

CHANTILLY, THE PETUN AND D-DAY PLUS 63

Charles Garrad
January 1997

Abstract

Connections between the Chateau de Chantilly in France, the Petun Indians of Ontario, and with Canada, are recorded.

Introduction

The Chateau de Chantilly in France has a number of connections with Canada. It was the birthplace and sometime home of the Princesse of Conde' (1594-1650), who endowed the Jesuit Mission of the Apostles to the Petun Indians of Ontario (1639-1650). In 1944, sixty-three days after D-Day, Royal Canadian Air Force bombers attacked German installations in the forest surrounding the Chateau, without damaging the historic building.

Chantilly

Some forty kilometres north of Paris is the moated Chateau de Chantilly surrounded by a spacious park and forest, the Foret Chantilly. Guidebooks fondly describe it as "an extraordinary gem", and add that the Chateau "is really two buildings, one plain and 'authentic', the other spectacular but completely rebuilt". The 'authentic' original part, the "Petit Chateau", was built about 1560, and has survived intact to this day much as it was at the time the Petuns Indians lived in Nottawasaga and Collingwood townships of Ontario. The newer part, the "Grand Chateau", was built after the events which are now to be examined, and plays no part in the story that follows.

At the time the Petuns began to arrive in the Ontario homeland (ca. 1575), the Chateau de Chantilly was the property of Henri I, Duc de Montmorency, Marshall and Constable of France. A short time after the Petun left Ontario (1650), the Chateau was the home of the fourth Prince of Conde', Henri's grandson.

In 1609, the Duc de Montmorency's only daughter, Charlotte-Marguerite de Montmorency (1594-1650), married Henry II de Bourbon, third Prince de Conde (JR2:296n24). The wedding took place in 1609, at Chantilly. After the death of Henri I in 1614, his only son, the Princesse's brother, Henri II de Montmorency (1595-1632), at nineteen years of age, found himself Grand Admiral of France, Governor of Languedoc, and master of Chantilly and other Montmorency estates (JR2:296n24).

In 1610, the Princesse showed her first interest in the natives of Canada, when she, her husband, and the Prince's younger brother and his wife, supported the activities of the Jesuit Father Pierre Biard at Port Royal in Acadia (JR2:154-5, 158-9).

In 1610 King Henry IV was assassinated. His 9-year old son became King Louis XIII (1601-1643).

In 1611 Champlain went to France to form the fur traders on the St. Lawrence into a new company under the personal patronage of a prince or noble. The young King appointed to the post first Charles de Bourbon, Comte de Soissons (1566-1612), who immediately died, and then the Comte's nephew, the Princesse's husband, Henry II de Bourbon, Prince de Conde. Conde adopted the title "Viceroy of New France", and appointed Champlain his Lieutenant (Champlain 1925 11:241-247; 1929 111:13-IS; 1932 IV:21~217; JR2:296n24). Perhaps it was from Champlain's reports to her husband (Champlain 1932 IV:220,350) that the Princesse first learned of the Petun, and the other Indian tribes that Champlain visited.

Conde intrigued against the young King Louis XIII and his mother the queen dowager, until in 1616 he was arrested and sent to prison. In prison he refused to renounce his vicerealty, although it was contested. On his release in 1619, Conde sold the viceregal post to his brother-in-law Henri II de Montmorency at Chantilly, who held it until 1625 (JR2:296n24). During this time, 1619-1625, the Chateau de Chantilly became, in effect, the capital of New France.

Henri II de Montmorency was another who could not refrain from intrigue. In 1632 he was arrested for armed revolt, and executed. Chantilly, and other Montmorency family estates, were confiscated by the Crown. Montmorency's childless widow entered a convent (Godley 1915:6-7; Herard 1987:105-106; Noailles 1924:298). With no male heir to continue, Chantilly would know the Montmorency name no more.

After the death of King Louis XIII in 1643, the widowed Queen, Anne of Austria restored Chantilly and the other Montmorency estates to Princesse Charlotte-Marguerite (Noailles 1924:298). The Condes moved to Chantilly as one of their principal residences.

The Princesse was already supporting charities and good works in France, and New France, including the Societe' Notre-Dame de Montreal, and Jeanne Mance (Daveluv 1966:484; Herardi 1987:117). Perhaps the additional income from Chantilly and her other restored estates enabled her to increase support and to address some of her unfulfilled commitments, among which was her promise to fund the Mission of the Apostles to the Petun, which she had probably made in 1637 (JRI 1:53).

