

Mathieu Savant of Félines and Thénisy, France

Gregory Childs; Clamart, France – 9 July 2013

Mathieu SAVANT¹, born about 1692³⁹, first appears in the parish records of the small rural village of Thénisy, France (located in the modern *département* of Seine-et-Marne, about 60 miles southeast of Paris) at the time of his marriage to widow Françoise BARDEAU, on 28 Sep 1717. He is described as the son of **Jean SAVANT** and the late **Marguerite MONATTE**, and as coming from the parish of Saint-Barthélémy in the town of Félines, within the Archdiocese of Le Puy in the region of Auvergne, France²². The marriage record is accompanied by a text, in Latin, from the church of Saint-Barthélémy granting permission to the church of Thénisy to perform the marriage. There is also a rough translation of the text in French with a brief note recommending Mathieu to the church of Thénisy, explaining that he's an honest 'boy' (i.e. bachelor) from a good family with every chance of finding a good situation in his new home, as evidenced by his impeccable behavior and social standing back in Félines.

Félines is located today in the *département* of Haute-Loire, and still well within the modern borders of Auvergne. According to the website of the Félines town hall, the name of the town can be traced back to the Latin word *Figlinæ*, which designates a clay pit (or quarry) for pottery works, and attests to the age of the settlement and almost certainly to the occupation of its early inhabitants.

It's hard to say why Mathieu SAVANT left his hometown and moved hundreds of miles north to Thénisy. Unfortunately, the earliest parish records of Félines appear to be lost – or at least unavailable online – so it hasn't been possible to locate records concerning Mathieu in Félines.

The Félines records available online begin in 1737, long after Mathieu had moved north to Thénisy. In these early records, there are only scant mentions of the name Savant (spelled *Sçavant* or more often *Sauvant*) and occasional mentions of members of the Monatte family (spelled *Maumatte*).

Mathieu SAVANT married (1) widow **Françoise BARDEAU**,¹ daughter of **François BARDEAU** and **Jeanne PETITHOMME**, on 28 Sep 1717 in Thénisy.¹

Françoise BARDEAU was baptized in Thénisy on 5 Oct 1678² and had married (1) **Nicolas GAUCHER**,⁴ son of **Nicolas GAUCHER** and **Jeanne FLEURY**, in Thénisy on 22 Nov 1701.⁵ Nicolas was born probably in nearby Lizines, Champagne, France,⁵ as this was where he was living at the time of the marriage.⁴ He is described as a winemaker ("*vigneron*") in the baptismal record of his daughter, Jeanne, on 13 Jul 1708.

Françoise and Nicolas had several children together, all baptized in Thénisy:

- M i. **Edmé GAUCHER**⁷ was born in Thénisy on 17 Nov 1702,⁷ baptized there the same day⁸ and buried there on 19 Nov 1702.⁷
- F ii. **Anne-Françoise GAUCHER**⁹ was baptized on 9 Oct 1704.⁹
- M iii. **Jean GAUCHER**¹⁰ was baptized on 28 Nov 1706.¹⁰
- F iv. **Jeanne GAUCHER**⁶ was baptized on 13 Jul 1708⁶ and buried in Thénisy on 18 Apr 1711.¹¹

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- F v. **Marie GAUCHER**¹² was baptized on 4 Oct 1710,¹³ died in Thénisy on 8 Oct 1788¹⁴ at age 78, and was buried there on 9 Oct 1788.¹⁴ Marie married (1) **Nicolas CAMELIN**,¹⁵ son of **Nicolas CAMELIN** and **Geneviève MATON**, on 31 May 1729 in Thénisy.¹⁶ Nicolas was baptized in Thénisy on 22 Sep 1707,³¹ died there on 2 Sep 1745³² at age 37, and was buried there on 3 Sep 1745.³² Marie married (2) in Thénisy on 26 Nov 1754, as his third wife, **Jean JACQUELIN**,¹⁷ widower of (1) **Nicole LE CLAIR** and (2) **Catherine LE SAGE** (first two marriage records of Jean JACQUELIN not found; Catherine LE SAGE incorrectly called “Catherine BENOIST” in Jean’s burial record). Jean died in Thénisy on 27 Feb 1788³³ about age 74, and was buried there on 28 Feb 1788.³³ He was possibly the Jean JACQUELIN baptized in Thénisy on 22 Nov 1714, son of **Claude JACQUELIN** and **Barbe SOUCHOIS**.
- F vi. **Jeanne GAUCHER**¹⁸ was baptized on 10 Jul 1712¹⁸ and buried in Thénisy on 7 Jan 1716.¹⁹
- M vii. **Christophe GAUCHER**²⁰ was baptized on 6 Sep 1714.²⁰
- M viii. **Nicolas GAUCHER**²¹ was born in Thénisy on 19 Jan 1716²¹ and baptized there on 23 Feb 1716.²¹

