

## Investigating the Sephardic Jewish ancestry of colonial French Canadians through genetic and historical evidence

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### Abstract

The Spanish Inquisition in 1492 resulted in the deaths of thousands of Spanish Jews and the exile of around 150,000. The Huguenots and Acadians who settled in Colonial French Canada are assumed to be of Christian faith and ancestry. To support this hypothesis, the researcher uses a novel combination of methods drawn from historical records and artifacts, genealogies and DNA testing. In recent years, this combination of methods has led to the discovery that several of the Plymouth Colony settlers, Central Appalachian Colonial settlers, and Roanoke Colony settlers were of Sephardic Jewish origin. Thus, using the new methodology of ancestral DNA tracing, the researcher document that the majority of Huguenot and Acadian colonists in French Canada were of Sephardic Jewish ancestry. They are most likely descended from Sephardic Jews who fled to France from the Iberian Peninsula in the late 1300s and early 1500s. The researcher additionally propose that some members of both groups continued to practice Judaism in the new world, thus becoming secret Jews or crypto-Jews. The researcher also finds evidence of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry in both groups.

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## 1. Introduction

In 1492, the Spanish Inquisition resulted in the deaths of thousands of Spanish Jews and the exile of perhaps 150,000 more. These exiles, termed Sephards, fled along both the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, and in the following decades and centuries travelled as far north as the Netherlands, France, England, Scotland, and Wales and as far west as the Ottoman Empire (Assis, 1988; Dan 1992; Gampel, 1992). The researcher proposes that some of the Sephardic Jews who fled to France later formed the Colonial French-Canadian groups called Acadians and Huguenots. To support this hypothesis, the researcher uses a novel combination of methods drawn from historical records and artifacts, genealogies and DNA testing. In recent years, this combination of methods has led to the discovery that several of the Plymouth Colony settlers, Central Appalachian Colonial settlers, and Roanoke Colony settlers were of Sephardic Jewish origin (Hirschman *et al.*, 2018; 2019a; 2019b). To test our hypothesis, the researcher used publicly accessible DNA databases for both the Colonial French Huguenot and Acadian peoples ([www.ftdna.com](http://www.ftdna.com)) and directly linked these persons to DNA databases of Sephardic Jews ([www.ftdna.com](http://www.ftdna.com)). The researcher begins by examining the earliest history still available of the Huguenot and Acadian people *The History of the Huguenot Immigration to America* (1885) by Charles Washington Baird.

### 1.1. History of the Huguenot Immigration to America (1885)

Baird is a French Canadian of Huguenot religious affiliation. It is clear from his writing that he firmly believes that the Huguenots were genuinely Protestant both in France and upon coming to North America. However, Baird was writing at a time during which Protestantism was considered *de rigueur* for North Americans (Glozier, 2002). Catholicism and Judaism were both under severe social suspicion as “foreign” influences on Protestant culture. The large-scale arrival of Irish Catholics in the middle of the 1800s and the incoming tide of Eastern European Jews, Italian Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians in the second half of that century made documenting one’s West European Protestantism an obsession for many already dwelling in the United States. It is no coincidence that many American hereditary and genealogical societies, e.g., the Colonial Dames (1890), the daughters of the American Revolution (1890), the Mayflower Society (1897), were formed during this time period. Thus, Baird’s (1885) book may be viewed as part of this same impulse toward certifying one’s Protestant ancestral roots.

The attempt to plant a French colony in the North America got off to a very rocky start. The French explorers such as Jacques Cartier and Samuel de Champlain had explored the coast of what is now Nova Scotia, Maine and the St. Lawrence seaway in the 1500s; and even earlier French and Basque cod fisherman had kept summer camps there (Adams *et al.*, 1991; Lotz-Heumann, 2012). Baird (1885, p. 18) reports that the earliest permanent settlers in the New France were the Protestant Huguenot volunteers – together with “persons gleaned from the prisons of France.”

Baird’s (1885) treatise documents that the Huguenot population in France was primarily located in seaports along the Western coast – in particular La Rochelle, Rouen and Dieppe. From these cities the Huguenots controlled the major share of the French economy, acting as merchants, transoceanic shippers, bankers, and entrepreneurs. Additionally, these Huguenot traders often spoke multiple languages, e.g., English, Spanish, Dutch, German, and had business contacts in these countries. As Baird notes, the Huguenots were the economic drivers

of France; this gave them some protection from scrutiny by the Roman Catholic clergy, but it also engendered resentment. In 1599, a Huguenot named Pierre Chauvin was tasked by French King Henry IV to “colonize America” (Baird, 1885). Many of the entrepreneurs and financial backers of the project were French Huguenots from La Rochelle.

Concurrent with French exploration and trading posts established along what became the coast of Quebec and Maine, the British were also expanding their colonization efforts north of Massachusetts Bay. As Baird (1885, p. 112) reports, “In 1621, James I...made over to one of his subjects, Sir William Alexander—afterward Earl of Stirling – the whole area east of the St. Croix River and south of the Saint Lawrence...The grant included all of the French colony of Acadia and was to be known as Nova Scotia.” This was happy news to the many French Huguenots who had already emigrated to England and Scotland and desired to help the English colonization effort. Baird further points out that the British were well aware that several of the ‘Catholic’ Acadians were in fact Huguenot Protestants (Baird, 1885, p. 132).

In France, however, the political situation quickly became more tenuous for Huguenots. The Roman Catholic Church was gaining favour with the French monarchy, and by the late 1650s to early 1660s, large numbers of Protestants were fleeing France for England and Holland and their American colonies, e.g., New Amsterdam. Finally, in 1685, the Edict of Nantes, which had guaranteed Protestants in France their civil and religious freedoms, was fully revoked by Louis XIV (Baird 1885). But, even prior to that, some Huguenot houses of worship had been burned and looted. As Baird (1885, p. 246) writes, “Thus the temple of St. Hippolyte in the region of the Cevennes was torn down in 1681, the temple of Milhaud in Languedoc was demolished in 1682...the temple of Usez in Languedoc was destroyed in 1676.”

Notably, the Huguenots called their houses of worship as *temples* just as did the Jews before being exiled from Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE. Furthermore, the biblical passages used during the Huguenot worship service were the Psalms of the David, not the gospels of Jesus. Baird (1885, p. 272), gives us an additional clue, “(In La Rochelle) ... the entrance to a Huguenot dwelling of the olden time was often distinguishable by some pious inscription, frequently a text of scripture or a verse from psalms, to be read over the doorway”. Those familiar with traditional Judaism will recognize this behaviour as the placement of a mezuzah at the front house portal. Often the *fleur de lis* was used by the Huguenots to decorate their doorways; this symbol is not only indicative of the Jewish Davidic line, but also an insignia used by the French royal line, making it acceptable in France and its colonies as a sign of support for the monarchy.

