

The Goulet

Life in France

The Goulet were also from Le Perche, France, a small forested area with wetland complexes south of Normandie and west of Paris. Our direct European descendant



Thomas Goulet (1593-1652) lived in the Normandel hamlet and worked as a miller at 'la Motte Rouge' (still there today; left).



He married Antoinette Feillard (1595-1622, daughter of David Feillard and Mathurine Navarre of Tourouvre in 1613, and they settled in the borough of La-Poterie-au-Perche (La Poterie). Antoinette was a seamstress. Their son

Jacques Goulet was born in early spring of 1615, followed by two sisters (Louise in 1619 and Yvonne in 1622). Antoinette may have died giving birth to Yvonne. Jacques remarried a widow four years later, on August 17, 1627. The children were thus raised by their step-mother Marie Chalumel and had three half-siblings (Louise 1628, Marie 1632, Marguerite in 1638; this suggests the first Louise died as a child). Thomas Goulet was well known in the community, perhaps not too fondly by some, because he was also the local tax collector.

At the age of 30 years (in 1645), Jacques married a very young Marguerite Mulier (age 14), which was the norm in France in the 17th century. She was born in Saint-George-des-Groseiller, 115 km to the west of La Poterie, and is the daughter of Jean Mulier (sometimes written as Mailler) and Catherine Chauvin. They lived in La Poterie (right; current day) and Jacques worked three kilometers to the south, as a miller on Noël Jucherau's farm known as Les Châtelets de l'Hôme. Noël, who was the general clerk of King Louis XIV for all expenses relating to Nouvelle-France, invited Jacques to join him on his following expedition. A year after their wedding, they parted with friends and family and boarded a westbound ship. Noël passed away on his next trip to Europe implying that Jacques had to find his own way in the colony before the end of his contract.



Settling in Nouvelle France

Once overseas, Jacques and Marguerite lived in Château-Richer, Québec (Nouvelle France). She worked as a seamstress as her mother-in-law had. He bought, settled, and sold possessions or land frequently over the years, eventually becoming one of the first 50 settlers in

l'Ange-Gardien (Côte de Beaupré). Based on the documentation of purchases and sales, it appears Jacques was entrepreneurial, honest, fair, hard-working, and unafraid of risk-taking. One small possession that he held onto was a wooden flute that was passed down to Alexis, then Maxime Goulet. In 1934, it was owned, cherished and used by actor/singer Roger Goulet of Winnipeg. The flute stopped working just before the first world war and someone had the bright idea of hydrating the wood over steam, which restored its sound. That flute is now missing and there are some efforts in place to relocate it.

Jacques and Marguerite eventually owned 33 acres of cleared land with a stone house, barns, and farm animals. Jacques's half-sister Louise Goulet, who married René Letartre in La Poterie, settled in Beaupré, Quebec, 20 years after Jacques did. There is an inscription in memory of Jacques and Louise in the church of La Poterie-au-Perche. Louise and René had a grand-child who married Anne Garneau in l'Ange-Gardien in 1706. One of their great grand-children, Jean-Baptiste, had a family with Marie-Jeanne Perrarault in 1743, and these are the direct ancestors of Israel Tartre who was not only an important political figure but founded *La Patrie*, a long-standing, influential newspaper in Québec in that era.

