

Etienne de Véniard sieur de Bourgmont

A timeline compiled by Dan Hechenberger

- 1679, April Etienne de Veniard sieur de Bourgmont born at Cerisy Belle-Etoile in Central Normandy (Father: Charles de Veniard, sieur du Veger, a respected surgeon) (great-uncle Mai Pierre Pitot, Grand Vicar of Bishop of Quebec, Msgr. de la Croix de Saint Valier)
- 1698 Etienne was found guilty of poaching on lands of the Monastery of Belle-Etoile, along with his stepfather and his uncle Gabriel Jean, the village priest. Etienne probably left for New France this year. He did not pay the 100 livres fine. His sister, Francoise, and his uncle, Gabriel Jean, were obliged to take over his debt.
- 1702 Fall The expedition of Charles Juchereau de St. Denys, including Etienne Bourgmont, now an ordinary soldier in the Troupes de la Marine, arrived at the River Des Peres mission village on his way to set up a tannery at the mouth of the Ouabache (Ohio) River. Pere Mermet, SJ, was assigned to go with them. Pere Marest traveled with them to the winter camp of Kaskaskia Chief Rouensa. Pere Marest tried to get the Kaskaskia to settle near the tannery, but they refused.
- 1702-03 For 18 months Etienne Bourgmont lived among the Mascouten, trading and hides and furs, probably for Juchereau's tannery.
- 1705, Sept. 29 On orders of his commanding officer, Antoine Laumet, sieur de Lamothe Cadillac, Ensign Etienne Bourgmont left Quebec for Fort Ponchartrain at Detroit.

- 1706, end of Jan. Ensign Etienne de Veniard, sieur de Bourgmont took over command of Fort Ponchartrain at Detroit from Alphonse Tonti. The fort was very short on gunpowder. (Bourgmont was 26 years old).
- 1706, March Ottawa Chief Le Pesant launched a surprise attack on a group of Miami warriors walking near Ft. Ponchartrain. Father Constantin, the missionary, and a French sergeant, who were both outside the fort, were killed during the attack. Thirty Ottawas were killed by French, Huron, and Miami gunfire from the fort.
- 1706, Aug.30 Commandant Cadillac reported the March attack to French Minister of Marine Pontchartrain. The Marquis de Vaudreuil, the governor general of New France also wrote to Minister Pontchartrain criticizing Ensign Bourgmont. Soon after Cadillac had returned to the fort, Ensign Bourgmont deserted.
- 1706-1709 Bourgmont lived as a coureur de bois (an illegal trader) with the mixed blood Madame Tichenet around the Grand River of Lake Erie. During part of this time, they were joined by other deserter: Betelley Pichon, known as La Roze, a soldier named Jolicoeur, and some others.
- 1709 Deserter La Roze was captured, tried for desertion, and testified that two of the other deserters drowned and one was shot and eaten by the starving survivors. La Roze was sentenced to have his head broken by eight soldiers till death followed.
- 1712 Etienne Bourgmont returned to the area around Ft. Pontchartrain to help the Algonkin tribes, along with the Missouri and Osage in the fight against the Fox Indians. He became infatuated with the young daughter of a Missouri Chief. Afterwards he moved to the Missouri village at the mouth of the Grand River.

- 1713 Bourgmont, his Missouri wife and some other Missouri traveled around the southern portion of the Illinois Country, for a time with two other French traders and their Indian women. Pere Marest, SJ missionary among the Kaskaskia, officially complains about the scandalous behavior of Bourgmont and the others traveling with the Indian women. In France, the Jesuit archbishop of Reims, Msgr. Pierre Tellier, the personal confessor of King Louis XIV, asks Minister Ponchartrain about Bourgmont. An order goes out to arrest Bourgmont.
- 1713, Summer Bourgmont makes a clandestine trip to Fort Louis at Mobile. He probably communicates with Governor Antoine Laumet, sieur de lamothe Cadillac. On the return trip to the Missouri village, Bourgmont writes an "Exact Description of Louisiana, of Its Harbors, Lands and Rivers, and Names of the Indian Tribes That Occupy It, and the Commerce and Advantages to Be Derived Therefrom for the Establishment of a Colony"
- 1714 An order goes out from the office of the governor general of New France to arrest Bourgmont and his companions "at the first favorable opportunity." The French Monarchy sent orders to the governor of Louisiana, Antoine Laumet, sieur de Lamothe Cadillac, to arrest Bourgmont "as soon as he appears at Fort Louis at Mobile".
- 1714, March-June Etienne Bourgmont and his men traveled the Missouri River at least to the mouth of the Platte River. Bourgmont writes an exact description of "The Route to Be Taken to Ascend the Missouri River." The route document eventually finds its way to the office of eminent cartographer Guillaume Delisle. On a copy of the document, his brother, Joseph-Nicolas, wrote: "Je crois que ce memoire est de Monsieur de Bourgmont. (I believe this report is by Monsieur de Bourgmont.) In a separate file, Joseph-Nicolas Delisle added: "This

route, concerning which I have found a map drawn by my brother, seems to date from 1714, and was written by Monsieur de Bourgmont, who was sent from Canada some time earlier to make investigations, for which he lived for some years with the Missouri. M. Le Page, who knew him particularly well, has heard him say that no one before him had ever traveled so far up the river. "

1718, Sept. 25 Commandant General Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, who replaced Cadillac, requested the French government to grant Bourgmont the Cross of Saint Louis, the highest decoration the King could bestow, in recognition of outstanding service to France.