Baird (1885, p. 276) describes the Grand Temple of the Huguenots in La Rochelle as follows:

“The chief... external ornament of this house of worship was a finely sculpted stone over the main entrance displaying the arms of the kings of France and Navarre (i.e., the fleur de lis). Within, distinguished from the plain benches...were high seats provided for the magistrates of the city, the ministers and the members of the Consistory: and on the wall near the pulpit was a tablet...inscribed with the Ten Commandments of the Law of God in letters of gold upon a blue background”.

Those familiar with Judaism will recognize this description as bearing great verisimilitude to Jewish temples of the same time period. To document this visually, two images are shown

below. The first is the Huguenot Temple in La Rochelle, France. Below that is a photograph of the interior of this same temple today. As can be seen from the interior shot, there are no icons or crosses displayed in the sanctuary. Additionally, by displaying “the arms of the kings of France and Navarre” – which is the *fleur de lis* -- on the exterior of their temple, the worshippers were using an ancient Jewish symbol.

Baird (1885) provides extensive listings of the Huguenot colonists who settled throughout North America – forming communities in New York, Maine, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Louisiana, North Carolina, Connecticut, and Virginia. They became the standard-bearers for the Huguenot society in the New World – holding political office, serving as military officers, establishing important shipping and agricultural operations from Canada to South Carolina to Louisiana (Baird, 1885). As the researcher will document, the descendants of many of these elite Huguenots bear DNA showing Jewish ancestry.

## 1.2. Huguenot Colonists in the French Province of Quebec

The researcher takes a closer look at the colonial French Province of Quebec. Lacoursière and Philpot (2009), *A People's History of Quebec*, is considered to be the primary reference on Colonial Quebec. Their presentation begins in 1534 when Jacques Cartier, a Huguenot, and his crew land on the Gaspé Peninsula and plant a flag proclaiming “Vive le roi de France”. Despite this grand proclamation, however, France's colonization of their newly claimed lands was generally weak and ineffective. But the French Huguenots continued their efforts, using the area as a trading post for fur pelts and fishing camps. Cartier's nephews, Jean and Michel Noel, carried on his efforts to establish a permanent colony.

The land on which the Huguenots settled changed hands repeatedly between France and Britain over the next 40 years. Depending on the time period, the Huguenot settlers were treated well or badly by both their French and English overlords (Lacoursière & Philpot, 2009). In 1663, Louis IX took control of the French colony, much as James I had done at the English colony of Jamestown in 1623, sending additional Huguenots to Quebec Province. Many of the newly arrived settlers were drawn to by promises of good farmland and religious freedom (Lacoursière & Philpot, 2009).

Because most of these colonists were men, the king sent over 850 unwed women, as potential wives. The newly formed families were promised a 300 Pound a year payment, if they had 10 children, and 400 Pounds a year if they had 12 children (LaCoursiere & Philpot, 2009). This resulted in a genetically homogeneous population over the next several decades, since few new settlers arrived, and the many children had to find marriage partners among their cousins. Thus, the number of different surnames (and DNA ancestries) is small, relative to the overall size of the French-Canadian population.

By the year 1689, the population in French Canada was 10,700 persons; by contrast, the population of the English North American colonies was 160,000 persons (LaCoursiere & Philpot, 2009). Obviously, the French were ill-equipped to defend their colony against attempts by the British to annex it. By 1713, Britain had prevailed in colonizing North America—the Treaty of Utrecht was signed giving Britain ownership of Acadia, Newfoundland, and the Hudson Bay.

### 1.3. The Acadians

The Acadians are an ethnic group from French Canada who, in popular culture and some ethnographies, are described in contrast to the Protestant Huguenots. Acadians, also termed “Cajuns”, are said to be staunchly Catholic and composed primarily of French peasants brought over as colonists during the early 1600s to settle in the Acadia Province of what is now part of Canada and Maine (Griffiths, 2001; Hodson, 2012, Jobb, 2004; Plank, 2001; Reid; 1981; 2004). However, as the researcher discuss below, Acadia was largely a French Protestant entrepreneurial project.

Let’s take a closer look at where the Acadians came from and who they were. In 1606 the ship *Jonas* set sail from the Huguenot port of LaRochelle carrying forty men. The ship and its crew were under the command of John de Biencourt, an associate of Pierre du Gua, sieur de Monts, the captain-general of New France. Both men were Protestant Huguenots (Faragher, 2005). Together, they established Acadia as a trading and settlement venture.

In 1630, Isaac de Razilly became Governor of Acadia in 1630, bringing over the first French families on board the *Saint Jehan*, which left La Rochelle, a Huguenot port, on 1 April 1636. These families also were Protestant. Additional ships followed, and Acadia became a colony of permanent French settlers, including women and children.

Kennedy (2014) argues that these French immigrants, who were from the Vienne and Aquitaine regions of France, carried to Acadia their customs and social structure. He proposes that a distinct Acadian culture emerged from their modification of traditional French practices, institutions, and ideas to the Native North American environment. Notably, the regions of France from which these Acadian colonists came are near or on the western coast, where Sephardic Jews are known to have settled after their exile from Iberia. Thus, while the researcher disagrees with Kennedy’s (2014) characterization of the Acadian settlers as ‘frontier’ people, the researcher agrees with his description of them as favouring industriousness, political activism and independence.

A closer examination of some the specific colonists supports this viewpoint. For example, Faragher (2005, p. 3) states that, “John de Beincourt had picked men from his home area, relatives and associates including his 15-year old son, Charles, and his relative by marriage, Louis Hebert, a young apothecary with a deep interest in horticulture...intending to supervise construction of the first winery and grist mill in North America, and his attorney, Marc LesCarbot...to act as the colony’s notary and historian”. This further supports the proposition that Acadia began as a Huguenot business venture.

Later, Faragher (2005, p. 20) acknowledges that the early Acadian colonial enterprise “did not attempt to enforce religious exclusion, [however] Huguenots kept their religious identity hidden”. Notably, the second son of Biencourt, Jacques de Salazar, also came to his father’s colony (Faragher 2005), Salazar is a prominent Sephardic-Portuguese surname ([www.sephardim.co](http://www.sephardim.co)).

