READING LOG: Janet Noel, “’Nagging Wife’ Revisited: Women and the Fur Trade in New France,” *French Colonial History*, Vol. 7 (2006), pp. 45-60

*And*

Adrienne Leduc, “A Fille du Roi’s Passage,” *Beaver,* 81: 1 (Feb/Mar 2001), p. 20

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*“Nagging Wife” Revisited: Women and the Fur Trade in New France*

Janet Noel’s revision of the “Nagging Wife” includes Noel’s argument that women in the Fur Trade in New France do not receive enough credit for their involvement in the trade, as well as every day life. The article gives multiple examples of women who played a large role in the success of the fur trade, as well as their involvement and contributions to that era. The most successful women in the fur trade consisted of widows and their daughters, taking on businesses and major responsibilities that may have originally belonged to a husband.

Women were actively involved in agriculture, milk, the production of cloth/clothes, providing hospitality as well as other goods and services. They would give large responsibilities within the business to their daughters, to pass down the skills that they retained themselves. Sons of these women typically had the business handed down to them, when they were old enough to manage it successfully on their own. In essence, the fur trade era “required the work of both sexes, and remained so throughout the history of the colony.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The idea of equality in this time period is not as recognized and promoted within the studies of Canadian history as it should be. The women of New France played a huge part in cross-border trades, and it most likely would not have been such a huge success if it weren’t for the involvement of the female population. It was said perfectly in the last sentence of this article: “The ‘nagging wife’ may not have joined her husband in the canoe, but there was a good chance she grew the tobacco, made the shirts he took west to trade – maybe even made the canoe itself!”[[2]](#footnote-2)

*A Fille du Roi’s Passage*

*A Fille du Roi’s Passage* is a publicized letter by Adrienne Leduc, addressed to her husband’s ancestor, Jeanne Fauchex. It focuses on Jeanne’s immigration to New France as a “fille du roi” (meaning: king’s daughters)[[3]](#footnote-3), and the journey she endured to get there. Adrienne did not know Jeanne, but was so intrigued by her story because of its close relation to her own past, 275 years after Jeanne’s.[[4]](#footnote-4) It is clear that even after a strenuous amount of research on Ms. Fauchex, Leduc still had many questions regarding her reactions to each event over the course of her immigration. She wonders if Jeanne was nervous or scared, and notes her bravery and courageousness for agreeing to immigrate under such difficult circumstances.[[5]](#footnote-5) Adrienne also questions Jeanne’s choice to marry her husband, Antoine Leduc. “Jeanne, I wonder if you accepted Antoine’s marriage proposal because his partner chose your friend, Marie?”[[6]](#footnote-6) These are all inquisitions that Adrienne will never know the answer to. She can imagine the steps that Jeanne has to take to get to her final destination, as well as her feelings and emotions as the goes through the motions of being a fille du roi. Adrienne comments on her personal connection to Jeanne’s war-bride story. She too was a war-bride, and felt the uneasiness that Jeanne was imagined to have experienced when immigrating to New France.

References

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Leduc, Adrienne. “A Fille Du Roi’s Passage.” *Beaver,* Vol. 81 No. 1. February/March 2001. P

1. Noel. Janet. “’Nagging Wife’ Revisited: Women and the Fur Trade in New France,” *French Colonial History,* Vol. 7, (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2006), 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid., 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Leduc, Adrienne. “A Fille Du Roi’s Passage,” *Beaver,* Vol. 81 No. 1, (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Canada’s National History Society, February/March 2001), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid., 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid., 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)