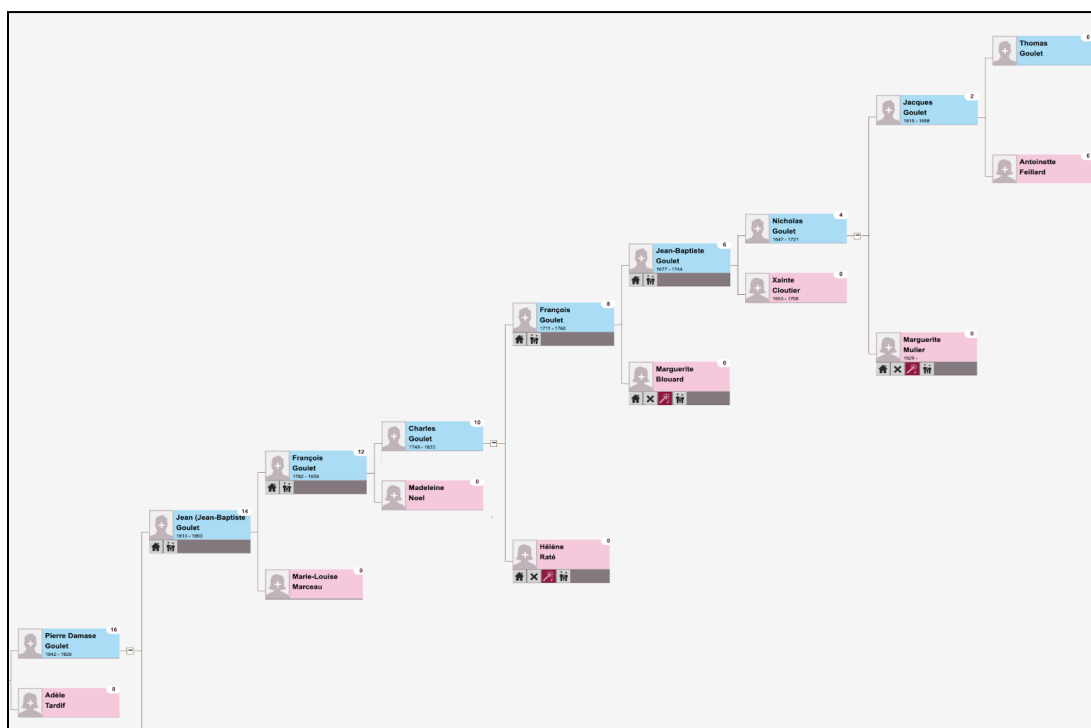
Jacques and Marguerite had 12 children including Geneviève, Nicolas, Jacques, René, Louis, Charles, Jacques, Thomas, François, Antoine, Joseph, and Marguerite. Geneviève, the oldest, died in the cradle as did Marguerite the youngest of the family. The two Jacques also passed away in childhood, the first at age two and the second at around age 10. All eight of Jacques and Marguerite's surviving children settled in Québec. François was the only one not to have children in turn. Jacques collapsed and died at the age of 73 (November 26, 1688) and is buried in the Saints-Anges-Gardiens cemetery, which had been their land before they sold it to the church. Marguerite presumably moved in with one of their children, and passed away four years later, at the age of 61 (July 20, 1692).

The eldest son Nicholas, born on Dec. 14, 1647) is our direct ancestor. He wedded Xainte Cloutier (1653-1706) in Château-Richer the day before Christmas 1672, and settled on l'Île d'Orléans where he died in 1721 at age 73. His house known as 'maison Goulet' is still standing today, and is reputed to be the only house in St-Pierre-de-l'Île-d'Orléans (northeastern section of the island) to have been built of rock when Canada was known as Nouvelle-France. Four of Nicholas and Marguerite's seven children got married and settled locally.



Nicolas' son Jean-Baptiste is our direct ancestor (1677-1744). He married Marguerite Blouard (1679-1754) on l'Île d'Orléans November 9, 1700. They had six children and we descend from their second youngest son François (1711-1760) who also settled on the Island. François

Marceau (1787-1815) of St-Vallier until he passed away (age 76). It was common to have large families in those days, partly to share the intensive labour involved in farming, and because it was expected in the deeply Catholic families of this era. As is often the case, religion gets entangled in the politics of a region. A large number of French Canadians were needed to sustain the church and increase the political power of the Nouvelle France's colony. Needless to say, François and Marie-Louise had 10 children of their own. Our ancestor, their sixth child Jean-Baptiste and his wife Luce Audet-dit-Lapointe (1810-1877; left) of St-Gervais moved to Lambton, 152 km further south from the lands of his family, near Lac St-François, and in today's Frontenac National Park. They raised a family of eight and when she passed away 47 years later, he remarried Zoé Pruneau. See Goulet genealogy below.



The Move West

Jean and Luce's son Pierre Damase Goulet (1842-1928) is my great-great grand-father (right) and he was the first of our direct Goulet descendents to leave the province of Québec. He married my great-great grandmother Adèle Tardif (1843-1933) on Oct. 14, 1862, and they had three children in Lambton (Mathias, Marie Rose, and Alfred) before uprooting themselves and heading west.



French Canadian families often migrated in kin groups in that era, and/or were sustained through extended family relationships and networks seeking a better future for themselves¹. It appears Damase followed his younger brother Joseph Octave (1846-1903) and wife Florida Marie Roy (1851-1920), who moved west in the late 1860s or early 1870s as evidenced by the birth of their first son Joseph Thomas in Austin, Mower County, Minnesota in 1871.

Joseph Octave and Florida likely made their way to St-Boniface, Manitoba, first because this city had a well-established church (cathédral Notre-Dame), and a francophone community; also, there were many Goulet families established there at the time (e.g., third cousin Jacques-Louis Goulet, father of Alexis and Moise who figure prominently in Manitoba history as discussed later). A further move to Minnesota would have occurred shortly thereafter, probably for political reasons. That is, when Manitoba entered Confederation (1870, Manitoba Act), speculators and incoming Anglo-Canadian settlers acquired much of the good farmland and land that the Métis and French-Canadian families expected to receive was often delayed, mishandled, or denied². Furthermore, Manitoba schools restricted French Catholic education in the 1880s-1890s³ and French-speaking Catholics felt increasingly marginalized.

