

INSTITUTE HISTORY WORKSHEET

TOPIC: Birth to Adulthood: Françoise's Family of Origin

Places:

- **Hôtel Blin, Amiens:** home of the Viscount Blin de Bourdon in Amiens (brother)
- **Rue des Augustins:** location of Hôtel Blin in Amiens
- **Gézaincourt:** home of maternal grandparents, where Françoise is born & raised
- **Doullens:** town 1.5 miles from Gézaincourt
- **Amiens:** seat of diocese, where Françoise finished education, site of Hôtel Blin,
- **Bourdon estate:** smaller than Gézaincourt, house built when parents marry
- **Abbey of St. Michael at Doullens:** Benedictine school Françoise attended in the summers beginning in 1762
- **La Providence:** 1st prison of Françoise in Amiens

People & Relationships between them:

- The Blins de Bourdon and the de Fouquesolles are related. Françoise's father's great grandmother and her mother's great, great grandmother are the same person.
- Father of Françoise: **Viscount Pierre-Louis Blin de Bourdon** - Viscount de Domart-en-Ponthieu; b. d. Feb. 1, 1797
- Mother of Françoise: **Marie-Louise-Claudine de Fouquesolles** – b. 1731, carriage accident, illness, death on April 2, 1784. 25 year age difference.
- Sister of Françoise: **Marie-Louise-Aimée Blin de Bourdon** – b. 1751, d. 1821, married to Gaspard Félix by time of mother's carriage accident
- Brother of Françoise: **Viscount Louis-Marie-César Blin de Bourdon** – b. 1753, d. 1826; owner of Hôtel Blin,
- Sister-in-law of Françoise: **Viscountess Elizabeth Blin de Bourdon** – b. 1758 (Elisabeth Pingre de Fieffes), died 1844;
- **Marie-Louise-Françoise Blin de Bourdon (Mother St Joseph)** b. March 8, 1756 at Gézaincourt; dies at Namur in 1838
- Maternal grandfather: **Baron Louis de Fouquesolles** – b. 1701, d. 1784; Viscount of Doullens
- Maternal grandmother: **Baroness de Fouquesolles** – b. Marie-Louise d'Ameral; Godmother, dies March 27, 1794 after refusing to eat after Françoise's arrest,
- **François Debuine Du Hamel** – described as maternal uncle & godfather; he must be a great-uncle or even further removed
- **Alexander Blin de Bourdon** – nephew, b. 1783, d. 1849; on August 3, 1794 arrives at Carmelite Convent and tells Françoise he, his father, mother and grandfather have been released from prison and she's free
- **Mademoiselle Ursule** – Françoise's governess

- **Bishop de la Motte:** confirms Françoise , has Mass & office composed in honor of Sacred Heart and institutes feast of the Sacred Heart in Diocese of Amiens
- **Carmelites of Amiens:** meets them as a child when her grandmother visits them; their convent is her 2nd prison; they are not executed
- **Ursulines of Amiens:** finishes education with them
- **Jeanne de Croquison de la Cour de Fiefs:** meets Françoise at Ursulines in Amiens, becomes **Madame de Franssu**
- **Louis XVI & Marie-Antoinette:** presented to their court in 1775
- **Mme. Elizabeth:** sister of Louis XVI, pious like Françoise, they become friends; executed 10 May 1794
- **Robespierre:** his arrest and execution on July 28, 1794 ends the Reign of Terror

Dates & Events:

- b. March 8, 1756
- baptized March 9, 1756 (Feast of St Frances of Rome)
- estate of Gézaincourt settled upon her as a child, Mlle. de Gézaincourt
- Confirmation at St. Michael at age 8 (1764)
- 1st Communion at St. Michael 1767
- 1775: at age 19 she is claimed by parents and spent some years at Bourdon & Amiens
- 1775: presented at court of Louis XVI – she doesn't care for it, thinking of entering Carmel
- 1783 journal entry says she has refused several offers of marriage;
- 1783-1784: cares for mother for 10 months
- 1784: returned to Gézaincourt in the spring to care for grandmother after death of grandfather
 - decision to devote self to God, life of service at Gézaincourt
 - healer, love of gardening
- 1793: her father is at Gézaincourt in December when he is arrested; Françoise & grandmother hide in loft of a house in village
- 1794: January – asked to hide Blessed Sacrament at Gézaincourt
- 1794: February – revolutionaries arrive at night to arrest both Françoise & her grandmother. Françoise convinces them to only arrest her. They take her to La Providence in Amiens.
 - how executions were announced
 - service to other prisoners
 - Transfer to Carmelite Convent in Amiens
- 1794: August 4 – arrives at Hôtel Blin
 - Desire to be a Carmelite solidified

Impact of War/Political Unrest:

- Before 1789: she doesn't feel the impact of growing violence and economic hardship as much because of her economic class
- Great uncertainty **after 1789**, delays her finalizing her vocational choice
- Experience of injustice (false accusations against father, brother-in-law; she's a *good* landowner)
- Loses her real mother (grandmother) early because of the revolution
- Strengthens her desire to be of service to others
- Highlights/solidifies her sense of being drawn to contemplative life

Relationship with Hierarchy & Clergy:

- Positive from what we can tell.
- Seems a little more distanced than Julie's, except at Gézaincourt: priest brings her the Blessed Sacrament to hide

Primitive Spirit:

- Experienced good educators – will help her form ND educators
- Commitment to the poor

Spirituality underpinning everything:

- Family motto, "Good like a Blin", originated because of sense of to be a Blin was to be of service to others
- Devotion to the Sacred Heart
- Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
- Contemplative (love of quiet, of gardening)

What touched your heart?

- Not knowing her siblings until they are all adults
- Not having extensive time with her parents until she was an adult
- Parents do not seem to pressure her to marry

New insights?

- She grew up with people much older than she was, then spends 34 years of her life as 'Mother'
- What all went into the transformation from a precocious child to reserved adult?
- On the surface she was a healer, not an educator, a nursing order would have been a more natural fit? Caring for the sick within Notre Dame is rooted very strongly in Françoise

- What was her Myers-Briggs profile – Introvert, Thinker, Sensate, Perceiver? Or was her long drawn out decision making process a product of the uncertain times in which she lived?
- Was the fact she was such a caretaker part of why she did not enter Carmel in her early 20s?
- Was Gézaincourt a burden and did it hold her back? She was not able to divest herself of the property until after her grandmother died and the political situation settled down
- Both Julie & Françoise have strong mothering role models and great devotion to Our Lady
- Role the Sacred Heart and concept of reparation plays a strong role in both their lives