

THE 14 FEBRUARY 1739 SUCCESSION RECORD OF MARIE (MARIANNE) CELLIER

By Cathy (Lemoine) Sturgell

On 14 February 1739, an inventory was taken of the possessions of deceased Marie (Marianne) Cellier. Her succession had been opened on 29 January 1739 in order to elect a tutor and sub-tutor for the minor children of Cellier and her husband, Pierre Mayeux. None of the three surviving documents of her succession mention how long she had been deceased nor was a record of her burial recorded in the sacramental books of Pointe Coupée, New Orleans, or Opelousas. Her widower signed a marriage contract with Marie Françoise Manne on 27 February 1739 – only a month after her succession had been opened which might make one think that the succession was opened in late January strictly in preparation of Pierre's impending marriage. Although this could be true, that's not necessarily so. It's very possible that Cellier had died within days of the 29 January date and Pierre's decision to marry Marie Françoise Manne was made hastily after Cellier's death in order to provide for his five minor children – the youngest who was likely 3-4 years of age. Leading credence to this possibility is the fact that Marie Françoise Manne had suffered the loss of her spouse, Laurent David, recently also. On 8 January 1739, Laurent David had his dying wishes documented in a nuncupative will – a will delivered orally to two witnesses when the person is too ill to execute a written will. It is likely that he died very shortly thereafter. Laurent David's burial record also was not found which seems to indicate that a priest might not have been available at Pointe Coupée in the January-February 1739 timeframe.

Marie (Marianne) Cellier's succession record consists of three known surviving documents:

- 29 January 1739 - In the first document, her husband, Pierre Mayeux, requested a family meeting to name a tutor for their children. That meeting took place the same day at New Orleans.
- 29 January 1739 - In the second document, the results of the family meeting were outlined. Pierre Mayeux (spelled Maieux on the document) was elected tutor of his children and Jean Carron was elected as their special tutor. Each took an oath to perform well and faithfully the duties of their respective office.
- 14 February 1739 – This document contains the inventory of Marie's possessions at the time of her death.

14 FEBRUARY 1739 SUCCESSION DOCUMENT

This document contains the succession inventory of "Marianne" Cellier. Here is a list of items found inside Marie's house at Pointe Coupée. These items are outlined on pages 1-4 of her inventory. Please note that there are *many* misspellings in this document - even on items that I was able to translate.

There are other words that I simply could not find an appropriate translation despite using numerous references.

The inventory started in the "chambre" (bedroom or room) in which Marie had been lodged. Please note that the pound sign (#) was used after the estimated value so I've used it here also. Here are the items found in the room:

- *A bad wooden bed with a straw mattress; a feather bed, two pillows, two sheets, two "robe de boeuf" (buffalo skins - commonly called a buffalo robe); ...estimate 60#*
- *Another bad wooden bed with a straw mattress, two "robe de boeuf" (buffalo skins - commonly called a buffalo robe), a woolen blanket, a bolster, two sheets; ...all estimated 30#*
- *A wooden cypress armoire; ... estimate 40#*
- *In the said armoire: A tablecloth and napkin of linen; ...estimate 10#*
- *Three tablecloths of linen "de ville" and nine napkins of same linen (could "toille de ville" indicate that the linen was locally made?); ...estimate 12#*
- *Three sheets of linen "de ville" - appears new; ...estimate 24# (hard to read)*
- *Three skirts and two half-coats(?) cotton linen (calico?); ...estimate 12#*
- *One skirt and two aprons of thick linen; ...estimate 3#*
- *One "camissolle" of flannel (likely a night shirt); ...estimate 15#*
- *Ten shirts of thick linen; ...estimate 30#*
- *Three "livre" (which means book or a term for money) and "fil de rainne" ("Fil" means thread or linen & can't identify "rainne"); ...estimate 7#*
- *Twelve headresses; ...estimate 12#*
- *"Saine" hankerchief (Sain/Saine means healthy/sane/sound but this doesn't make any sense; this word is used several times in this document but I couldn't find another translation for it) and a skirt of cotton; ...estimate (looks like 210# but this cannot be correct based on total written on following page of document)*
- *Three other "livre de fil de rainne" (possibly 'liure/ciure/civre' - can't find; "livre" means book or a term for money but it doesn't make sense in this case because it's followed by "fil de rainne". "Fil" means thread or linen & can't identify "rainne"; ... estimate 6#*
- *Eight men's shirts of "roialle" linen (could "roialle" be a misspelling of "royal"?); ...estimate 32#*
- *Twelve men's shirts of linen "ville"; ...estimate 24#*
- *Ten other of course cloth; ...estimate 120#*
- *Two empty chests; ...estimate 10#*
- *One __ old wooden cypress armoire; ...estimate 10#*
- *Two pewter dishes; Fourteen pewter plates; ...estimate 30#*
- *Twelve earthenware/crockery plates; Twelve pewter spoons; ...estimate 7#8*
- *Twelve forks "dasier"; a tin pepper box; a "lierre"(?); ...estimate 8#*
- *A pewter pot; one other of earthenware/crockery; one of stoneware; ...estimate 6#*
- *One folding(?) table; - Pot cover of deer(?) ("tapir (tapier) de pot de chevreuil"; - Three "chesse"; ...estimate 11#*