By 1626, several alliances had been formed between earlier Huguenot refugees to England and the current Huguenots attempting to colonize Acadia. In particular, John and David Kirke, the sons of a Scottish merchant and a French Huguenot woman from Dieppe, had recently captured French Huguenot captain Claude LaTour and “found they had much in common” (Farragher,

2005, p. 40). “Within a few months of his ‘capture’, he formally renounced his allegiance to Louis III of France and swore loyalty to Charles I of Britain.... LaTour then ... married an English noblewoman ... a relative of Sir William Alexander”. Alexander had led some of the earliest – and unsuccessful – efforts to create a British colony in Canada.

The French made an additional attempt to settle Acadia in 1636. Again, sailing from LaRochelle, the passengers included Huguenots from Dijon, Basque carpenters, and wine-making farmers from Bordeaux. Among the surnames were Trahan, Charbonneau, Martin, Vigneau, Lejeune, Theriot, Gaudet, Aucoin, and Salle. A total of 200 persons, in all, were now settled at Port Royal in the Acadia, “linked by kinship and culture”, as Faragher (2005, p. 45) puts it. They would become the cultural and genetic base of Acadia. Over the next thirty years, the colony grew slowly. Officially it was Catholic, and those who joined were expected to declare themselves affiliated with the Roman Church. However, in reality, they were ethnically mixed, including not only the English Protestant men, but also persons from the Azores, Portugal, Spain and Basques (Faragher 2005) – all places the Sephardim had fled from or to during the Inquisition.

In 1654, the British took control of Acadia and kept it for 20 years, during which time there were no priests or Catholic services in the colony (Faragher, 2005). This historian also notes that though Catholicism is seen in today as an important part of the Acadian culture, “it was by no means the foundation of Acadian culture” (Faragher, 2005, p. 66). Even though France regained control of the colony in 1674, the Acadians, themselves, had already established strong – though illegal – mercantile activities with the British colonies, especially Massachusetts. Furs, fish, and other trade goods were commonly exchanged on the ‘black market’ making some families in both locales’ wealthy.

International politics being what they were, the French settlement in Acadia was destined to come to an end. By the mid-1700s France had become weak both militarily and economically. It could no longer sustain a colony so close to the prosperous and populous New England. In 1757, British troops entered Acadia and rounded up many of the inhabitants, around 7,000, but over 12,000 Acadians fled to the west and north (Faragher, 2005). Here is how Faragher (2005) describes their forced removal by the British from their homes:

“In the Autumn of 1755, officers and troops from New England, acting under the authority of the colonial governors of Nova Scotia and Massachusetts, systematically rounded up more than 7,000 Acadians -- the French-speaking, Catholic inhabitants who lived along the shores of the Bay of Fundy. Men, women and children were crowded into transport vessels and deported in small groups to other British colonies. Many families were separated, never to meet again. Another ten to twelve thousand Acadians managed to escape and spent years as refugees...Their property was plundered; their communities were torched, and their lands were seized (p xvii). *Le grand derangement* continued until the end of the Seven Years’ War between Great Britain and France in 1763 (p. xvii)”.

Those who were captured were divided into small groups of women and children – usually without their husbands or older brothers – and sent by boat to the various British colonies along the Atlantic Coast. Many families, thus separated, and were never reunited (Faragher, 2005). Some were sent to British islands in the Caribbean, while others went to Virginia, South

Carolina and Georgia; where their descendant's dwell today (Hodson, 2012). But the largest group made their way to Louisiana, which was then jointly governed by Spain and France (Hodson 2012).

Many of the Acadians also were taken by ship to France, where they lived in poverty until 1785 when, summoned by their kin living in the Louisiana, a total of 1,596 boarded seven vessels and sailed to join them. Three fourths of this group settled in Bayou Lafourche, west of the Mississippi River. By the end of 1700s, there were over 4,000 Acadians settled in Louisiana (Faragher 2005; Hodson, 2012). This left several thousand Acadians still living in Canada as refugees; most of these persons made their way to Quebec, especially Montreal, where they were joined by some of their deported friends returning from Connecticut and Massachusetts (Hodson, 2012).

It is at this point that many histories of the Acadian people end, and scholars are believing it is the conclusion of their story. Moreover, it is at this point that the researcher examines a novel hypothesis: that the Colonial French settlers – both Acadian and Huguenot -- were largely composed of the descendants of Sephardic Jews who had taken refuge in France after the 1492 Spanish Inquisition.

## **2. Methodology: Using Maternal and Paternal DNA Samples to Ascertain Ethnic Ancestry**

Conjecture about possible Sephardic origins for Huguenots and Acadians remain speculative unless there is strong evidence to support them. Fortunately, historians now have an entirely new form of historical inscription that can reveal the past without the concern of forgery or incompleteness that artifacts and texts are subject to. This is the availability of global DNA databases which can be accessed by researchers and the general public alike to trace specific individuals and groups through several thousand years of history.

Human DNA testing for ancestry tracing was revolutionized in 2001 with provision to the general public of personal DNA tests; these can be used to link individuals to distant relatives and ancestors (see e.g., familytreedna.com, 23andme.com, ancestry.com.). Concurrently, population geneticists began collecting DNA samples from nationality and ethnic groups to trace patterns of migration from ancient to modern times (Lavender, 2005; 2006). It became possible to track human ancestry not only out of Africa, but around the world, both on a personal and group level.

In 2006, the National Geographic Society completed the first global mapping of human haplotypes, compiling a database of over 850,000 individual samples from across the globe (nationalgeo.com). At present, academic and commercial enterprises have greatly expanded the mapping of human origins, to the extent that virtually every ethnic group, religious group, nationality and indigenous tribe has been tested and the results uploaded onto publicly accessible websites (see e.g., ftdna.com). The present study utilizes databases containing both female (MtDNA) and male (Y chromosome) DNA samples. These two types of DNA ancestry testing are described below.

### **2.1. Mitochondrial DNA (MtDNA) testing**

The Mitochondrial DNA is transmitted from mother to child, so that one's direct maternal

ancestor can be traced back in time using MtDNA. A perfect match found to another person's MtDNA test results indicates shared ancestry of possibly between one and fifty generations ago (i.e., 1,250 years ago). More distant matching to a specific haplogroup or subclade may be linked to a common geographic origin. In the present study, the researcher traces female ancestry to the ethnic group level, since there are viable DNA collections for contemporary Sephardic Jews, Acadians and French Huguenots – the three populations the researcher wants to compare.

MtDNA is divided into three regions. They are the coding region (00577-16023) and two Hyper-variable Regions (HVR1 [16024-16569], and HVR2 [00001-00576]). The most common mtDNA tests are a sequence of HVR1 and HVR2 and a full sequence of the mitochondria. This type of testing was used in the present study.