The US Homestead Act of 1862 encouraged immigrants to settle in the vast tracts of fertile prairie land because an increased population would support the creation of towns, markets, and local government structures. Under the Act, any intended citizen over the age of 21 could claim 160 acres of surveyed public land. If a house was built and the soil cultivated for five continuous years, their acreage could be purchased for \$4.00. This incentive encouraged French-Canadian families to follow the Red River south from St-Boniface into Minnesota's Red River Valley. French-Canadian hubs were already well-established there by the 1870s-1880s, including Red Lake Falls, Lambert/Oklee, and Gentilly, by farmers and by coureurs-des-bois because beaver populations were declining in the last decade of the 19th century and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) exhibited tight control over the fur trade, making it a less economical way of

¹ Sara Hulburt. 2017. Kin Keeping and Family Storytelling in Nineteenth-century French Canadian Immigrant Letters: The Bergevin Corpus Social History 50 (102): 285-313.

² Gerald Friesen. 1987. The Canadian Prairies: A History. University of Toronto Press.

³ Marvin Emery. 1971. The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights? McClelland and Stewart.

life. Travel between St-Boniface and the Red River Valley was frequent in those days and the border between countries practically non-existent.⁴

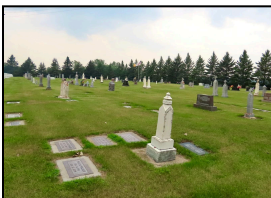
Joseph Octave might have brought Florida (who was sometimes referred to as Mary on census data) to Austin, Mower County, Minnesota to earn 'easy' money in order to secure a homestead because Austin was a rail hub. There was ample rail and saw mill work tied to the numerous railway expansions across Minnesota from Chicago and Milwaukee. Minnesota census data indicate that Joseph Octave was in Lambert, Polk County, Minnesota, by 1885. His brother Damase had joined him⁵. Damase and Adèle arrived after 1881 based on a Québec census. Joseph Octave and Florida had four children at the time including Joseph Thomas (age 14), Napoléon (age 12), Elizabeth (Eliza; age 4), and Louis (age 2). Damase and Adèle's first born son Mathias (my great-grandfather) was 20 by then. Their daughter Marie was 16, and married off to Urgel Bergeron (age 40) that same year (July 23, 1885).

Joseph Octave, Damase, and Mathias may have worked for Alphonse Lambert and his wife Cesarie, who were instrumental in establishing the village of Lambert in 1881, including the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church. A landowner by the name of O.K. Lee saw an opportunity to relocate the town next to the Soo Line railroad, however, which was completed by 1910. As



such, the town of Oklee was born 13 km to the east in 1912-1914 and the catholic church was rolled there on logs in the winter of 1917. Many parishioners contributed \$75 each to add stained glass windows to the church once it reached Oklee, despite the depression, which translates to \$15,000 per person today⁶. This reflects how important a church was to community members in those days. As of 2025, all that exists of Lambert is a historic town hall (left).

On November 21, 1887, Mathias married Josephine Rodrigue (1872-1905) of Gentilly, also in Polk County. He was 22 and she was 18. Her parents Bernard and Adèle (Audet) Rodrigue had also immigrated to Minnesota with their children in the late 1800s. Mathias and Josephine married at the town's St. Peter's Catholic Church (right). An 1889 census indicates that the Rodrigue family



remained in Gentilly through the late 1880s. Mathias and Josephine lived in Terrebonne based on their marriage certificate, and the grave site of their first born son Joseph Mathias (1888-1889) at the St. Anthony cemetery. Nothing else remained of Terrebonne when visited in 2025, yet the cemetery is extensive and still well maintained (left). Terrebonne is halfway between Lambert and

Gentilly (10 km from each).

⁴ Tony Bachand. Citizen living across from Lambert's historical town hall, speaking about his grandfather's life in the area. Interview with author Linda Dupuis. July 14, 2025.

⁵ Minnesota Historical Society. People Records Search <https://www.mnhs.org/search/people> Accessed Aug 21, 2025.

⁶ Father Bryan Kajawa, pastor of the Catholic parishes serving Oklee, Grygla and Goodridge, Minnesota. Interview with author Linda Dupuis. July 14, 2025.