- *Three rifle/guns and pound of powder; Thirty pounds of lead and ball; ...estimate 59#*

SECTION ENTITLED : "*Batry(Ratry) de qiussinne*" (likely *Batterie de cuisine* - tools used in a kitchen):

- *One pair of andirons; a fire shovel; one stoneware; one spit; two "poille"; one "poillons" (both "poille" and "poillons" are possibly reference to pans and/or frying pans - which is spelled poêle OR poële which was a stove to keep a room warm); three candlesticks; one pair of snuffers; one ladle; a light; ...estimate 46#*

- *Four iron boilers; two irons for clothes; ...estimate 38#*

- *Thirty pots of oil; "douze quarante livre de suif" (translates literally to 'dozen forty book(s) of tallow?'); ...estimate 44#*

- *A set of cutlery _____; two empty baskets; two "da mine jaune" ('jaune' means yellow; can't identify da mine/d'a mine/d'amine); ...estimate 25#*

- *An empty book of soap; ...estimate 20#*

- *"Quainse" (?) (Quaiuse/Quoinse) empty bottle (It's possible that the first word is actually a misspelling of 'cuisine' which means kitchen; see the note for heading for this section of the inventory regarding "Batry(Ratry) de qiussinne"); ...estimate 7#*

- *"Saine vielle (?) a che dis vielle pioche" (Sound, old _ _ _ _ old pick axe); ...estimate 25#*

- *Barrel of corn, barrel of beans; ...estimate 424#*

- *"Saine millier/milliez de tabac an ma_noq" (I believe this is a reference to a hogshead barrel which was a very large barrel designed to hold 1000-1500 pounds - often filled with tobacco); ...estimate 1000#*

- *Three wood piroques made of cottonwood; ...estimate 90#*

The remainder of Marie's succession document:

Beginning at the bottom of page 4 of Marie Cellier's inventory is a section entitled "Esclave" (Slave). The following slaves were inventoried:

- *A 'naigre'* named Tomas*
- *Marianne, his wife*
- *Marÿe, their child, age about four years*
- *Nanneste, their child, age about two years*

All estimated at 2400#.

- *A 'naigre pïesse dainde'*** named Alexis*
- *Janerte, his wife*

The two together estimated at 2000#.

- *A 'naigre piasse dainde'*** named Jasemaine*
- *Margot, his wife*

The two together estimated at 2000#.

- *Two 'naigre piece dainde'**, named Sanbat and the other named Pierrot*

The two together estimated at 2000#.

NOTES:

*'Naigre' is the misspelled word 'nègre' (negro).