## **2.2. Y Chromosome testing**

The Y-Chromosome is one of the twenty-three pairs of human chromosomes. Only males have a Y-chromosome, as women have two X chromosomes in their twenty-third pair. A man's paternal ancestry can be traced, because the Y-chromosome is transmitted from father to son nearly unchanged. A man's test results can be compared those of another man to determine the timeframe in which the two individuals may have shared a common ancestor in their direct paternal line. A woman who desires to know her paternal ancestry can ask her father, brother, paternal uncle, or paternal grandfather to take a test for her. There are two types of male DNA testing: STRs and SNPs.

The most common type of male ancestry testing is conducted using STR's or Short Tandem Repeats. These are pairings of genetic coding material which are passed from father to son. The more STR markers tested, the more accurate the results will be in determining paternal lineage. In the present study, comparisons with as many as thirty-seven STR markers are used, which provides a high degree of accuracy. The results of two individuals are compared to see how closely they match.

## **3. Analysis and findings**

Our primary thesis is that the Acadian and Huguenot populations of the Colonial French Canada are of Sephardic Jewish origin; the researcher believe that this was one of the factors motivating them to escape the religious wars in France and seek a new life on distant shores. Ethnicity is a complex concept; it may involve one's ancestors, religious beliefs, regional and national affiliations, and race (see e.g., Lavender, 2008; 2009). In the present research, several of these elements are in play simultaneously. The people the researcher is interested in emigrated from France to North America during the 1600s to the early 1700s; once there, some inter-married with Native Americans. This will introduce instances of Native American ancestry into their gene pool.

Some of these French settlers then were “removed” (an overly kind term) from their homes in Canada and distributed across English colonies in the North America, especially Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia and Louisiana. In these colonies some may have inter-married with sub-Saharan Africans who were enslaved or freed. This would introduce the sub-Saharan African genes into their ancestry. Since our hypothesis focuses on their original ancestry in France, and not the later additions in the French Canada or the United States, the researcher



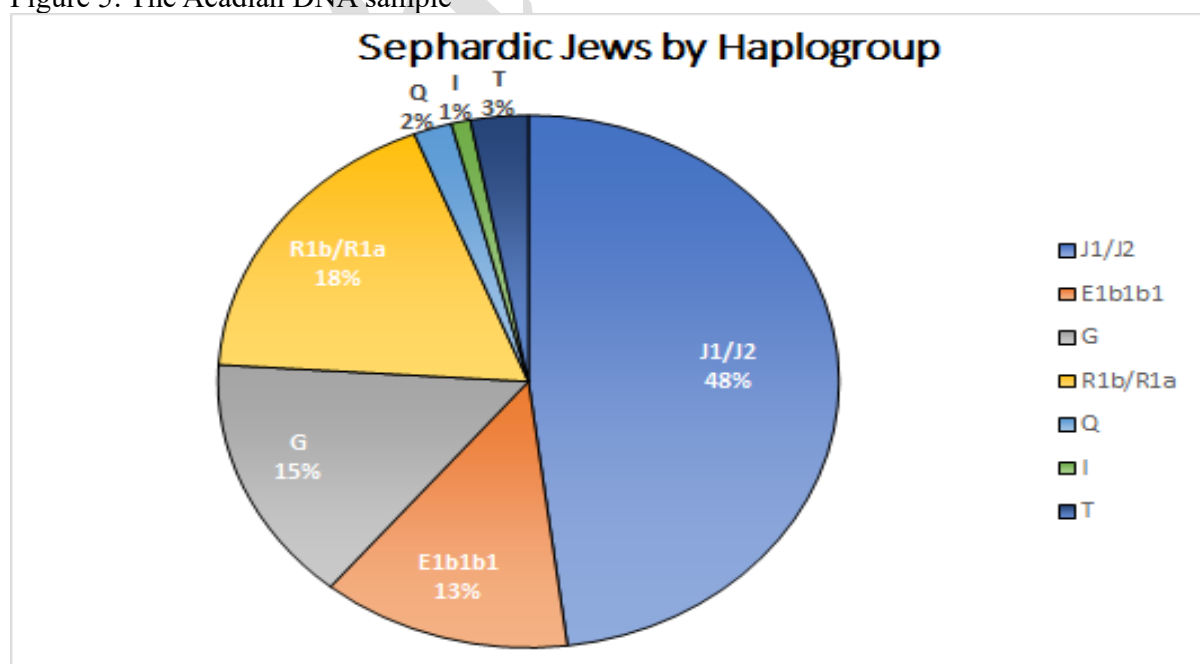
excluded from the analysis the persons who have a direct Native American or Sub-Saharan African paternal or maternal lineages, but the researcher report the overall levels of these ancestries in each database.

The chart below shows the current composition of Sephardic Jewish Y DNA haplogroups (jewishgenesblogspot.com). While useful, the chart groups together both J1 and J2 haplogroups and R1b and R1a haplogroups. In the case of the J haplogroups, this is not so problematic, because both originate in the Middle East and are, therefore, ‘markers’ of Semitic ancestry. Men having these paternal haplotypes have ancestry from the Middle East and are likely to have descended from either Jews or Muslims (geneticsofthejewishpeople.com). In the present study, the researcher assumes that those French colonists having either J1 or J2 haplotypes are of Sephardic Jewish descent.

The chart also conflates Y haplogroups R1b and R1a. This is unfortunate, because R1a is primarily distributed throughout Northern Europe. Further, there is a subgroup of R1a called R-Y2619 /R1a-M582 or R1a1a1a which is carried by a Jewish group called Ashkenazi Levites (geneticsofthejewishpeople.com). As the researcher shall show, there are some descendants from this group included in the French Heritage and Acadian Colonial samples the researcher will be using. This implies that not only Sephardic Jews were colonizing New France, but also Ashkenazic Jews.

The R1b portion of this chart is understated, as this haplogroup was originally not considered to be part of the Jewish paternal gene pool, since it does not originate in the Middle East. However, research since 2010 on Sephardic and Ashkenazic populations has indicated that substantial numbers of men in both these Jewish groups do have R1b ancestry (see jewishr1bprojectftdna.com). R1b has now been relabelled R-m269 in current DNA research and there is a Jewish R1b/Rm269 Project at FTDNA which currently has 778 members. The researcher uses this as our comparison pool for the French Heritage and Acadian Colonial males having this DNA haplotype.