In April of 1888, according to records in the Red Lake Falls County courthouse of Minnesota, Joseph Octave and Florida Roy obtained a Receiver's Receipt under the Homestead Act for a prospective land patent in the Chester Township of Polk County, approximately 30 km east of Lambert. Damase obtained his Receiver's Receipt for a potential land patent in Lambert a year later (June 1889; NW1/4, Sec 11, Twp 150 N, Rg 41, 5th P.M.); his land was immediately north of Alphonse Lambert's SW1/4. Mathias and Josephine appear to have lived in Lambert from around 1890 to 1899. Mathias might have worked on his father's land, and or his brother-in-law Urgel's land, having no land of his own at that point.

Based on baptismal records from Oklee's St. Francis Xavier Catholic church (right), Mathias and Josephine had eight children in Lambert during that ten-year period. Mathias' uncle and aunt, Joseph Octave and Florida, are on some of the records confirming the family ties. Mathias' cousin, Joseph Thomas (their son) and his wife Mary Hince were also witnesses for one of the children's baptisms. My great-uncle Eugène mentioned that a boy named Bernard died in infancy, presumably before he was baptized (no record was found); nor was



a death record found. He would have been born in 1889-90, either in Terrebonne or Lambert. The two first born sons were obviously named after their grandfathers. The subsequent Lambert-born children included Urgel (28 jun, 1891), Misaël (10 Sep, 1892), Véronique (16 Dec, 1894), Marie Rachelle Rebecca (01 Oct, 1895), Rose Anna (11 Dec 1896 1896), my grandfather Alphonse (5 Dec, 1898), and Josaphat Cyprien (8 Dec, 1899). Rebecca died just shy of three (Nov. 24, 1898). The Lambert Catholic cemetery (known as the old Oklee Catholic cemetery; left) was not well maintained over the years. Many of the tombs have been lost including Rebecca's. A communal memorial was eventually erected to honour lost graves (left). Of note, the tombstone of Josaphat's godparents Cyprien Asselin (1835-1905) and Celine Henri (1835-1906) was still standing in 2025.

Joseph Octave obtained his land patent in 1893. Damase was unable to meet the requirements of his Receiver's Receipt and went into foreclosure in 1894 having an unpaid loan of \$680 (including \$80 in interest). It is worth noting that much of the good land in the Red River Valley was taken up in the late 1880s and land for sale in the Lambert/Oklee area was swampy and hard to cultivate⁷. As with most homesteaders, Damase had to take out loans to buy tools, materials for the home and fences, livestock, and seed. In the spring, the soil had to be broken up with a plough pulled by a team of oxen, and hand-seeded from sacks carried on one's back. In the fall, the grain and legume plants had to be cut by flail (handheld thrasher), and the seeds were knocked off the head by hand and separated from the chaff in open winds⁸. Winds were so

⁷ Father Bryan Kajawa. 2025. Words of pastor for the Catholic parishes serving Oklee, Grygla and Goodridge, Minnesota. Interview with author Linda Dupuis, July 14.

⁸ Virgil Benoit. 1975. Gentilly. A French-Canadian Community in the Red River Valley

strong that homes were often boarded up to keep wind-born silt out.⁹ Cows, pigs, and chickens required attention year-round. In the winter, many homesteaders of the Red River Valley logged (10 to 12 hour day) at a wage of \$1.00/day. They nourished themselves with canned beef, salt pork, and molasse cakes covered in lard.

Only one other census was done in the late 19th century in Minnesota, in 1895. It appears that though Damase did not obtain a land patent, he continued living in Lambert with Adèle and Alfred (age 15). Their daughter Marie and her husband Urgel Bergeron were also in Lambert and had five children by then: Clara (age 9), Blanche (age 8), Urgel (age 7), Louis (age 5) and Mathias (age 4) who died before the age of 10. Urgel Bergeron senior (age 88) was also in their household. Joseph Octave and Florida were living in Chester Township with six children (additions to the family by then included Marie Louisa and Léa/Leah). Mathias and Josephine were listed with her parents (my great-great grandparents) Bernard and Adèle Rodrigue, suggesting that the couple moved to Gentilly the year after Damase's foreclosure. Mathias and Josephine had three surviving children at the time (Urgel, Misaël, and Véronique). Josephine's father Bernard (recorded as Barnett Roderig by an incompetent public servant) and wife Adèle (recorded as Adell) had five children at home including Alphonse, Noé (Noah), Anna, and Misaël (recorded as Mesile; ages 16 to 9 respectively). The census occurred in June and since both men were farmers, Mathias might have been helping his father-in-law for all or part of the growing season.

