

thus, or according to one of the numerous variants which appear in the parish vital records? The priests themselves were not troubled by any urge after consistency, for it is a common occurrence to find the name of a given individual written several different ways in the Ste. Anne's and Assumption church records. The same is true of the surnames: such well-known Detroit names as Campau, Cicotte, Godfroy, Gamelin, and Tremblay are recorded with numerous variant spellings. On occasion, the priest in writing up his baptismal entry, spelled the name of a godfather other than the godfather himself signed it immediately below. Nor can it be said that the signatures themselves are conclusive authority, for it was a frequent practice for members of the same family to spell their inherited surname differently.

To add to the perplexity of the Editor, the residents of French Detroit commonly possessed, in addition to the inherited surname, a nickname; more rarely a citizen might possess two nicknames; and frequently he was better known by his nickname than by his inherited name. This practice finds ancient and respectable precedent in the act of Christ in ordaining his twelve disciples: Finding two Simons in the group, he surnamed one of them Peter; and this example the residents of French Detroit imitated with appalling zeal. For illustrations of this generalization, the reader is referred to almost any biographical footnote in the volume. To contemporaries, who enjoyed first-hand knowledge of their neighbors, the custom presented, apparently, no particular difficulty; to the investigator of a distant generation the case is quite otherwise. In annotating the documents which follow, we have labored manfully to spell the proper names correctly, giving highest authority, ordinarily, to the individual's own usage where it has been possible to determine this; but to achieve entire consistency has proved impossible, and our rendition of an individual's name does not imply that some variant spelling of it may not be equally permissible.

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