

Samsons in the early census records of New France

The 1666 Census of New France

The first census of Canada (and in fact, all of North America) was conducted in the winter of 1665-66. A few years earlier in 1663, the French Minister of the Marine, Jean-Baptiste Colbert brought the colony of New France under direct royal control, and planned to make it the center of the French colonial empire. In order to accomplish this, he needed to know the state of the population, so that the economic and industrial basis of the colony could be expanded. He directed the colony's first Intendant, Jean Talon to organize the census. Talon largely conducted the census by himself, travelling door to door among the settlements of New France. He did not include Native American inhabitants of the colony, or the religious orders such as the Jesuits or Recollets. According to Talon's census there were 3,215 people in New France, and 538 separate families. There were 2,034 men and only 1,181 women. Both Gabriel and Jacques were included in the census, although the spelling of their surname was listed as "Senson".

At the Seigneurie of Lauzon, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River:

Land owner Francois Becquet, age 41, his wife Margueritte Deprez, 40, and domestic apprentice Gabriel Senson, 23.

At Sillery, including all the inhabitants of Cap Rouge and St. Francois Xavier:

Land owner Gervais Buisson, age 65, his wife, Marie Laireau, 43, their children Anthoine Buisson, 20, Simonne Barbe Buisson, 11, Marie Buisson, 8, Jean Francois Buisson, 5, and domestic apprentice Jacques Senson, 19.

The 1681 Census of New France

Another census was conducted in New France in 1681. At this time, both Samson brothers were living side by side at the Seigneurie of Lauzon. Both had married and begun families, and both owned land. Gabriel had five children and Jacques had four children, as well as two domestic apprentices. The overall population of the colony was just under 10,000 people, a huge increase since the first census. However, this compared to the population of the English colonies of about 150,000.

At the Seigneurie of Lauzon:

Gabriel Samson, age 36, his wife Françoise Durand, 24, their children, Pierre Samson, 11, Perrine Samson, 9, Jeanne Samson, 6, Jean Samson, 4, and Marguerite Samson, 2; 1 gun, 6 horned animals, 8 arpents of land.

Jacques Samson, age 34, his wife Marie Metru, 25, their children Jean Samson, 9, Marie Samson, 8, Ignace Samson, 5, and Marguerite Samson, 2; domestics Olive, 17 and Jean, 24 (surnames not provided); 1 gun, 9 horned animals, 16 arpents of land.