Trudel's *The Seigneurial Regime* (1956) is probably right in claiming that, by discouraging English settlement in the St. Lawrence valley, the system contributed to French Canada's cultural survival.

To conclude this very selective survey of the ever-widening range of sources being used to write the social history of New France, let me draw your attention to one type of evidence that has been scarcely touched by historians. Here again, it is apparent that we can learn much from other disciplines and, in particular, from French Canadian scholars. Material evidence in the form of buildings has been imaginatively analysed by historical ethnologists of Laval University's Department of Folklore.¹² Yet physical evidence in the form of artifacts uncovered by archaeologists has only been given superficial consideration. These artifacts reveal the everyday existence of all classes of society and they can be evaluated quantitatively. The Fortress of Louisbourg project has amassed the largest collection of artifacts from the French regime and these objects provide information on many undocumented aspects of life, such as the amusements of children.

The archaeological finds are both a supplement to literary sources and a corrective to the official correspondence. The variety of imported wares found at Louisbourg testifies to the high standard of living in the eighteenth century; it also reveals the falsehood of official claims that New England vessels were only permitted to land essential foodstuffs and building materials at the port. When one looks at the household *bénitiers*, the iron ice creepers, and the masses of liquor bottle fragments from this site, it is apparent that we still know very little about day-to-day life in New France. Simple questions, such as 'did fathers openly display affection for their children?', can only be answered with conjecture rather than certainty. The probable answer, based on what we know about the patriarchal family structure in the French regime, is that fathers did not show affection publicly. That is only an educated guess.

It is impossible to discard the impressions of society in New France contained in travellers' accounts and in the official correspondence. The new techniques of historical research, when used with critical analysis, and the new types of evidence do enable us to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the administrative records, and to supplement them. The CII Series will remain a major source for the social history of New France, but what has been achieved in the last three decades is the liberation of historians from a blind dependence on that series.

12 See, for example, Jean-Claude Dupont, ed., *Habitation rurale au Québec* (Montreal, 1978).