Figure 5: The Acadian DNA sample



The Acadian-Amerindian Project from which our Acadian DNA sample is drawn was organized by a group of Acadian persons who contracted with Family Tree DNA to help them collect and analyse data within their ethnic group in order to determine their ancestral origins. It is described below:

“Established in 2006, the Acadian Amerindian Ancestry Project (FTDNA) builds upon the historic surnames and the mtDNA and Y DNA haplogroups of our Acadian and Amerindian ancestors of 17th-century Acadia (and later diaspora regions). The researcher extends invitations to our friends and relations from all across North America -- including the United States (especially the East Coast, Louisiana, Texas, and Northern Maine), Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the Gaspé Region, Quebec, and surrounding areas to join our Acadian Amerindian Ancestry Project..... The project currently has 1801 members.”

### 3.1. Male Acadian DNA analysis

The researcher first examined the men from the Acadian DNA Project who do not have either Native American or sub-Saharan male DNA haplotypes. The researcher then compared each man’s DNA markers to known Jewish men to see if there were corresponding matches. In table-1 below are the names of the Male Acadians having E-M35 haplotypes. Since this haplotype originated in the Middle East and composes a large portion of the Sephardic Jewish ancestral lineage, these men very likely had Sephardic Jewish ancestors.

These men have several early-settler surnames, such as Boucher, Villareal, Roussy, Leger, Courville, Gaudard, Muise, Moisan, and Larche. Also, of interest is that three of the men, Williams and Hesse from Germany and Romero from Spain are not originally from France. This diversity in country of origin suggests that the Acadian Colony may have retained knowledge of its Jewish roots and attracted both Spanish and German Jews at a later time. The researcher also located Jewish men in other DNA project groups who matched these Acadian men at the 24-marker level or above, giving further evidence that they were of the recent practicing Jewish origin.

Table-1: Surnames of male Acadians having E-M35 Haplotypes

Boucher Acadia/France	Courville Canada	DeRosby Canada	DuPont Acadia
Gaudard Switzerland	Hachey Canada	Hesse Germany	Larche France
Lebau France	Leger	Moisan France	Muise Canada
Romero Spain	Roussy France	Simms Mali	Villareal France
Williams Germany			

Haplogroup G is known to be Middle Eastern/Semitic. It is also a major component of the known Sephardic Jewish population. There are four Acadian men named below who have this haplotype and therefore are likely of Sephardic Jewish descent. They include some of the earliest settlers in French Canada: Allaire, Chenete, Chaisson and Gaudet. The researcher was able to locate men in data bases of known Jewish ancestry who matched the haplotypes of these Acadians at the 24 marker or better level.

There were several Acadian men who carried haplotypes from Haplogroup I-P37. This haplogroup is cantered in the Balkans, especially Croatia and Serbia. How could it have gotten to French Canada? There are two intriguing possibilities. First, it is possible that these may have been persons from South-Eastern Europe who ventured to the American Gulf Coast and joined the Acadian population once it was established. Another possibility is that they may be descended from men of the South-Eastern European ancestry who were recently discovered among the Lumbee Native American population in North Carolina, who date from the mid to late 1500s. These persons are believed to have arrived in the North America from the Croatia during the period of mid to late 1500s when the Croatia (Ragusa) was a major sea power (Hirschman *et al.*, 2019a).

One person in this group states his ancestor is from Serbia, Jovanov, and two others report their ancestors are from Spain: Pacheco and Rodriquez. The largest group of men having I-p37 haplotypes report their ancestors came from France and/or Canada and includes many of the ‘original founder’ surnames: LeJeune, Martin, Dubois, Aucoin, Daigle, Duguay, Gautreau, Lavergne, Legere, Saucier, Petitpas and Cyr.

Adding to the complexity is a surname common in Central Appalachia, King, which has been found to be Ashkenazic Jewish (Hirschman *et al.*, 2019b)—and two that are commonly Ashkenazic Jewish, i.e., Deutsch, Jobes. Then there is the surname Acra, which is ancient Hebrew. The researcher quote from [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/acra](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/acra) “The Acra (also spelled Akra, from Ancient Greek: Ἄκρα, Hebrew: חֲקֵרָה, חֲקֵרָה Ḥaqrā(h)) was a fortified compound in Jerusalem built by Antiochus Epiphanes, ruler of the Seleucid Empire, following his sack of the city in 168 BCE.”

And finally, the researcher learnt that the name Azard is Islamic, and may be used as a first or last name. For example, Mohammed Azard | Facebook ([www.facebook.com/mohammed.azard2](http://www.facebook.com/mohammed.azard2)) and Azard Ali | Facebook ([www.facebook.com/people/azard-ali/1464999352](http://www.facebook.com/people/azard-ali/1464999352)). Given this, the researcher believes that the I-p37 descendants currently dwelling in the Acadia may be a largely Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewish-descended group, supplemented by a possible inflow from Muslim men and some Balkan men.

Table-2: Surnames of Acadians having Haplotype I-p37

Acra VA	Allen Scotland	Aucoin France	Azard
Bonnevie France	Bowtell Mass.	Cashen Ireland	Chapman Ireland
Cousins MASS	Cyr Canada	Daigle Austria	Deutsch Germany
DuBois Brittany/FR	Duguay France	Hadson Canada	Henry France
Jobes Unkn.	Jovanov Serbia	King VA/NC	Kinne U.K.
Le Jeune Canada	Leger France	Lesslie Ireland	Martin France
Maxson England	Miller Louisiana	Nance England	Pacheco Spain
Petitpas France	Rodriquez Spain	Saucier France	Taylor Germany
Wild England			

The surnames below (table 3), having J1 and J2 haplotypes, are of Middle Eastern ancestral descent, because this where these two Y haplogroups originated and where the vast majority of men carrying them still live. What is quite interesting about them in the Acadian sample is the diversity of country origins they represent: Spain, Germany, Ireland, France, England, and the US. Many of these are places where the Huguenots fled, e.g., Germany, Ireland, England, but their diversity also suggests that these Acadians may have known they were of Jewish ancestry, and may have practiced a form of what is termed Crypto-Judaism – secret Judaism – in their communities (Lavender, 2010; Noguiero *et al.*, 2015; Velez *et al.*, 2012).

The researcher asserts this because the presence of Spanish Jews, i.e., Sisco, Gallego, and Ashkenazi Jews, i.e., Hohwerder, Miers, together with founding-family French Huguenots, i.e., Carriere, Dugas, Gautreaux, Lavergne, all living in the same community is unlikely to happen by chance. It is more likely that these persons had developed a way of communicating across crypto-Jewish communities and decided to gather in the Acadian settlement. This much Middle Eastern DNA coming from so many geographical locales and arriving in one community is not likely to be a coincidence.

