

The Drouillard Family from France to the Détroit River Region – Part I  
Simon Drouillard and His Family in France  
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In the April 2008 *Michigan's Habitant Heritage*<sup>1</sup> Simon Drouillard *dit* Argencourt's origin and family in Marennes, Charente-Maritime, France, were presented. At that time the only way to do research in France was the consultation of microfilms at a local Family History Center, *i.e.* the Mormons. It was an expensive, tedious process, which, at the time, limited the research that might be able to be done concerning a family. The French departmental archives are now all online and free. As a result, more research was able to be done on Simon Drouillard's mother's Chevrou family as well as a few additional facts concerning the Drouillard family itself. The origin of the Drouillard family is still unknown.

Simon's Drouillard's parents, Jean Drouillard and Anne Chevrou, were married 30 August 1666 in Marennes.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, as was typical at the time, no parents were named for either party. The witnesses were Pierre Mercier, husband of Jeanne Chevrou, possibly a sister of Anne Chevrou; Jean Drouillard; Étienne Drouillard; and Michel Baudet. The family connection among these Drouillards is not known.

The first record found for Jean Drouillard in Marennes was on 1 July 1663 when he was a godfather to Elizabeth, daughter of Jean Crirot and Jeanne Rabeau.<sup>3</sup> On 31 January 1666, he and his future wife, Anne Chevrou, were godparents to Anne Mercier, daughter of Pierre Mercier and Jeanne Chevrou.<sup>4</sup> The next act for him was his marriage.

He and Anne Chevrou were the parents of eight children in Marennes:<sup>5</sup>

- 1.) Paul, baptized 29 May 1667.
- 2.) Simon, born 10 November 1668 and baptized the 28<sup>th</sup>.
- 3.) Catherine, born 23 December 1668 and baptized 12 January 1670. Her godmother was Catherine Drouillard, but the family relationship was not stated.
- 4.) François, born 27 September 1671 and baptized 4 October 1671.
- 5.) Gabrielle, born 12 October 1674 and baptized the 28<sup>th</sup>. Her father was said to be absent.
- 6.) Pierre, born 20 December 1675 and baptized 20 July 1676. His father was said to be absent.
- 7.) Magdelaine, born 20 December 1677 and baptized 19 June 1678.
- 8.) Jeanne, born 11 February 1681 and baptized 30 March 1681. Again, her father was said to be absent.

In none of the records, found to date in Marennes, is Jean Drouillard's occupation stated. It is possible he worked in the salt marshes in the area. Or he worked as a *marinier*, a mariner. The records for Marennes were researched, and nothing was found after the last baptism for the Drouillard family through the year 1710.

A source that was not available in 2008 was GeneaNet, a subscription service. By putting in the name of Jean Drouillard, a source was given that a Jean Drouillard, aged 49, (which would indicate he was born *circa* 1636), a *matelot du port* (sailor in the port), a native of Marennes, died in the hospital in Rochefort on 27 April 1685 and was buried in the hospital's cemetery.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, "The Family of Simon Drouillard *dit* Argencourt in the Parish of St-Pierre de Marennes, Charente-Maritime, France," *Michigan's Habitant Heritage* (hereafter *MHH*), Vol. 29, #2, April 2008, 97-100. This article can be read online in the members only section of <https://habitantheritage.org>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170030886> Marennes, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, 1666-1668, image 148.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170030886> Marennes, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, 1666-1668, image 49.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170030886> Marennes, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, 1666-1668, image 91.

<sup>5</sup> Moreau-DesHarnais, 97-100; Fichier Origine #310103, researched by Christian Siguret and Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, accessed 13 February 2022.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170040228> Rochefort, Collection hospitalière – Hospitalier – Décès – 1683-1691, image 20.

+ 1085

Jean Drouillard

Le 27<sup>me</sup> du mois d'Abril 1679 est decede Jean Drouillard matelot  
 l'hospital Royal de Rochefort Jean Drouillard matelot  
 du port age de 79 an natif de marine de son port  
 d'origine la Commission de l'Eglise presbyterien de  
 Rochefort et a été inhumé dans le cimetiere dudit  
 Hospital le jour et an que dessus en presence de  
 Jean Jouillet curé dudit port et de Guillaume  
 Guichard qui ont signé avec nous - Coisard  
 Jean Drouillard de Guichard