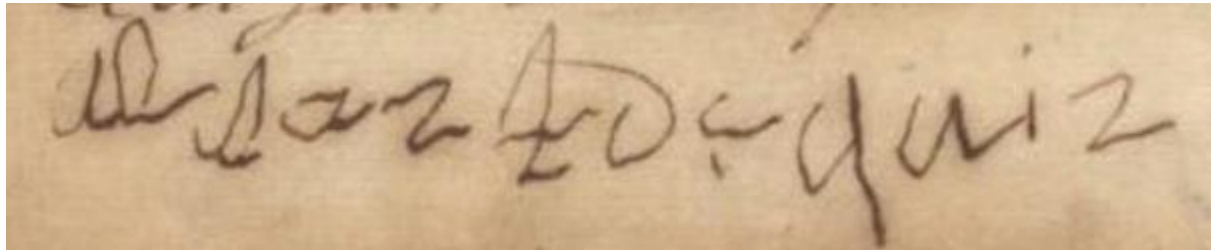
**'Naigre piasse dainde' (spelled differently each time it was used in this document) is actually *nègre pièce d'Inde*. This term was used in the colonial slave trade when referring to a slave who was about twenty-five/thirty years of age, tall, sturdy, and in perfect condition. Slaves given this label were valued at a higher rate.

There were 10 slaves named in her inventory despite the fact that the typed cover sheet synopsis of the inventory stating that this synopsis was published in the Louisiana Historical Quarterly in 1923 indicated that there were 12 slaves on Marie Cellier's inventory.

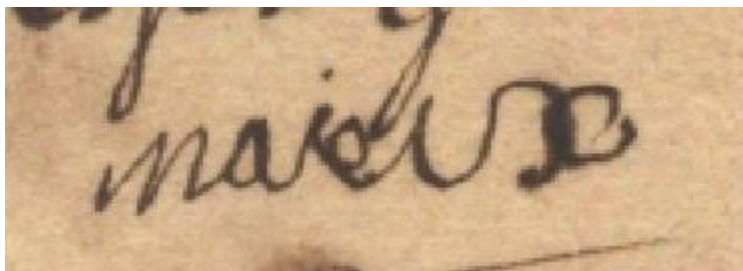
The last section of Marie Cellier's inventory mentions the following livestock:

- *Oxen in sound condition ("boeuf de tirre" - likely should be "boeuf de terre"); one plough and yoke harness all together estimated at 660#;*
- *Six ____ cows with their ____ (sound/without other) ____ all together estimated at 800#;*
- *One mare estimated at 30#;*
- *Seventeen pigs all together estimated at 255#;*
- *Ten turkeys and six hens all together estimated at 20#;*
- *One habitation of about eight or nine arpents of farm/land with all the outbuildings estimated all together at 800#.*

The total value of Marie's succession was 13739 livres. The inventory was attested to by P. Haussy (Pierre Haussy) and Albert De Quir (Albert Décur) on the day of the inventory. Here is Décur's signature as it appears on the inventory:

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on aged, yellowish paper. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Albert Décur".

There is a final page on Marie's succession record that almost appears to be an addendum which outlines two debts owed by Pierre. It is dated 27 February 1739 in New Orleans and was not written by the same person who wrote the succession document. Based on the handwriting, I believe it was written by Monsieur de Salmon, Commissaire-Ordonnateur, first Judge of the Superior Council of the Province of Louisiana, although Salmon did not sign it. This document was drawn on the same day that Pierre signed his marriage contract with Marie Françoise Manne. In the first item of the short document, Pierre declares that he owes the Compagnie des Indes 2443 lives following closure of his account. There are several words in the first item that I'm unable to transcribe which prevents me from fully understanding his declaration. However, there is mention in the same statement of 1223 lives, 10 sols but it's unclear if he is paying this much to settle his account or if he still owes this amount. The second item states that he owes about 400 livres to the ____ merchant/shopkeeper of this town. The only signature on this page was that of Pierre; he simply signed it as "maieux".

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on aged, yellowish paper. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "maieux".

NOTE:

In the inventory document as well as the addendum mentioned above, Pierre is referred to as Maieux, Maiux, and Mayeux. Marie Cellier was referred to as Marianne Cellier.

WHAT BECAME OF THE SLAVES IN CELLIER'S SUCCESSION DOCUMENT?

Some of the slaves identified in the 1739 inventory of Marie Cellier also appeared in the 21 December 1747 inventory of Pierre Mayeux. The bold names underlined below were those identified in Cellier's inventory. Under each of those names, I've noted the facts that were found about each of them.