Table-3: Surnames of Acadians having Haplotypes J1 and J2

Brown Ireland	Carriere France	Dugas France (many)	Gallegos Spain
Gardner England	Gautreaux France	Hohwerder Germany	Kenney Ireland
LaVergne France	Mier Louisiana	Pittman Newfoundland	Sisco US
Webster England			

The *piece de resistance*, however, is the group of R1a1a1a Ashkenazi Levite DNA carriers shown in table 4. These Acadians include Jaroch from Poland, MacNiell from Scotland, Vincent from France, Hawkes from the US, Forest from Canada, Michaski from Poland, Segall from Romania, Bailey from England, and Ryan from Waterford, Ireland. Again, to get this many persons from this many countries all carrying the same specific Jewish DNA signature indicates that they likely were aware of their Jewish ancestry and chose to gather together with others of the same ethnicity.

Table-4: Surnames of Acadians having Haplotype R1a1a1a (Ashkenazi Levites)

Bailey England	Forest Canada	Hawkes US	Hinshaw N. Ireland
Jaroch Poland	MacEachern Scotland	MacNiell Scotland	Michaski Poland
Ryan Waterford, Ireland	Segall Romania	Vincent France	Webb England

In table-5 below the researcher have the names of several members of the Acadian DNA Project with R-m269 haplotypes. Each of these men matched a known Jewish person in the Jewish R1-b/R-m269 Project at the 20-marker level, or higher, indicating they likely had Jewish ancestry, either Sephardic or Ashkenazic. Also note the diversity of names – ranging from English, Scottish, and French to Italian, as well as traditionally Jewish, e.g., Simon. Once again, the diversity of national backgrounds all collected in one community strongly suggests self and group knowledge of Jewish affiliation.

Table-5: Surnames of Acadians having R-M269 matches with known Jews (Percent of R-m269 matches with Jewish R1b/Rm269 or Sephardic DNA Project at 20+ Markers: 91%)

Allison	Arsenau	Babineau	Banlier	Bastarache	Baudoin
Bell	Benoit	Bergeron	Bigelow	Bohlender	Bonhomme
Bourg	Bourgeois	Bourget	Broussard	Brown	Chapadoas
Choate	Circe	Collette	Cottrell	Cyr	Cyree
Daigle	Dattalo	David	Davidson	Debor	Detcheverry
Deveau	Doherty	Doiron	Doucet	Dubois	DuPuis
Edminster	Enguehard	Fortin	Gagnon	Gallant	Gargano
Gaubert	Gauthier	Gibson	Gilfillan	Gleason	Green
Guedry	Hanks	Hatfield	Hayley	Hebert	Henard
Hern	Horton	Hulbert	Kyle	Landry	Langlois
Lapier	Lavoie	Le Jeune	LeBland	LeRoy	Levacque
Long	Lore	Lowrey	Lozon	Maddox	Marel
Martin	McCabe	McGee	Mignier	Mitchell	Morris
Morrison	Moss	Muse	Newton	Nicely	O-Niell
Payan	Payne	Pelleren	Pierce	Pike	Piorier
Pitre	Poucher	Pouliot	Prince	Pumroy	Rees
Richard	Robichaud	Robicheaux	Roche	Savoie	Simon
Simpkins	Someran	Sonnier	Surette	Tate	Terrio
Therault	Thibault	Thibodeau	Thompson	Toney	Trahan
Travis	Vaux	Voegtly	Webb	Weber	Wilbur
William	Young				

### 3.2. Acadian MtDNA findings

The table-6 below shows that several Acadian women have H (undifferentiated) haplotypes. The researcher compared these to those of women in the Sephardic Heritage DNA Project (FTDNA) and found that all of them had corresponding matches in that database. Similarly, among the Acadian women having H1-variety haplotypes, all were found to have a corresponding match within the Sephardic database. However, none of the H2-variety women matched the Sephardic database.

Among the Acadian women having H3-variety haplotypes, four had matches in the Sephardic database. However, the H4 women had no matches. The H5, H6 and H7 Acadian women all had matches in the Sephardic data base. Moving to Haplotype HV, the single entry did have a match to a Jewish woman in the Ukraine, which may indicate Ashkenazic ancestry. It is possible that the non-Jewish female entries may be those of the descendants of the 850 “King’s Daughters” -- young women who were early sent to French Canada as potential wives for the single men living there.

Table-6: mtDNA match Surnames (country of origin prior to 1800) mtDNA Haplotype H and HV

Aucoin France H	Balfour Scotland H	Beaudin France H3
Begg Scotland H2a	Benoit Canada H4a1	Blanchard France H7b
Boudemer France H1bu	Boudreau France H3a1	Bourdois France H
Bourg France H1	Bourgeois Ireland H3ar	Bourgeois France H
Bourgoise Canada H1ag	Breau France H1	Bugaret France H
Bugaret Canada H1c3b	Chabot France H	Chastain France H5
Corbineau Canada H1ag1	Corbineau France H	Curry Ireland H
De Sense France H7	DeCano France H	DeShaies France I1a1b
Dodin France H1	Dube Canada HV1	Dube Canada HV1
Eakin Ireland H3k1a	Eisman Poland H	Eloy France H5
Fouache France H7	Fox England H-1t	Franklyn England H3a
Freyman Switzerland H1b1	Grunbach Germany H1e	Hebert France H
Kuhn Germany H1-t	LaFleur France H3-T1.	Landry France H
Landry France H3a1	LaPierre France H	Lavalee Canada H11a
LeBlanc Canada	LeJeune France H2a	LeVillian H1ag
McCormac Ireland H	McKenzie Scotland H2	Melanson Canada H24
Miller Germany H	Pierard Belgium H3ag	Quelin/Guelin France H5
Rau France H4a1	Rau France H	Renud France H
Roark Ireland H	Rolleville France H	Rufuange Canada H10e
Russell US H	Tournier Canada H1aa1	Vanier France H1e
Volmar Germany H6	Ziegler France H16a	

For the two Acadian women in mtDNA haplogroup I, no matches were found to Sephardic women: these women were Rennon dit Arnoult (France I2d) and DeShaies (France I1a1b). Among women in mtDNA haplogroup J, J1 and J2, all were found to have corresponding matches to women in the Sephardic Jewish DNA project (see table 7). This maternal haplotype is Semitic in origin, so the matches are not surprising given our hypothesis.

