

CHAPOTON, JEAN-BAPTISTE, surgeon; b. c. 1690 in the parish of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Bagnols (now Bagnols-sur-Cèze, dept. of Gard), France; son of André Chapoton and Anne Lassaigne; m. 16 July 1720 Marguerite Estève at Detroit; d. 11 Nov. 1760 at Detroit.

Jean-Baptiste Chapoton was assigned to Fort Pontchartrain (Detroit) as surgeon-major late in 1719. A description of him in the parish register for 1758 as “master surgeon of this town” suggests that his duties as post surgeon expanded over the years to encompass the care of the sick in the surrounding region.

Chapoton became an important landowner. In 1734 he received a grant on the recommendation of the commandant Jacques-Hugues Péan and the former commandant Henri-Louis Deschamps* de Boishébert. Nine years later he sold it because it was “too distant from the fort to enable him to care for the sick according to his duty as surgeon,” and was granted another tract, four by 40 *arpents*, on which he had already erected buildings. The 1750 census shows that he was cultivating about 50 acres and raising wheat, oats, and livestock. In 1751 the size of his grant was doubled. He also owned a residence inside the fort.

Like most other prosperous frontiersmen, he bought, sold, and traded goods whenever he thought he could turn a profit. Father Armand de La Richardie’s accounts for 1742 show that Chapoton borrowed 100 *livres* in furs from the Huron mission, agreeing to repay within a year. He sold grain, medicines, and building materials to the authorities at Detroit.

On retiring from his surgeon’s post at the fort about 1752, he was succeeded by his son-in-law, Gabriel-Christophe Legrand de Sintré. Most of Chapoton’s children married well, as befitted a leading family of the community.

Harry Kelsey

AN, Col., C^{11A}, 118, ff.332, 347; 119, ff.165, 278, 298. DPL, Burton hist. coll., Chapoton papers, 7 July 1734; Moran papers, 18 June 1743; Macdonald papers, 18 June 1743; Registres des baptêmes, mariages et sépultures de Sainte-Anne, Détroit, 16 juill. 1720, 11 nov. 1760; F. J. Anderson, “Medicine at Fort Detroit in the colony of New France, 1701–60” (typescript, n.d.), 24–25; G. B. Catlin, “Early physicians of Detroit” (typescript, n.d.); Christian Denissen, [Genealogy of the French families of Detroit] (26v., typescript, n.d.), C/1, 2529. Clements Library, Thomas Gage papers, American series, John Campbell to Gage (encl.), 31 Oct. 1765.

“Cadillac papers,” *Michigan Pioneer Coll.*, XXXIII (1903), 687–89; XXXIV (1904), 120–21. *The John Askin papers*, ed. M. M. Quaipe (Burton Hist. Records, 2v., Detroit, 1928–31), I: 1747–1795. *JR* (Thwaites), LXIX, 249, 308. *Michigan Pioneer Coll.*, VIII (1885), 454–56. *Some glimpses of life in ancient Detroit*, ed. M. M. Quaipe (Burton hist. coll. leaflet, III, no.1, [Detroit], 1924), 1–6. *Windsor border region* (Lajeunesse). *Dictionnaire national des Canadiens français (1608–1760)* (2v., Montréal, 1958), I. Silas Farmer, *The history of Detroit and Michigan . . .* (Detroit, 1884). M. C. W. Hamlin, *Legends of le Détroit* (Detroit, 1884), 272–75, 281–84, 299–304. Téléspore St-Pierre, *Histoire des Canadiens du Michigan et du comté d’Essex, Ontario* (Montreal, 1895), 150.

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