Family 1

- **Tomas**
 - He was likely the slave identified as "Thomas, slave of Pierre Maieux" whose baptism was recorded on 28 March 1739 in the records of Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée (PCP-2, 5).
 - Identified as Thomas in Pierre's 21 December 1747 inventory.
- **Marianne, his wife/woman**
 - There are no slaves identified as "Marianne" or "Marie Anne" in the sacramental records of Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée. However, there are references to Anne, Anne Marie, and another named Marie. It's impossible to identify this individual although she is possibly the "Anne, slave of Pierre Maieux" whose baptism was recorded on 28 March 1739 in the records of Saint François d'Assise (PCP-2, 5)
 - Identified as Marie Anne in Pierre's 21 December 1747 inventory.
 - There was a burial recorded at Saint François d'Assise for "Anne Marie, slave of François Mayeux" buried 4 November 1755 ca. 30 years (PCP-2, 115). If this is, indeed, a reference to Marianne/Marie Anne, wife of Tomas/Thomas, she was likely older than 30 years of age in 1755.
- **Marÿe, their child, age about 4 years**
 - Not living with her mother and father in Pierre's 21 December 1747 inventory. She would have been about 12 years of age.
 - She was possibly the "Marie, slave of Pierre Mayeux" who was buried on 7 September 1747 (PCP-2, 32a). (There are two identical burials listed for a "Marie, slave of Pierre Mayeux" on the same day and the same record in "*Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Church Records, Pointe Coupée Records, 1722-1760, Volume 1b*".)
- **Nanneste, their child, age about 2 years**
 - Identified as Nanette, age of about 11, in Pierre's 21 December 1747.

This family also had three additional children by 21 December 1747:

- François, age of about 7 or 8 years; He is likely the "François, slave of Maieux" whose baptism was recorded on 27 August 1740 at Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée (PCP-2, 12). He was also likely the "François, ca. 8 yrs., slave of Mayeux" whose burial was recorded on 20 February 1749 at Saint François d'Assise (PCP-2, 37a).
- Pierre, age of 4 years; He was also likely the "Pierre, slave of Mayeux" whose baptism was recorded on 4 August 1743 at Saint François d'Assise (PCP-2, 27).

- Antoine, age of 2 months; He was also likely the “Antoinne, slave of Pierre Maieux” whose baptism was recorded on 12 November 1747 at Saint François d'Assise (PCP-2, 33a).

Family 2

- **Alexis**
 - He was likely the “Alexis, slave of Pierre Maieux” whose baptism was recorded on 28 March 1739 in the records of Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée (PCP-2, 5).
 - He does not appear in Pierre’s 21 December 1747 inventory.
 - He was likely the “Alexis, slave of Pierre Mayeux” whose burial was recorded in the records of Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée on 14 August 1747 (PCP-2, 32).
- **Janerte, his wife/woman**
 - There was a “Jeanette” identified in Pierre’s 21 December 1747. She appears to be living alone. This is possibly the widow of Alexis.
 - On 29 December 1747, shortly after the death of Pierre Mayeux, Pierre's widow, Marie Françoise Manne, acknowledged the receipt of a payment of 7000 livres from François Mayeux. The payment was made in money, slaves, and other various items. She was likely the "Marie Jeannette" who was transferred to Manne: *"...and one other named Marie Jeannette for price and sum of 1800 livres..."*.

Family 3

- **Jasemaine**
 - He was possibly the slave identified in the records of Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée as “Joseph, slave of Pierre Maieux”. If so, he was baptized there on 28 March 1739 (PCP-2, 5). (See marriage below regarding “Joseph Jasmin”.)
 - Identified as Jassmin in the 21 December 1747 inventory taken after the death of Pierre Mayeux.
- **Margot, his wife/woman**
 - Identified as Margot in the 21 December 1747 inventory taken after the death of Pierre Mayeux.
- This couple had one child living with them on 21 December 1747: Louis (age of 8 years). He was likely the “Louis, slave of Pierre Maieux” whose baptism was recorded at Saint François d'Assise on 19 June 1739 (PCP-2, 8).
- There was a marriage recorded at of Saint François d'Assise on 4 April 1752 which *could* be a reference to this couple: *“Joseph Jasmin, slave of Mr. Mayeux” m. 4 April 1752*