Table-7: MT-DNA Haplotype J

Brelancour France J1	Coursolle Canada J2	Dube J
Duguay France J	Fables Netherlands J	Garnier/Grenier France J2
Gaudet France J1	Gauthier France J	Gauthier France J1
Hebert France J1	Klein Germany J2	Leger France J1
LeJeune Canada J1	Schlicht Germany J1	

Several K haplotypes (table 8) among the Acadian women displayed matches to both Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewish women, including some of the Ashkenazi female founding lines. This provides support for the proposal that the Acadian population was aware of its Jewish ancestry and that it included members from both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi branches of Judaism.

Table-8: mtDNA Haplogroup K

Barron-Barnes England K	Bussiere France K1	Chaumeret France K1
Chaussegros K	Chaussegros K1	Daigneau Canada K1
Drury-Bacon K2	DuPont France K1	Eigenberger Germany K1
Evard France K1	Goard France K1	Lewin England K1
Myers Austria K1	Reilly Ireland K1	Schultz Germany K1

There was one truly remarkable find among the Acadian women's DNA; a woman surnamed DesMiers has the same mtDNA haplotype as a woman whose ancient remains were recently unearthed in Sardinia (Matisou-Smith *et al.*, 2018). This DNA can be traced back to ancient Phoenicia – making it Semitic – and is one of the earliest Semitic DNA discoveries on record (Matisou-Smith *et al.*, 2018). That this mtDNA signature made its way through the entire Mediterranean Region over a centuries' long journey to North America is remarkable: Desmiers France (1515) N1b1a5 = Phoenician.

Next, the researcher arrives at the Acadian mtDNA T haplogroup samples (table-9). T1 is rare in Jewish populations, but T2, especially T2e, is considered a 'marker gene' haplotype for Sephardic Jewish women (Velez *et al.*, 2012). However, within the Sephardic MtDNA Project sample the researcher did find matching T and T1 samples; these occurred in women claiming ancestry from Hungary (T) and a woman of unknown country-of-origin named Sharabanai (T1a1j). A search for this surname turned up a woman from India, suggesting a possible South Asian origin for this Acadian woman. There were similar South Asian female ancestries occurring among the Colonial Central Appalachian population which was also found to be largely of Sephardic ancestry (Hirschman *et al.*, 2019a)

In the Acadian sample, the two women carrying the T1a haplotype were surnamed Bruyene (France) and Eagle (unknown). There were several Acadian women with the T2 haplotype and each of them matched women in the Sephardic Jewish Project. Thus, the researcher conclude that these Acadian women were likely of Sephardic Jewish descent.

Table-9: Mt-DNA Haplogroup T

Belindess Virginia T2	Bruyene France T1a	Clark T2a1a	Clerice France T2b
Cochran Ireland T2	Dalama Sweden T	Doucet France T2	Eagle T1a1
Glodkowska Germany T2	Guyon France T2	Laverdure France T2	Mason France T2
Reynaud T2	Sotala Finland T	Tabor Vermont T2	Tripp Germany T2
Vetu Canada T2			

There were also several Acadian women carrying the W haplotype, yet when the researcher compared these to the women in the Sephardic Jewish DNA Project, the researcher found only one W1c1 woman, whose name and country of origin are not given. Of interest is the fact that the W mtDNA haplogroup is very rare and originated in Anatolia (i.e., Turkey) during the Neolithic period. And yet here the researcher has a set of eight Acadian women all of them carrying this haplotype and originating from countries as diverse as France, Ireland, Finland, and Italy.

Given this distribution, it is possible they were of Huguenot origin in France and then dispersed during the 1500s or 1600s, ending up in the Acadian population by the late 1700s. Additional searching led us to the “N and W mtDNA Project” (FTDNA) where the researcher found several W haplotype surnames; some were of possible Jewish origin, e.g., Kaiser, Majer, Kobeskowa, Kohn and the countries included Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Russia (see table-10). Thus, the researcher propose that a credible interpretation is that the W mtDNA Acadian Women are of Ashkenazic Jewish ancestry.

Table-10: Mt-DNA Haplogroup W

Bourque Canada W	Canol Canada W3	LeFranc (m. Hebert) France W
LeFranc France W1	Martin Finland W1	Petronille Italy W1
Rohrbacher France W5	White (Waterford, Ire.) W1	

The researcher has arrived at the X mtDNA haplogroup (see table-11). Three of the Acadian women are X and had matches to women in the Sephardic Heritage DNA Project. Thirteen Acadian women are in the X2 haplogroup and had no matches to Sephardic DNA project women. The recent research study has suggested that X, itself, is mainly distributed in Eurasia and North Africa, as well as some Native American groups. Subclade X2 is more widely distributed throughout Mediterranean Europe, the Caucasus, the Near East and North America. Thus, the Acadian women carrying this haplotype may be of the Native American origin, or they may be of the Ashkenazic Jewish descent given the stated origins in Germany for two of the women.

Table-11: MT-DNA Haplogroup X

Alexandre Canada X	Bajoulet Canada X2	Belles England X2	Benoit Canada X2
Bourdelou Canada X2	Boutillier Canada X2	Duffenais Canada X2	Elie-Breton Canada X2
Grunefeld Germany X2	Lambert France X2	Marchand US X2	Marche Canada X2
Miller Virginia X2	Miller Germany X	Poite France X2	Tolliver X

### 3.3. The French Heritage DNA Project

The researcher now examines the data contained in the French Heritage DNA Project. This on-line DNA group states that it is open to “all persons with ancestral roots in Colonial French Canada” and thus includes both Huguenots and Acadians, along with persons having Native and African ancestors. The project has fewer sub-Saharan African and Native American-descended members than the Acadian project; (these were excluded from our analysis, as before), but has many of the same surnames as the Acadian DNA project discussed above. Therefore, the results are very similar. Because of the large size of this group (over 9,700 participants), the researcher shows data only for participants with A through D surnames. In this project, the members’ results are given alphabetically, and are not grouped by haplotype (see table-12).

### 3.4. French Heritage MtDNA results

There is an even stronger signal of possible female Jewish ancestry in these data than in the Acadian data set. The Ashkenazi female lines are found among the K1 and K2 haplotypes,



while the Sephardic lines are present in the J1 and J2 haplotypes as shown by direct comparisons with the known Jewish women. The H haplotypes all had matches in the Sephardic mtDNA Project, as did the H1 haplotypes. The H2 haplotype did not have a match. The H7 haplotype matched a member of the Sephardic Project, but the H6 did not. The HVO haplotype matched a member of the Sephardic DNA Project, as did the I5 French Heritage project donor.