In 1898, Mathias obtained a Receiver's Receipt for land in Gentilly (SW¹/₄, Sec 21 T151 N, R41 W, P.M.05) approximately 400 m SW of St. Peter's Catholic church (the land today is on 260th St. SW, approximately 50 m west of 185th Ave SW). That same year his father-in-law Bernard obtained a Receiver's Receipt for land in the Red Lake Falls County (just north of Polk County). It appears the Rodrigue family got to know Mathias' relatives (Joseph Octave and Florida Goulet's family) there. This is confirmed by two marriages, which took place in Red Lake Falls in December 1899. More specifically Anna Rodrigue married Napoléon Goulet and Pierre (Peter) Paul Rodrigue married Leah Goulet.

In 1900, the whole ancestral clan (Mathias and Josephine Goulet; Bernard and Adèle Rodrigue; Damase and Adèle Goulet) moved to rue Provencher in St-Boniface, Manitoba, with their dependents. Language and religion were the most probable reason they left the US. The small French-Canadian hubs of the Red River Valley commonly fostered a continuation of early cultural and spiritual values, as a function of rural isolation and a strong reliance on each other for survival. Whether intentional or not, this "preservation of the past" was reinforced within the parish structure, which was purely administered by French-Canadian pastors¹⁰.

At a meeting in Baltimore in 1888, the Catholic Congress adopted a resolution that "national societies were incompatible with the spirit of the Catholic church", which was overseen by the

⁹ Tony Bachand. Citizen living across from Lambert's historical town hall, speaking about his grandfather's life in the area. Interview with author Linda Dupuis. July 14.

¹⁰ Virgil Benoit. 1975. Gentilly. A French-Canadian Community in the Red River Valley

pope who is always based at the Vatican in Italy. This decision alarmed the French- Canadians whose sense of identity was so closely tied to their parish. In June of the same year, a National Franco-American convention took place in New Hampshire which further generated a wave of French-Canadian nationalism in the US. In fact, a delegate of this Convention visited a colleague Father Gamache in Gentilly seven months prior, arousing the Minnesotans (he was greeted by 500 people). Father Theillon from Terrebonne (who baptized some of the Lambert-based Goulet clan) was subsequently elected to attend the convention too. An “Union Française” similarly took place in St-Paul, Minnesota, in 1889. French papers started intensifying their advocacy for the preservation of French-Canadian language, religion, and culture. In the years to follow, however, French-Canadians began to ascertain their political influence and realized they were fairly weak as a group even where they represented a majority, mainly because many forwent the process of becoming naturalized citizens¹¹.

Presumably many of the more conservative Minnesotan French-Canadians moved back to Manitoba with this imminent threat of English becoming enforced in Catholic parishes. Also, the schools of Minnesota were public (without faith) and led in English. Mathias and Josephine paid off their \$712 loan and sold their Gentilly land patent in 1901. Bernard and Adèle paid off \$1,175 in loans and sold their Red Lake Falls land patent the same year. Many (or all) of Joseph Octave and Florida’s married children remained in Minnesota. Florida was a widow by then (Joseph Octave died at age 55; Jul 13, 1903) but sustained herself as a dressmaker with her daughter Lea (Leah) in Red Lake Falls. Damase and Adèle’s daughter Marie and husband Urgel Bergeron also stayed behind. A 1905 census indicates they were living in Red Lake Falls. Marie had another five children: Antoinette (age 10), Eleva (age 8), Lina (age 7), Albert (age 5.5), and Leona nearly three. Of note, Marie (Goulet) Bergeron was widowed by 1927 (her husband was in his 80s) and remarried to the widower Alexandre Brossait from Tamarac, Marshall County. Alexandre Brossait and deceased wife Sophie had 7 children in Marshall County by 1905. At the time of their wedding, Marie and Alexandre’s children would all have moved on to shape their own lives. She died in Crookston, Minnesota in 1957. The two remained in Minnesota, eventually settling in Oklee (based on Adèle Goulet’s 1933 obituary).

Life in St-Boniface

Mathias and Josephine lost their six-year-old daughter Véronique (right, with younger sister Rose Anna) the year they arrived (1900) in Manitoba. She buried with her parents in the Saint-Boniface Cathedral cemetery. Véronique fervently wished to receive her confirmation before dying but the local curator at the time, Monseigneur Azarie Dugas, denied her this wish because she was not yet 15. This would have caused her and her mother much grief.



is

¹¹ Virgil Benoit. 1975. Gentilly. A French-Canadian Community in the Red River Valley

Based on a 1901 census, Josephine and Mathias had six surviving children at this time, including Urgel (9), Misaël (8), Rose Anna (4), Alphonse (2), and Josaphat Cyprien (1). They were living with his parents Damase and Adèle for a time, and brother Alfred (age 21). Josephine bore three boys in quick succession in St-Boniface including Jean-Baptiste (1902), Eugène (1903), and Napoléon (1904).