Nicolas GAUCHER, father of the above children, was buried in Thénisy on 10 Feb 1717.⁴

Françoise was 38 years old and had already given birth to 8 children by the time she married (2) Mathieu SAVANT in September 1717. Mathieu and Françoise went on to have three children together whose baptisms are recorded in the Thénisy parish records:

- F i. **Marguerite SAVANT**²⁴ was baptized on 23 Oct 1718²⁴ and buried in Thénisy on 1 Nov 1718.²⁵
- M ii. **Pierre SAVANT**²⁶ was baptized on 22 Nov 1719,²⁶ died on 3 Jun 1786 in Bescherelles, Île-de-France, France²⁷ at age 66, and was buried in Dontilly, Île-de-France, France on 4 Jun 1786.²⁷ Pierre married (1) **Thérèse FADIN**,²⁸ daughter of **Nicolas FADIN** and **Jeanne MERCIER**, on 20 Feb 1746 in Nangis, Île-de-France, France.²⁸ Thérèse was baptized on 16 Dec 1725 in Ozouer-le-Repos, Île-de-France, France³⁵ and was buried on 31 Oct 1747 in La Chapelle-Rablais, Île-de-France, France.³⁶ Pierre married (2) **Françoise GUILLEVERT**,²⁹ daughter of **Nicolas GUILLEVERT** and **Marie RENARD**, in Dontilly on 28 Feb 1753.²⁹ Françoise was born possibly in Bescherelles and probably died there after 5 Jul 1791, when she consented to the marriage of her daughter, **Victoire Rosalie SAVANT**, to **Antoine Barthélémy DUMONT**.³⁷ Pierre SAVANT was only 18 years old by the time both of his parents had died, and he moved between a number of villages in the area, working as a farm laborer or carter throughout his life. Pierre SAVANT and Françoise GUILLEVERT appear to only have given birth to daughters, which could help explain why the name Savant never ‘took root’ in this area.
- M iii. **Mathieu SAVANT**³⁰ was baptized on 6 Feb 1722.³⁰

Françoise BARDEAU was buried in Thénisy on 12 Feb 1727³ at the age of 48. Her son Pierre was seven years old when Françoise died; Mathieu (Jr.) was only five.

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Three years after the death of Françoise, Mathieu married (2) **Marie PIOU**,³⁸ daughter of **Guillaume PIOU** and **Thomasse LE SOURD**, on 14 Feb 1730 in Provins, Champagne, France.³⁹ Marie was born about 1692⁴⁰, a native of the town of Thorigny as indicated by the marriage record, and was buried on 9 May 1733 in Thénisy.⁴⁰ It's worth noting that Mathieu SAVANT's marriage record to Marie PIOU is the only indication we have at this point of Mathieu's age: the record states that he is 38 years of age "or thereabouts" at the time of the marriage. Mathieu and Marie do not appear to have had children together.

Mathieu next married (3) widow **Anne LEROY**,⁴¹ daughter of **Jean LEROY** and **Marie JACOB**, on 26 Nov 1736 in Mons-en-Montois, Île-de-France, France.⁴¹ Anne, who was roughly 25 years older than Mathieu, was baptized on 12 Dec 1666 in Mons-en-Montois⁴² and had married (1) on 1 Feb 1689 in Mons-en-Montois, **Pierre COUSSON** (born about 1668, son of **Grégoire COUSSON** and **Philippine LE LONG**, buried in Mons-en-Montois on 7 Dec 1731). Pierre COUSSON and Anne LEROY were the godparents of Mathieu SAVANT's first child, Marguerite.

The parish records tell us little about the life of Mathieu Savant in Thénisy, but we do know from the first records mentioning him that he started his new life there as a viticulturist or winemaker ("*vigneron*"). By the time of his marriage to Marie PIOU in 1730, however, he appears to have changed professions to become a sawyer ("*scieur de long*"). This particular type of sawing involves one man, the top sawyer, balancing himself on top of a piece of timber placed over a sawpit, with a second man, the bottom sawyer, working from inside the pit down below. The change in profession ultimately caused Mathieu's demise: his burial record, although difficult to read, appears to indicate he was involved in an accident where a large piece of lumber he was sawing fell and caused his death.

Mathieu SAVANT died in Bescherelles, Île-de-France, France, on probably either 5 or 6 Apr 1738²³ and was buried on 6 Apr 1738 in the neighboring village of Dontilly, Île-de-France, France.²³

His widow, Anne LEROY, survived him only about two years and was buried in Mons-en-Montois on 6 Mar 1740.⁴³

Source Citations – Mathieu Savant (Sr.)

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