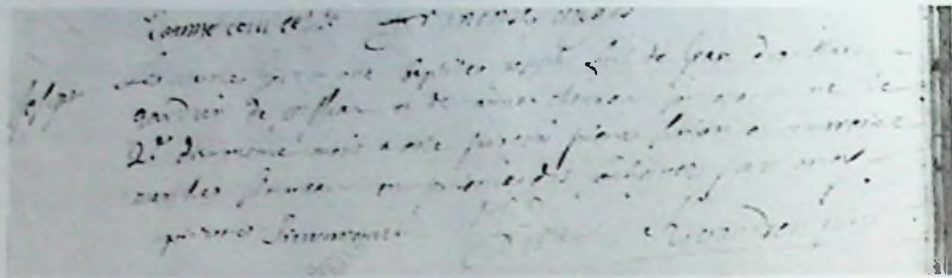
Based on the assumption that this Jean Drouillard was Simon Drouillard's father, the research continued in Rochefort. The two churches in Rochefort were Notre-Dame Hors Les Murs, the extant records began 13 September 1665, and Saint-Louis, whose records began in 1687. On 20 August 1679, in Rochefort, a Jean Drouillard was witness to the burial of **Jean Mognan/Monnau**, a watchman.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps his absences during the baptism of some of his children can now be explained – he was working in Rochefort. See the above map to see the distance between Marennes and Rochefort.

It is possible this is “our” Jean Drouillard, and he worked in Rochefort, a town which was a city created as a *port de guerre et de l'arsenal* (port for war and an arsenal) by Charles Colbert de Terron, a first cousin of Jean Baptiste Colbert (Minister of Finances for Louis XIV from 1665 to 1683). Colbert de Terron was given the responsibility of finding a place on the Atlantic that was capable of providing an arsenal which could become a place of refuge, defense, and a supply depot. Brouage had been considered, but, in December 1665, Rochefort was chosen. There were several reasons for choosing Rochefort: (1) protection from enemy ships because of the small islands surrounding it; (2) the war port of Brouage had been *ensablé* (surrounded by sand); (3) the mudflats surrounding it would be good for stranding vessels; (4) the owner of the land, a Calvinist named Jacques Henry, *seigneur de Cheusses*, was “forced” to sell the land; (5) the near-by Charente River and its canals were conducive to the transportation of the needed materials of wood, food, metals, *toiles* (canvas), and *denrées* (food products) from the rich areas of Saintonge, Périgord, and Limousin.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170026171> Rochefort, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, Sépultures 1665-1681 [Notre-Dame], images 309 and 401.

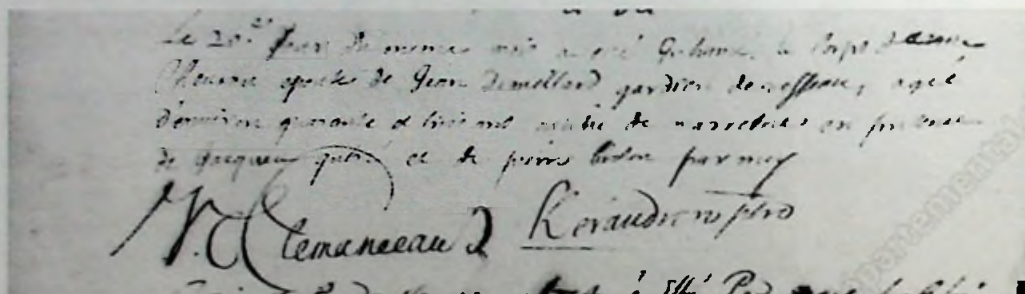
<sup>8</sup> [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochefort\\_\(Charente-Maritime\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochefort_(Charente-Maritime)) – translation mine. Gail Moreau-DesHarnais, “In Honor of Father Gabriel Richard [1767-1832]: Part 1,” *MHH*, Vol. 38, #4, October 2017, 194.

The Jean Drouillard family appeared to have settled in Rochefort because their last child, **Joseph**, was born on the second of March 1683 and baptized on the 4<sup>th</sup> in Notre-Dame. In this act it was noted that Jean Drouillard was a *gardien de vesseau* (a ship's watchman).<sup>9</sup>



Baptism of Joseph Drouillard.

Not quite one year later, on 20 January 1684, Anne Chevrou, wife of Jean Drouillard, *gardien de vesseau*, aged about 43 years (born *circa* 1641), a native of Marennes, was buried.<sup>10</sup> Since no burial records have been found for any of the children of Jean Drouillard and Anne Chevrou, it can only be assumed that nine children survived, including Simon. When their father died in April 1685, there were possibly nine orphans.



Burial of Anne Chevrou.

