

It is a fitting memorial of the part played by a son of Italy in the exploration of our commonwealth and of the river that binds it to the endless sea that washes the shores of Beltrami's native land.

D'ERAQUE, DARRAC, OR DAREC?¹

In Pénicault's *Relation*, published in Pierre Margry's *Découvertes et Etablissements des Français*, volume 5, pages 419 and 424, mention is made of a certain d'Eraque, a Canadian gentleman whom Le Sueur met in 1701 in the Mississippi country and who, with six other merchants, had been attacked and pillaged by the Sioux. Le Sueur left d'Eraque in charge of Fort L'Huillier with its dozen Frenchmen, promising to send supplies from the Illinois country as soon as he should arrive there. But d'Eraque, after waiting a long time without news and having been attacked, was obliged to abandon the fort. Finally, in 1702, he arrived at Mobile, where d'Iberville, "having extended him many honors, induced him to remain."

Pénicault tells us more: that in 1708 d'Eraque was sent by d'Artaguette to the Illinois and even up the Missouri to negotiate with the Indians; and that when his mission had been fulfilled, he returned to Mobile.

Who was this Canadian gentleman, this Sieur d'Eraque? We do not find his name, nor any similar name, in Tanguay.

Yet among the witnesses at the investigation of Bienville in 1707, instituted on the complaint of Nicolas de la Salle, marine commissioner of Louisiana, we find mention of a certain René Boyer, who declared that he had been placed in irons by Bienville when he refused to repair a gun that Sieur Darrac had brought him.

One can hardly doubt that this Sieur Darrac was the Sieur d'Eraque to whom Pénicault refers.

¹A translation, by Grace Lee Nute, of a note published in the *Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*, the official organ of the bureau of archives of the province of Quebec, 37: 216 (April, 1931).

But that does not advance us far, for there are no more references in Canada to Darrac than to d'Eraque.

In the end, does not our Canadian gentleman settled in Louisiana prove to be the Louis Darec whom we find as a godfather at Boucherville in 1685 and who stands on the registers as a cadet of Monsieur de Saint-Cirque's company? At a time when the spelling of proper names, as well as others, was left to individual taste, it is not strange that Pénicault wrote *Sieur d'Eraque* for *Sieur Darec*.

Darec, who was a cadet in St-Cirque's company in 1685, does not appear to have become an officer, for his name does not appear in Lafflard. Probably he left the army early and became a merchant. He must have been a person of some importance, since we have seen that d'Iberville, when receiving him at Mobile in 1701, "extended many honors to him." If any reader knows anything further of this man than what has just been recounted, he will oblige the undersigned greatly by communicating it to him.

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