**Journal #4**

The readings we completed this week; “Nagging Wife” Revisited: Women and the Fur Trade in New France. By Jan Noel, and “A Fille du Rio’s Passage” by Adrienne Leduc, focus on the various roles woman played during the fur trade as well as the characteristics of women's place in the economy of New France.

In Noels article, he starts off by making reference to William J. Eccles and Richard Colebrook Harris and their limited allusion of women in the 1960’s 1. “Harris perceived women as a “pull” factor that drew males habitants into the fur trade regions” 2 . While Eccles observed woman as a “push” factor stating “Canadians… were men of broad horizons… where a wife to nag too constantly, some of them at least could hire out as voyagers for the west” 3. I suppose that both assumptions that women either “pushed” or “pulled” men into the fur trade could be believed by some had they not understood that women played just as vital a role as men during this age. History has portrayed women who were involved in trading relations in New France as a handful of self-motivated entrepreneurs. Whether or not you believe that woman “pushed” or “pulled these men westward would depend on ones view of a woman’s role in society today. This heavily cited article credits dozens of these wives, widows, daughters/girls, nuns, and the native women of the region on their regular daily routine alongside countless of other tasks that contributed to this time in history.

Leduc’s article also addresses a women’s role in New France, but in a different area of focus. “A Fille du Rio’s Passage” fixates on a letter written from one woman in 1945 to another woman in 1671, and their participation in the filles du rio fleets who arrived in Quebec in the mid seventeenth century and again in 1946 4. Translated “le filles du rio” means “the kings daughters”. The girls involved would present themselves to the king, and once approved would become part of a program that would advance the settlement of the kings colony in New France 5. These girls/woman made the voyage westward to marry a man and uphold the duties expected of a woman in this era in New France.

In 1945 Adrienne Leduc writes a letter to one Jeanne Faucheux. The letter is swarmed with questions directed towards Jeanne about her involvement in the filles du rio. Leduc asks Jeanne questions like how she felt when she left her home in France, what her thoughts were during her voyage to the west, how she felt when meeting her future husband and so on. A woman’s role at this time seemed to be to perform her daily tasks, care for her husband and to bare and care for children. Leduc repeatedly addresses Jeanne by her first name. I think the point of Leduc frequently addressing Jeanne is to make the reader aware that although Jeanne was technically a “mail order bride” she is still a woman. A woman who has interests and thoughts and opinions on the world around her. For certain a woman who’s capabilities go beyond what was expected of her. Leduc answers some of the questions she had directed to Jeanne but from her point of view. She talks about her excitement and eagerness to travel to Canada to start a new life. The writer and the one who the letter is addressed to traveled to Canada 275 years apart. And although these woman came from different eras in history they may have had more in common than one might think.