The Petun

The Mission of the Apostles to the Petun commenced in 1639, when two Jesuit missionaries from Ste-Marie-aux-Hurons wintered in Petun villages. After two winters the Mission was suspended, the Jesuits pleading a shortage of missionaries (JR21:177-185, JR23:179-183). It has been suggested elsewhere that the shortage of missionaries was due to the initial failure of the Princesse de Conde to fund the Mission as she had promised (Garrad 1996). While this is entirely speculative, it is based on the facts that the Mission resumed in 1646 (JR33:143; Jones 1909:355,361), following the restoration of Chantilly and other family estates to the Princesse in 1643 (Noailles 1924:298). This allows the supposition that between 1643 and 1646 the Princesse had at last provided the promised funding, presumably drawn from her restored estates. Support for this proposal may be found in another sequence of events. After her husband died in 1646, she "regained her liberty and inherited his large fortune" (Godley 1915:5), and soon after the Mission of

the Apostles expanded to support four missionaries instead of the original two, in two separate Petun towns (JR33:143; JR3S:107). This implies her first payment had been followed by another.

From 1646, the widowed and wealthy Princesse resided permanently at Chantilly, and devoted her remaining years to devoutly doing good works. In 1648 the long-delayed news was announced that it was the Princesse of Conde' at Chantilly who had "declared herself the Mother and foundress of the Mission called that 'of the Apostles' in the nation commonly known as the Tobacco nation" (Petun) (JR32:135-137; Du Creux 1952 11:485-6).

The Princesse died in 1650 at Chantilly, and could not have known that in the spring of that same year the Mission of the Apostles had ended with the withdrawal of the French Jesuit missionaries from Ontario to Quebec. The Petun abandoned Ontario and began a long journey to emerge in later history under their own name of Wyandot.

On the death of his mother, Chantilly became the property of the Princesse's eldest son, Louis II de Bourbon, the Duc d'Enghien (rendered d'Anguien in JR8:225, JR8:291n13, JR11:53), the fourth Prince of Conde', the Great Conde. During his time there would be more contact between Chantilly and New France.

As a boy in France, the Great Conde' had been partly tutored by the Jesuit Father Paul Ragueneau, the same who later, as Superior of Ste. Marie-aux-Hurons in Ontario, organised the Mission of the Apostles to the Petun. After the abandonment of the Huron and Petun missions in 1650, Ragueneau became the Jesuit Superior of New France, at Quebec. From there both he and the Governor wrote letters in 1661 to Ragueneau's former pupil, now the Grand Conde, at Chantilly, asking that a regiment of soldiers be sent from France to defeat the Iroquois (JR46:146-153). In 1662 Ragueneau went to France to plead the same cause personally, presumably to the Prince at Chantilly. He never returned to Canada (Pouliot 1966 1:563).

After this, the connection between Ontario and the Chateau Chantilly was broken for almost three centuries, until sixty-three days after D-Day, in August 1944.

D-Dav plus 63

For the civilian population of southern England the invasion of continental Europe on D-Day, June 6, 1944, did not bring the hoped-for relief from the random bombing that London and other cities had endured for years. Hitler introduced "Vengeance" weapons entirely aimed at British civilians. The first, the V-i "doodlebug", was a pilotless flying-bomb, launched from a ramp which could be more easily concealed than an airfield, and placed further back in German-occupied territory. It had little directional accuracy and no pretence at being aimed at military targets. The destruction of civilian homes continued until by 1945 two million houses in England had been hit (Moran 1966:251).

Much of the work of seeking out and destroying the bases and supply dumps for these new weapons beyond the fighting lines was undertaken by the young volunteer crews of the Royal Canadian Air Force. A typical sortie occurred on August 8, 1944, sixty-three days after D-Day. Canadian Halifax Bombers of RCAF 431 squadron, among them Halifax "Y" with FIO Jack Poste DFC aboard as navigator, flew from Yorkshire, England among some two hundred aircraft to

destroy a suspected V-I supply base concealed amongst the trees of the Foret Chantilly (McNenly 1992:31; Middlebrook 1985:557), the wooded parklands surrounding the historic Chateau.

Thanks to RCAF skill at precision bombing the target was successfully destroyed without any damage to the nearby Chateau, which certainly survived World War II in much better condition than it did the French Revolution. The "Petit Chateau", which in its day had been the de facto capital of Canada, was preserved by the skill of the young Canadian boys, who were probably unaware of its historical connection to Canada.

In 1996, fifty-two years after the August 1944 raid on the German installations and dumps in the Foret Chantilly, the writer was privileged to see the paper file and microfilm records of the event, housed in the Public Records Office, Kew, Richmond, England. Of particular interest was the air photograph taken after the raid, showing smoke from burning oil and trees. No buildings were near enough to appear on the photograph. The cost was one Lancaster lost in the sea on the way back to England (Middlebrook 1985:557).

