Social Life in New France

Characters:

* Mr. Savoie - Habitant
* Mrs. Savoie - Habitant
* Mr. Demure - Habitant
* Mrs. Demure - Habitant
* Mr. Lamante - Habitant
* Mrs. Lamante – Habitant
* Mr. Seigneur - Seigneur
* Ghost of Jacques Cartier
* Ghost of Samuel de Champlain
* Narrator

**Narrator:** New France, 1640. The habitants are hard at work in their fields, ploughing their crops and tending to their animals.

[Enter Mr. and Mrs. Savoie, Mr. and Mrs. Demure]

**Mrs. Savoie:** [to Mr.Savoie] How was your day at work, mon chere?

**Mr. Savoie:** Hard day at work, my love!

**Mrs. Demure:** Who would have imagined that we would be slaving in the fields all day when we came to New France? We left the beautiful French countryside for this. No cheese, no wine, no swine.

**Mrs. Savoie:** All will be well, mon chere. All will be well, have patience.

**Mr. Savoie:** Patience is for heathens!

[Enter Seigneur]

**Seigneur:** ‘allo habitants! Your annual rent is due tonight; I hope you’ve been saving! *Hon hon hon!*

[Exit Seigneur]

**Mr. Demure:** I am very thankful that today is the day we pay our annual rent to the seigneur! I can’t wait to have a hearty meal! Although, I would rather have spent that money on beaver pelts. Fort Frontenac has some new sales.

**Mr. Savoie:** Darn that monsieur seigneur! I can barely save enough money to feed my beautiful children!

[Enter Mr. and Mrs. Lamante]

**Mrs. Lamante:** Oh dear, Mr. Savoie, that is not a very good attitude to have towards the seigneur!

**Mr. Lamante:** Quiet, wife, or I’ll send you back to the homeland on a wooden raft! This matter is none of our concern. [to Mr. Savoie and Mr.Demure] have you both stored your harvest in the barns?

**Mr. Savoie:** Darn it, I knew I forgot to do something today! I have the majority in there; I just need to put the rest away!

**Mr. Damare:** Have you taken out the portion for the seigneur? You know how he feels when we arrive unprepared to pay our rent!

**Mrs. Damare:** Well, we can all work on it together; we haven’t much time left before we need to see the seigneur!

**Narrator:** As the Damare, Lamante and Savoie couples stored their harvests safely in the barns, the ghosts of Samuel de Champlain and Jacques Cartier watched. It had been five years since the passing of Samuel de Champlain and he was curious as to how New France was coming along.

**Ghost of Samuel de Champlain:** My, my, my! These habitants are quite busy today! Is this what you had envisioned for New France?

**Ghost of Jacques Cartier:** Oh, absolutely! I am so proud of mon petite habitants, so hard at work on the fields! I wonder where they are going now!

**Narrator:** The habitants had packed up their rent, which included sacks of wheat, barrels of eel, chickens, ducks and bags of wool. They had packed them into a caleche, which is a two-wheeled, horse drawn wagon and were on their way.

A couple of hours later, the habitants arrived at the seigneur’s manor house. There were many other habitant families, and music and laughter could be heard in the distance. The Damare, Lamante and Savoie families unpacked their goods and headed inside the manor to greet the seigneur.

[Enter Seigneur]

**Seigneur:** Hon, hon, hon! Welcome habitants to my home! I see you have come prepared with your annual rent! Fork it over! God bless Jacques Cartier for this amazing country!

**Mrs. Lamante:** These draperies are just divine!

**Mr. Savoie**: I see you have a fine collection of brandy and cigars.

[Aside] I should live so long to see my family blessed with such riches.

**Mr. Demure:** So Monsieur Seigneur, what’s the damage?

**Mr. Seigneur:** 30 copper coins, 5 barrels of eel, 20 chickens and 10 ducks.

[Aside: I won’t give these Habitants a piece of my pie. Hon hon hon.]

**Narrator:** The Seigneur opens his accounting book, and as the habitants pay the rent, he records each payment, without giving them a receipt.

**Ghost of Samuel de Champlain:** There is only one way to develop this land for our future generations, and that is through hard work and toil. The habitants are working hard to create a great nation, built on a solid foundation set by these habitants.

**Ghost of Jacques Cartier:** I agree, that is what I envisioned. This will be a great country one day.

**Monsieur Seigneur:** Kneel honourable sons and daughters of New France! You have proven your salt and your efforts will be rewarded. Come join me at my manor for wine, cheese and swine!

**Narrator:** Monsieur Seigneur blesses the habitants.

**ALL:** Hooray!!!!! Celebrate.

[ All exit stage in song and dance.]