Only three additional records concerning this family has been found in Rochefort: (1) On 4 November 1689, in Saint-Louis, Rochefort, Catherine Drouillard was a godmother. If she was the daughter of Jean Drouillard and Anne Chevrou, she was not quite 20 years old at the time.<sup>11</sup> (2) On 15 October 1691, in Saint-Louis, Rochefort, Paul Drouillard, the eldest son, was at a witness at the marriage of his cousin Anne Mercier, a native of Marennes, who had lived in Rochefort for eight years, to **René Borde**, a merchant and widower who had lived in Rochefort for 18 years. Paul Drouillard signed the act.<sup>12</sup> (3) On 30 June 1693, Saint-Louis, Rochefort, Paul Drouillard, [aged 26], a carpenter, was a godfather and signed.<sup>13</sup> These were the last acts, found to date, for this family in Rochefort. The fate of all of the siblings of Simon Drouillard *dit* Argencourt is not known.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive, which reads 'Paul Drouillard'.

A photograph of another handwritten signature in cursive, which reads 'Paul Drouillard'.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170032120> Rochefort, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, Sépultures 1681-1685 [Notre-Dame], image 161.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170032120> Rochefort, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, Sépultures 1681-1685 [Notre-Dame], image 76.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170023481> Rochefort, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, Sépultures 1687-1692 [Saint-Louis], image 150.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170023481> Rochefort, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, Sépultures 1687-1692 [Saint-Louis], image 334.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170032196> Rochefort, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, Sépultures 1693-1696 [Saint-Louis], image 64.

### Additional information on the Chevro family

The first records for the Chevro family were found in extant records in Marenes in 1589 when a **Jehan Chevro** was a godfather. After this date there were records for two distinct Chevro families: the family of **Abraham Chevro** and **Jeanne Mitouard**, married 28 June 1597 in Marenes<sup>14</sup> and **Jean Chevro** and **Isabelle/Élisabeth Martineau**, whose date and place of marriage are not known. The latter couple was the ancestors of Anne Chevro, wife of Jean Drouillard and were the parents of five known children:

- 1) **Philippe** – 15 November 1598 – married **Judicq Hilaire**, 25 July 1630
- 2) **Guillaume** – 19 May 1601 – married **Marie Mourou/Maurouse**, date and place unknown
- 3) **Denis** – 16 March 1603 – fate unknown
- 4) **Anne** – 19 April 1609 – married **Jean Beaudry**, 25 July 1630
- 5) **Mathurin** – 1 April 1612 – possibly married 27 November 1642 to **Janette Mallet**

The Chevro families used many of the same first names over and over (Jean, Anne, Marie, Jeanne, Guillaume), making it tricky, if not very difficult, to follow family lines. Based on people present for baptisms, marriages, and burials (found with regularity after 1670), most family lines can be established. Thus, it is possible to state with certainty that Guillaume Chevro and Marie Maurouse were the parents of the following seven children.

- 1) **Jeanne** – 5 August 1634; **Philippe Chevro**, godfather; married **Pierre Mercier**, 31 January 1664; buried in Marenes 28 August 1679 at the age of 42 (born *circa* 1637)
- 2) **Jean** – 8 December 1635; married **Andrée Beaudry** 20 April 1665; buried 20 September 1703 at the age of 70 (born *circa* 1633) in presence of his son **Louis Chevro** and his son-in-law **Pierre Druneau**
- 3) **Élisabeth** – 10 May 1637 – fate unknown
- 4) **Anne** – 11 December 1639 – married Jean Drouillard, 30 August 1666; buried in Rochefort 20 January 1684 at the age of 43 (born *circa* 1641)
- 5) **Jean** – 1 December 1641 – **Philippe Chevro** signed as a witness; fate unknown
- 6) **Anne** – 28 May 1645; (1) married **Joseph Roy**, 17 June 1669, in presence of her brother **Jean Chevro** and Pierre Mercier, her brother-in-law; (2) **Pierre Metereau**, 3 August 1676; buried 2 July 1710, age 66 (born *circa* 1644) in presence of her husband Pierre Metereau and her son-in-law **Jean Tourtier**
- 7) **Ozanne** – 30 January 1650 – fate unknown

The very few times that an occupation was listed with any of the men it was the occupation of *saulnier* (an extractor or seller of salt). Occasionally the term of *marinier* (sailor) was also used. Now the town and region are famous for their oysters.



<https://www.guide-charente-maritime.com/fr/tourisme/deguster/les-produits-de-charente-maritime/huitres-moules-fruits-de-mer/hiers-brouage-388/les-huitres-moissenot-12402.html>

To be continued.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170026050> Marenes, Collection Communale, Paroissiale, Baptêmes, Mariages, 1584-1603, image 144.