Josephine herself passed away of cardiac arrest at nearly 33, six years after arriving in Manitoba. She bore 12 children in 15 years probably out of a sense of duty. Exhaustion surely triggered her illness, having never had time to recover from labour and the constant care of infants, toddlers, and young children. Women in those days were tasked with helping the local pastor educate young children in French and maintain their spiritual faith, in addition to keeping the homes in clean working order, mending clothing, and feeding everyone. One would like to think that since her mother-in-law Adèle Goulet had no more children after leaving Québec, Josephine would have had support with her very large brood of youngsters, both in Lambert and St-Boniface. In her obituary, it was said of Adèle (below) that she was tenderly loved by family and community. Josephine would have had some support from her mother and her little sister Anna (who was 13 in

1895) as well, in Gentilly and St-Boniface. Grieving the loss of five children would surely have contributed to a compromised immune system. Diphtheria was rampant in the 1880s. Typhoid, tuberculosis, and influenza were also major causes of death in that era. On a side note, disease rates would have been highest during the harshest months of the year. Cyprien was a December baby, Joseph Mathias and Rebecca both passed away in November, and Véronique died in early spring.

It was sadly a common practice for a widowed father to place his children in orphanages or religious institutions in those days, for practical survival in the absence of childcare as we know it today. After consulting with the pastor, Mathias' oldest son Urgel, who had been struck by lightning as a child, was placed in the care of the Grey Nuns until his death at age 30 (1922).



He enjoyed regular visits by his brothers and father until he went into a permanent coma at age 28. Mathias' next three oldest sons (Misaël, Alphonse, and Josaphat) were placed in an agricultural orphanage in Mackinac, just south of Lac Dauphin, Manitoba. It was run by the Clerics of St-Viateur. His nine-year-old daughter Rose Anna was taken in by the Oblate Nuns of Sacré-Coeur, at their St-Charles convent nine miles from Winnipeg. There is no mention of Cyprian, which means he had already passed away (before the age of 6). Three-year-old Jean Baptiste was raised by his grand-parents, Damase and Adèle Goulet. Two-year old Eugène was raised by his godparents (Mr. et Mme. Ludger Roux). Baby Napoléon, who was colicky, was eventually taken in by Josephine's loving sister Rose Blais. According to Rose, his constant crying was a result of hunger as it was in vogue those days to ration food even for babies. Mathias Goulet rebuilt his life as a successful real estate agent in St-Boniface. He lived at 211 Roger St., in Norwood, Manitoba and never married again. There are very few references to family in Alphonse and Eugène's biographies. It appears the siblings had contact with each other and their father during family gatherings and visits.



Josaphat, Alphonse, Rose-Anna, Misaël, Jean-Baptiste (back row); Napoléon, Mathias, Eugène (front row)

Four more of Mathias' children passed away in young adulthood in addition to Urgel. Misaël (right), who was a charismatic and well loved brother according to Eugène, had wanted to go into the priesthood but was advised by his father not to spend money on college as it was possible to make a living without an education. In his defense, he already had four children in the domain of religion. Misaël eventually enrolled in World War 1's 29th Battalion of the Canadian Infantry (he was private no. 2138703). He had confided in his sister Rose Anna that he was weary of life and hoping to die in battle. He did indeed get hit by an exploding shell the day after his 25th birthday, two months before the



end of the war, while working on a railroad at Sains-lès- Marquions (1918). He is buried in a Commonwealth cemetery on Queant Road (left), Pas-de-Calais (2 km SW of Buissy) along with 254 other soldiers.



Jean-Baptiste, known as 'Ti-Jean', left Canada to become a Marianist Brother. In this "Society of Mary" congregation, brothers and priests share equal status and live communally to survive poverty. He was to be appointed a Marianist priest in St-Boniface in 1921 but he died that same year of pulmonary complications from the Spanish flu he had been a victim of in 1918. He was just short of 19.



Rose-Anna, who wholeheartedly entered the sisterhood of the Oblate Nuns of Sacré-Coeur, died of consumption at age 27 (1924). She is commemorated as Sister Rose Anna M. de Felix-de-Valoi in the St-Boniface Cathedral Cemetery (left). She showed great interest and devotion to her brothers and had been well loved. Josaphat, who had the most influence on his father according to Eugène, had serious rheumatism that put him at greater cardiovascular risk. He suffered a heart attack that caused him to die in his sleep at 35 (in 1934) at his uncle 'Pit' Rodrigue's house in Pasadena, California.