It is noted that RCAF 431 squadron adopted the name "Iroquois". Imaginatively stylised Iroquois' headdresses were painted on the aircraft which were careful not to damage the Chateau de Chantilly, the very building from which in the 1660s the Great Conde' had considered the destruction of the Confederacy Iroquois in North America (Eccles 1966:283, Poulliot 1966:563). Both the Iroquois Confederacy and the Chateau de Chantilly survived.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and THANKS

I gratefully acknowledge and give thanks to the following people who contributed to this paper and without whom it could not have been written: Claire Knapp, Willowdale, Ontario, for French translations and abstracts; Jack Poste, retired Collingwood Collegiate Institute teacher, former RCAF Officer, and all-round supporter of just about everything worth-while, for reminiscing about his adventures more than fifty years ago, and for showing me the RCAF log book recording the raid on the Foret Chantilly in which he took part. The staff of the Public Records Office, Kew, Richmond, England, for providing guidance and access to microfilm and paper records of the raid on the Foret Chantilly in 1944. Henri, Michele and Catherine Reichert, Paris, France, for visiting Chantilly and obtaining photographs; Pere Roger Tandonnet, S.J., Bibliotheque des Fontaines, Chantilly, France, for correspondence and material; Fathers Lucien Campeau, S.J., and Robert Toupin, S.J., Archives de la Compagnie de Jesus, Saint-Jerome, Quebec, for correspondence; Frederic Vergne, Conservateur de la Bibliotheque et des Archives Conde, Chantilly, France, for correspondence, and particularly for the manuscript of Anne Herard's thesis.

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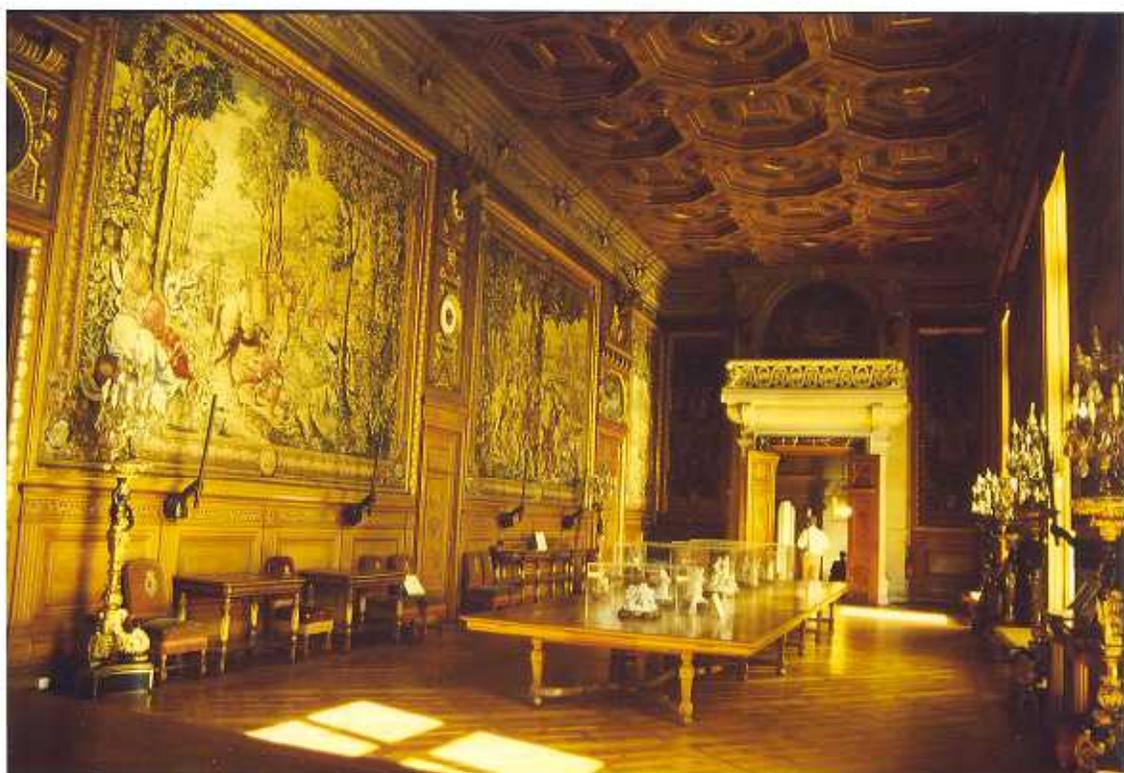
Flying Log Book issued to JR. Poste.



Le Petit Chateau de Chantilly

Exterior views, 1996

Photographs kindly provided by Mme. Michèle Reichert, Paris



Le Petit Chateau de Chantilly

Interior views, 1996

Photographs kindly provided by Mme. Michèle Reichert, Paris