

Simon St. Germain (1859-1941)

Early Life and Background

Simon St. Germain was the son of Joseph St. Germain and Anne McGillivray. He was likely born at the parish of St. Norbert, specifically at Lot 139, his father's lot, on the east side of the river, an area that would become St. Vital, as his obituary states he was born in St. Vital. He was born on 28 May 1859 and baptised at St. Norbert on 30 May 1859. His godparents were Francois Roy and his wife Isabelle Lafreniere.

Census Records

From the 1870 through 1906 censuses, Simon is recorded in the St. Norbert parish. From the 1911 through 1931 censuses, he is listed at Lot 139, his father's lot in St. Vital, with the 1931 census noting that he owned a single-storey, eight-room wooden house valued at \$1,000. This was notably large compared to other homes in the area, which generally had only two rooms, indicating that he had become quite successful by this time. Additionally, it was noted that they did not have a radio. Interestingly, his son and neighbour, Joachim, had a radio, one of the only households in the area to have one. Joachim was the grandfather of the famed Métis musician, the late Ray St. Germain, indicating a love of music that must have been passed down to Ray from his grandfather.

Community Involvement and Professional Life

Simon was the leading force in the establishment of the St. Germain School District, serving as School Board Chairman from 1906 onwards. He was also a Reeve and Councillor of Ritchot Municipality and a Councillor of St. Vital in the 1920s and early 1930s. As an Immigration Officer, Simon was known as the "suitcase judge" due to his frequent travels for federal court legal proceedings. He was a charter member, Secretary, and multi-year President (including 1907) of the Union Society of St. Joseph and the first Secretary (1887 onwards) of the Métis Society [Union Nationale de Métisse]. Simon was also the census enumerator for St. Norbert in the 1901 and 1906 censuses.

Marriage and Family

Simon married Rose Hamelin (1857–1953), daughter of Joseph Hamelin (son of Métis politician Salomon Hamelin) and Josephe Sayer (daughter of fur trader and activist Pierre Guillaume "William" Sayer), at St. Norbert on 8 October 1878. They had nine children:

- Joseph Napoleon St. Germain (1879–1958)
- Simon Joachim St. Germain (1881–1968), married Marie Olivine Normand
 - Grandparents of Ray St. Germain
- Maxime Martial St. Germain (1883–1964), married Amanda Marchand
- Ernest St. Germain (1885–1951)

- Raoul "Ralph" St. Germain (1886–1961)
- Marguerite Marie Ida Elisa St. Germain (1889–1982), married Mathieu Arthur Carrière
- Marie Lucie St. Germain (1891–)
- Olivine St. Germain (1896–1987), married George E. Deslauriers, then John Williams
- Salomon St. Germain (1901–1977)

Death and Legacy

Simon died at the St. Boniface Hospital on 25 May 1941 and was buried in the St. Norbert Cemetery on 28 May 1941. At the time of his death, he was still living at Lot 139, now called Lot 139 St. Mary's Road in St. Vital, the same lot he was likely born on. His funeral was held at the St. Norbert Parish Church. He and his wife were commemorated with the naming of Ritchot Post Office (opened on 1 April 1937) as the St. Germain Post Office, and St. Germain School in the Louis Riel School Division was named in his honour.

Sources:

- Scrip affidavit for St. Germain, Joseph; concerning the claims of his children: Alexandre St. Germain, born: 1 January 1861; Simon St. Germain, born: 17 May 1859; claim no: 4157 - 4157; date of issue: November 25, 1875.
- Census of 1870 of Manitoba (Red River Census).
- Canadian Census Collection 1881 to 1926.
- 1931 Census of Canada; Folder Number: T-27325; Census Place: St Boniface, Manitoba, Canada; Page Number: 2.
- Sacramental Records of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Barkwell, Lawrence. St. Germain dit Brisard, Simon (1859-1941).

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