Of Mathias and Joséphine's 13 children, only the two youngest survived to old age, Eugène and Napoléon. Eugène (right) entered the priesthood in Québec. My grandfather Alphonse had just been assigned a teaching position in a catholic school in Montreal so the two traveled there together much to the grief of their father who had lost so many children (9). Eugène lived in poverty during most of his college years because he had a falling out with the harsh godfather who raised him. He was given a break in 1925 and 1926, when he earned a summer income as a cabin boy on a cruise ship traveling between Montreal and Saguenay. Life got progressively easier for him financially once he graduated from the novitiate in 1927. He was curator in Quebec's wartime housing in



Bois-Franc, village St-Laurent, for 19 years; then, a chaplain in Cartierville (6 years). Due to constant struggles with stomach problems he was dismissed from active service at age 66. This devastated him as he was passionate about his work. His relief was profound when he later became confessor and chaplain at the Sisters of the Holy Cross' provincial headquarters, where he worked until age 75. He willingly retired after 50 years of service, eventually settling in a residence at the St-Joseph Oratory in Montreal until his death at 95 (1998). Mathias came out to attend Eugène's significant milestones as a priest.

Napoléon (below) was raised in St-Boniface and used to the relative ease of city life. He suffered the fewest hardships as a child. He married twice, to widows. The first was an Irish woman with a child, but she died young. Her name was Albanie and she liked to tell my mother



Elaine stories when the family visited. Bernadette, who lost her first husband during World War II, was his second wife (left).

They were in love and enjoyed a happy marriage. Napoléon had a successful insurance business. They raised his stepson Hughie together and had a fancy house in the suburbs.

Napoléon was quite connected to his older brother Alphonse. As young adults they traveled to the West Coast together when Alphonse was ready to move on from the orphanage and the subsequent teaching position obtained through the orphanage.

Napoléon and Bernadette stayed in touch with Alphonse and visited him regularly. Bernadette's passing at the age of 60, was a tremendous loss to Napoléon as he expressed in a letter

to Yvonne in 1970. It consoled him to have such a long lineup of people to offer their condolences at her funeral. Napoléon died of a heart attack five years later, at the age of 71.

Alphonse was the only one of Josephine and Mathias' 13 children to have children of his own. He married Yvonne Beaubien in 1921, in New Westminster, BC. Mathias traveled to the west



coast to attend his son's wedding and meet his in-laws. The couple is pictured on the right with their two eldest children Elaine (my mother) and Eugène.

They had two other children shortly after Eugène was born, named Angèle and David (left). Alphonse and Yvonne raised their family partly in BC, and partly in Manitoba. He was twice the victim of dishonest business dealings, which caused him a lot of financial hardships. He was so kind, generous, and non-judgemental that he undoubtedly trusted people whole-heartedly.





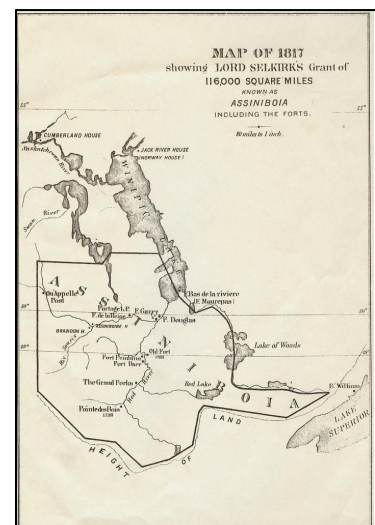
It is in this happy environment that my mother married my father Aurélien Dupuis (left). She had worked in Montreal as a young woman when her family was living there. I remember her telling me she loved her uncle Eugène and confided in him when she felt troubled, as young adults are wont to. While working as a secretary for aircraft manufacturer Canadair, she made a friend Jacqueline who was dating a good-humoured, kind man named Lionel Dupuis. My mom was impressed with him and Jacqueline suggested she meet his younger brother who was another kind and

gentle soul though much more quiet.

My mother had moved back to Manitoba to be close to her parents and siblings. She worked as a secretary for insurance company Great-West Life in Winnipeg, and lived in a pension for young unmarried girls (which she found utterly dull). She and my father kept up a regular correspondence until one day, he came to visit and proposed to her at dinner, in front of a very stunned little sister and brothers. My aunt Angela told me that, being more socially savvy than his orphanage-raised sibling and his pious wife, Napoléon and his wife Bernadette helped organize their niece's wedding and gifted her a silverware set that she cherished all her life. Sadly, my grandfather died of a heart attack just days from his 64th birthday, having only met the first of his twelve grand-children, toddler Marc-Aurèle. His heart issues were probably compounded by the grief of loss unexpressed. Alphonse lost his mother at age six, was separated from his father, brothers and sister at that time, and experienced the death of many siblings. That much loss is bound to wear on the heart. It is also kindly Napoléon who took his niece Angela to her graduation at the University of Manitoba, and had her picture taken by a professional photographer. Her mother Yvonne had been invited to join her brother Arthur on a trip East at the time, to visit distant relatives.