There were several women carrying the T mtDNA haplotype all of whom matched known Jewish women in other DNA projects. The V French Heritage haplotype matched one person in the Sephardic DNA Project, as did the two U4 members. The X member had a match in the Sephardic DNA group, but the W member did not. Based on this analysis, the researcher concludes that several of the women in the French Heritage DNA Project are likely of Ashkenazic or Sephardic descent.

Table-12: Mitochondrial DNA results for the French Heritage DNA Project (Huguenots and Acadians in the sample)

Abraham France K1a1b1	Alexander US J1c3b2	Alton France J1c
Arcular France J2a	Asselin France H1j9	Aubert France J1c
Auneau France T2b3	Aurard France V	Bajolet France X2b7
Banne France H1	Barberau France H1ar1	Barbier France H1ag
Bastinaud France H1aa	Baudon France H1aa	Bayon France J
Beaudin France H3	Benoit France T1a1	Bethelere US H6a
Bigot France K1b2b	Bineau France K1a3a	Bizelan France Canada U5
Blanchard France H7b	Blanquet France H1	Boisdon France J2a1a1
Bonheur France I5a1a	Bouart France J1c2	Bouchard France H
Bourdon France H3b5	Bourg France H14b1	Boytet France U2e2a
Brodeau France K2b1a	Broust France H2b	Bugaret France H1c3b
Burell France U5	Cahmois France T2	Camus France H86
Canol France W3a1	Canteau France H-T19fc!	Carment H3h
Cauchaon France K2a6	Chancy France H	Chapelier France K1a
Charlot France T1a1	Charlot France X2b-T226C	Charpentier France H7a1
Chaussegros France K	Chebrat France HV4a1a4	Chemereau France U4a
Chotard France U5	Chretien France T2	Clerice France T2b
Colignon France H27	Collet France H1bd	Colon France H
Corbineau France H1ag1	Cousin France T1a1	Cousteau France HVO-T195
Coutois France T2a1b1a1b	Crevet France K1a-T195C!	LaBarre France H1u1

### 3.5. Male Y-DNA Haplotypes in the French Heritage project

The Y DNA results also are listed alphabetically, not grouped by haplogroup (see table-13). Because of this system, the researcher found one surname, Amirault, which has participants belonging to five different haplogroups. All of these matched persons of Jewish ancestry from

other FTDNA projects. When the researcher took a closer look at this surname in the French-Canadian genealogical records, the researcher found there was confusion as to when Mssr. Amirault first arrived in Canada – there were multiple instances of a Francois Amirault in various records. Looking at the DNA results, it becomes clear that several *different* men with that surname arrived in French Canada during the Colonial Era, but that each man was likely of Jewish ancestry.

Within the sample given below in table 13, there are six men in the E-m35 haplogroup: six men in the J1/J2 haplogroups and 7 men in the G haplogroup. Since all of these haplogroups are Semitic in origin, these men are likely of Jewish and/or Muslim descent. There are seven men having I-P37, I-223/ or I-M170 haplotypes. These also matched the haplotypes of known Jewish men at the 20-marker level or higher. There are 9 men in the I-253 haplogroup, but only 4 matched Jewish haplotypes on record. Lastly, there are twenty men in the sample who had R-m269 haplotypes. Of these, 17 had matches in the Jewish R1b/R-m269 Project or Sephardic Jewish Project data bases at the 24-marker level or above. Thus, the researcher conclude that it is likely these French-Canadian men have Jewish ancestry, primarily the Sephardic.

Table-13: French Heritage Y DNA Results (all are from France)

Allaire France R-m269	Amiot J-PF	Amirault R-m269, J1, E-m35, I-m253, J2
Andre La Fontaine E-M35	Angers R-m269	Archambault R-m269
Arsenault R-m269	Aubin R-m269	Aucoin I-m223
Auger I-m253	Babin G-m201	Bastarache R-CT
Baudoin G-m201	Baudon R-m269	Baudreau R-m269
Beauchamps/Deschamps J-m172	Beaugrand R- L552	Beuleiu J-m172
Bedard E-m35	Belanger I-m253	Belleau I-L573
Benoit R-m269	Bertrand R-by700	Blais J-m172
Blanchard I-m253	Blanchet R-m269	Bon homme R-m269
Bosse R-m269	Bouchard I-m253	Boucher E-m35
Bourassa I-p37	Bourdeau I-m253	Bourgeois R-m269
Bouvier R-m269	Brisson I-m253	Broussard R-M269
Brousseau R-m269	Brunel R-by165849	Caille R-L21
Caron R-m269	Carrier R-CTS 11567	Chabot R-m269
Chaisson G-m201	Charon R-m269	Charpentier E-m35
Chastain R-m269	Chauving R-m269	Chouinard I-m2
Cloutier G-m201	Cloutier G-m201	Collet I-by35476
Comeau R-m269	Corneau R-m269	Couture R-df49
Cyr R-L20	Daigle I-m253	David dit St Michel R CTS4299
Denevers E-M35	DesJardinsG-m201	Diel I-m170
Douat G-z36520	Doucet R-L2123	Drolet I-m253
Dube J-m4410	Dubois I-p37	

It is intriguing that there do not appear to be any R1a1a1a Ashkenazi Levites in this group of men. When the researcher re-examined the Acadian DNA Y Chart, the researcher realized there was only one French surname in the group of R1a1a1a men, Vincent. The researcher then looked for that surname in the French Heritage database and found Vincent listed as R-m198, which is a more recent designation for R1a1a1a. This suggests that the Ashkenazi Levites the researcher found in the Acadian sample may have either (1) moved as a group to Louisiana from French Canada, or (2) may simply have settled in the Louisiana community after the Acadian refugees arrived there.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study has documented through the DNA analysis, historical records, and the artifacts that the Colonial French-Canadian settlers, both the Huguenots and the Acadians, were likely of Sephardic Jewish descent, as hypothesized at the outset. The researcher believe that the data further indicate that some of these individuals practiced this religion – at least to some degree -- in their New World communities. This is demonstrated by the similarity of their worship practices in France and the New World with contemporaneous Jewish practices, e.g., the display of the Ten Commandments at the front of their temple sanctuaries and the use of Hebrew psalms and prayers in their services. But, most profoundly it is shown in their close genetic ancestry to current Jewish persons in both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic branches of Judaism. That persons of the same over-arching religious faith would gather together in communities across several centuries seems strong evidence that they were conscious of their religious past and desired to perpetuate it into the future. The researcher hopes that these findings – and their ethnic implications for the settling of North America – will stimulate increased introspection among all those whose ancestors came to the New World seeking religious freedom.

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