1719, Sept.

The Council of the Colony of Louisiana issued an ordinance stating that Bourgmont was sent to the Illinois and other Indian nations to make alliances for the Company. He also brought chiefs to Isle Dauphine, but all died except one, whom Bourgmont agreed to escort back to his village. He would then go to Paris where, the ordinance stated, he would be paid 4,279 livres which had been due him for six months. All of this was "in recognition of the service he has rendered, without drawing any inference from any other fact." Bourgmont took the chief back to the Illinois Country and was back in New Orleans on March 16, 1720.

1720, June 4

Bourgmont and his Missouri Indian son departed for France on the Duc de Noailles.

1720, Summer

Bourgmont arrived in Paris during great excitement and speculation over John Law's Compagnie des Indes. News also reached Paris of the Spanish Villasur expedition, which had been defeated by tribes friendly to the French because of Bourgmont.

1720, July 25

Etienne Bourgmont was commissioned a captain in the colonial troops.

- 1720, Aug. 12 Bourgmont was named "Commandant of the Missouri River." In a contract with Bourgmont, agreed to by His Royal Highness the Duc d'Orleans, Regent of France, it was written that the explorer would: 1.) bring peace to the tribes bordering New Mexico; 2.) build a fort on the Missouri River. Both of these to would be done to insure future trade. In return, Bourgmont would be granted Letters of Nobility.
- 1720, Oct. 22 In a royal letter, Bourgmont was advised that the king had created him a Chevalier of the Order of the Cross of Saint Louis. He was also granted a concession of land in Louisiana.
- 1721, May 8 Bourgmont married Jacqueline Bouvet des Bordeaux in his home village of Cerisy Belle-Etoile.
- 1721, June Bourgmont left for New Orleans on the La Loire.
- 1722, Jan. After recuperating from a long, serious illness, Bourgmont requested supplies, boats and men for a two-year expedition to build a fort and go west of the lower Missouri River. The council balked at the expense of his requests. During Bourgmont's time in France, John Law's plans had collapsed in 1720 and support for the colony disappeared.
- 1723, Feb. Bourgmont left New Orleans traveling north to begin his expedition.
- 1724, Jan. The Council of the Illinois sent a directive to Bourgmont to cut back on the original plan and only build a small post and return. The stated purpose of his mission was now only to encourage the Missouri to fight against the Fox during the current war.
- 1724, Feb. Bourgmont skillfully replied by letter to the Council

that his mission had not changed since he left Paris, except the Council was now more concerned about cost than purpose. Bourgmont and his men completed Ft. d'Orleans

1724, Summer/fall

Bourgmont, with the help of the Missouri, Oto, Kansa and Osage traveled to the Padoucahs on the southern Plains and brought peace between them and the French allied tribes.

1724, Nov.

Bourgmont traveled with 9 Chiefs - 4 Missouri, 4 Osage, 1 Oto - and the Missouri Chief's daughter (his former Indian wife, the mother of his Missouri son) to New Orleans. At Ft. de Chartres they were joined by 5 Illinois chiefs and Reverend father Nicolas-Ignace Beaubois, SJ.

1725, Jan.

Bourgmont and his delegation arrived in New Orleans but the Superior Council of Louisiana eliminated the interpreters and reduced the size of the party to one chief each from the Illinois, Missouri, Osage and Oto, and the Missouri chief's daughter, along with Sergeant Dubois.

1725, Mar.

Bourgmont and his delegation boarded the vessel La Bellone, along with the former Gov. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne de Bienville, to sail to France.

1725, April 2

The La Bellone sank at the first port of call, Dauphin Island at the mouth of Mobile Bay.

1725, Sept.

Having crossed the Atlantic in the vessel La Gironde, Bourgmont and his Indian delegation arrived in Paris.

1725, Sept.-Nov.

The Indian delegation visited the City of Paris and the King's chateaux at Versailles and Marly and Fontainebleau. They hunted in the royal forest with

the young king, Louis XV. They then returned to New Orleans and their own people.

1725, Dec.

Etienne de Veniard, sieur de Bourgmont was elevated to the nobility with the rank of écuyer (squire).

Compiled From Bourgmont: Explorer of the Missouri, 1698-1725 By Frank Norall
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