Cecille Margret, slave of Mr. Mayeux; wit. Declared child (name omit)" (PCP-2, 73). However, it is possible that Margot died (death not recorded) and (Joseph) Jasmin remarried to a slave named Cecille who belonged to François Mayeux. (Cecile gave birth to a daughter, Geneviève, on 20 August 1759, baptized 9 September 1759. PCP-3, 55)

Two Individuals

- **Sanbat and the other named Pierrot**
 - In the 21 December 1747 inventory taken after the death of Pierre Mayeux, there was one slave identified as Sambar. He was living with his wife, Manon. Also living with the couple were their two children: François (age of 3 years); Augustin (age of 10 months).
 - François, identified as "François, slave of Pierre Mayeux", was baptized on 28 June 1744 at according to the records of Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée (PCP-2, 33).
 - Augustin, identified as "Augustin, slave of Pierre Mayeux", was baptized on 6 February 1747 according to the records of Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée (PCP-2, 54).
 - On 29 December 1747, shortly after the death of Pierre Mayeux, Pierre's widow, Marie Françoise Manne, acknowledged the receipt of a payment of 7000 livres from François Mayeux. The payment was made in money, slaves, and other various items. This family of four was transferred to Manne: *"...and 3600 livres in one negro named Sambar, one negress named Manon, his wife/woman, one negrillion age about 3 years named François, and one other named Augustin age of 10 months..."*.
 - There is no slave identified as Pierrot in the 21 December 1747 inventory. It's possible, however, that he was the "Pierre, slave of Pierre Maieux" whose baptism was recorded in the records of Saint François d'Assise in Pointe Coupée (PCP-2, 5) on 28 March 1739 and whose burial was recorded there two months later on 31 May 1739 ("Pierre, slave of Pierre Mayeux") (PCP-2, 6 also PCP-1, 17).

There was also a fifth slave family identified in the 21 December 1747 inventory of Pierre Mayeux that did not appear in Marie Cellier's 1739 inventory. There were as follows:

Family 5

- Laurent
- Pinday (or Pindax), his wife/woman
- Pierre, age 1 year
 - "Pierre, slave of Pierre Mayeux" was baptized on 6 October 1746 (PCP-2-,51).
- Louison, age about 10 or 11 years (female)

- Cecille, age about 7 years
- Margueritte, age about 4 or 5 years
 - “Marguerite, slave of Mr. Mayeux” was baptized on 3 May 1743 (PCP-2, 25).

NOTES:

- It appears that on 28 March 1739, a number of the slaves of Pierre Mayeux were baptized. This was Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday. This would have been shortly after his marriage to Manne.
- Several of the female slaves in Cellier’s inventory were identified as “*sa femme*”. Although that usually means “his wife”, “*sa femme*” less frequently translates to “his woman”. This is important for one reason. Although many of these couples were, without doubt, living as husband and wife, it does not necessarily indicate that they were legally married. Louisiana’s 1724 Code Noir (Black Code) did recognize marriage between slaves if consent was received from the master of the slaves but such marriages did not often take place because slave owners could not separate a legally married husband and wife.

There were 20 slaves identified by name on the 1747 succession inventory of Pierre Mayeux. As mentioned above, five of these slaves were given to Marie Françoise Manne on 29 December 1747 as settlement of the estate with her. However, on 9 March 1748, François Mayeux leased 17 unnamed slaves as well as the plantation and livestock of his deceased father to Jean François Allain for a period of two years. I was unable to determine the number discrepancy since it would appear that there would have been only 15 slaves remaining after giving 5 from his father’s estate to Manne.

Sadly, I was unable to locate the 1765 succession records of François Mayeux and/or his wife Nicole Prévost who both died in 1765. These documents might have provided additional detail about the slaves of Pierre Mayeux and Marie Cellier. Since the whereabouts of most of the early civil records of Pointe Coupée are unknown, it’s likely that these succession records mysteriously *walked off* along with the rest of these precious documents. In addition, I’ve been unable to determine the fate of Marie Françoise Manne after the death of Pierre Mayeux. She did not appear in the sacramental records of Pointe Coupée, Opelousas or New Orleans.