

## **Chapter I**

### **PRELUDE**

In the early 1600s Europe was alive with wars, diseases, poverty, and class and religious discrimination. Many saw it as a time to search the horizon for new challenges, new beginnings, and a better life.

Some saw their prospects and future in the New World across the Atlantic Ocean. In those days there were not the conveniences and comforts of today's travel. The journey by these early voyagers to their destination required travel in crowded and dirty quarters on a mast-rigged ship across treacherous waters.

Upon reaching their destination settlers would be faced with an untamed land to clear and conquer. In addition they would have to deal with unknown challenges, dangers and hostilities.

Their efforts would take courage, endurance and optimism. It is to these first permanent settlers that we need to give praise, for they contributed to making this country what it is today.

Early recorded history of frontier Canada is alive with an exceptional cast of colorful characters in a New World inhabited by unique indigenous peoples. The chronicles of this evolutionary period in Canadian history contain engaging tales of adventure and challenge.

Canadian annals are replete with struggles and achievements, hopes and disappointments, tragedies and triumphs. These ancestral tales demonstrate the courage, the perseverance, and the resourcefulness of these early actors on the Canadian scene.

This era does not want for romance and glory. It contains an historical and brilliant pageant of motley personalities, both native and European. These individuals include adventurers, explorers, traders, entrepreneurs, schemers, Indian chiefs, hunters, warriors, missionaries, coureurs-de-bois, voyageurs, pioneer settlers, intrepid

women and country wives, all of whom contributed to the fabulous history and heritage of Canada.

Among the most remarkable of this cast of characters are Louis Hébert and his wife Marie Rollet. Some four centuries ago they left the cosmopolitan lifestyle of Paris, France to relocate to the undeveloped frontier of the New World.

In doing so they became the first colonial family to permanently settle in Canada. In their determination to make a home in this country, they undauntedly overcame disheartening barriers, handicaps, and adversities. They subdued the untamed land and laid the groundwork for the future development of the great nation of Canada.

They were the forerunners of the millions of men, women and children from all over the world who would immigrate to Canada to find a better life. The following is a factual account of the noteworthy lives and times of these two extraordinary trail-blazing pioneers.