Distant Ancestors

It should be noted that the French were the first Europeans to colonize western Canada partially through the fur trade, and with the intention of populating new areas. A settlement was established at the productive junction of Red River with Assiniboine River; an area referred to as Assiniboia (right) before métis and 'coureur des bois' Louis Riel pushed to have it incorporated as Canada's province of Manitoba. In fact, Louis Riel's grandparents Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière and Marie-Anne Gaboury were the first Europeans to settle there amongst the Ojibwe and Cree populations, in 1807. In 1817, the Hudson Bay



Company (HBC) issued a land grant in this region, known as the Selkirk Concession, to Thomas Douglas, fifth Earl of Selkirk. This land grab intruded on a well-established, local Métis Red River Colony. The Selkirk Settlement ultimately failed due to the 1812 war on Canada-USA boundaries, the disputes between fur trading companies, grasshopper epidemics, flooding, and cold weather. In 1818, the city of St-Boniface was established in the area as a Roman Catholic mission led by Bishop Joseph Norbert Provencher. He was given tracts of lands and soon constructed a church that served as a chapel, residence and school. His mission was to convert locals and help with colonization. That same year, Polish settlers of the De Meuron regiment of the Swiss Infantry called St-Boniface home too, and defended it against the North West Company (NWC) Forces. Eventually, the pious French of that time period founded a convent for the Grey Nuns, the St-Boniface Hospital, and the Collège de Saint-Boniface (now a university). By the time young Mathias and Josephine settled on their farm between Ste-Anne and Ste-Marie, three miles from the St-Boniface church, the area would have been thriving.

Some of our distant Goulet ancestors had noteworthy roles in the development of Manitoba as a province. Alexis Goulet (1811-1856, left in photo to the right, with his brother Leonide) descendant of the original founder's son Antoine Goulet (we are descendants of Antoine's brother Nicolas). Alexis worked for the HBC at Brandon House, just as his grand-father Jacques Goulet had worked for the NWC in Athabasca, Alberta from 1804 to 1821. He was an oarsman on a York boat carrying freight and passengers along the river systems from 1829-1832, then retired as a civilian of the Red River settlement until his death in 1856. In his latter years, Alexis hunted buffalo, did some freighting, and guided sportsmen who ventured out west in their quest to acquire Canadian souvenirs (wildlife trophies). He was one of 22 buffalo hunters who assembled on August 29, 1845, to write a letter demanding Métis rights to hunt and trade at a fair price.



Alexis Goulet married sixteen year old Josèphite Siveright (1817-1891) on October 1, 1833. She was born in August 1817, the daughter of John Siveright and Josèphite or Louise Roussin, a Métis woman. Alexis and Josèphite's children were well-connected with the political and economic elite of both the French and English communities. Their eldest son became Honourable Roger Goulet (1834-1902). He was a student at Collège de St-Boniface, godson of Bishop Provencher, and a métis. In addition to being a district judge, he was a land surveyor, and a member of the Assiniboia council. With all his connections to church and the Government of Canada, he earned status and prestige. He was even authorized by the Ottawa government to negotiate with Louis Riel and the métis leaders of his provisional government regarding land claims. He was unfortunately obliged to oppose Riel. During this time, he used his influence to elevate his brother Elzéar Goulet (1836-1870) to the military rank of captain of Riel's provisional government under Ambroise Lépine.



During the 1869 Métis Resistance, Elzéar Goulet (left) eventually became a court martial for Thomas Scott, who was accused of treason against the provisional government. Elzéar supported the imposition of a penalty though offered to be responsible for Mr. Scott rather than have him suffer the death penalty. He was outvoted and delegated as one of two escorts bringing Mr. Scott to the Métis firing squad in nearby Fort Garry. He was on the west side of the river (Winnipeg) one day in 1870, when he was recognized as one of Riel's men by Wolesley's troops. They pursued him and hit him in the head with a large rock as he jumped into the Red River to escape; deceased at 34 years of age, Elzéar was a victim of his time.

Alexi's third son Leonide (1852-1928) was a member of the Boundary Commission's 49th Rangers. That is, he was a member of the Canada/US team responsible for marking out the country boundaries. The youngest son, Maxime Goulet (1855-1932; right), was well integrated in the cultural and political life of St-Boniface. He was elected a member of the Manitoba legislature in 1878 and cabinet Minister of Agriculture in 1880. Maxime was eventually appointed inspector of bilingual schools in Manitoba and in 1909, was president of l'union Nationale Métisse. He was also a member of Société de St-Boniface and there is a Goulet Street in his honour.



Prairie Life

Louis Goulet (1859-1936), nephew of Alexis Goulet (son of Moise Goulet and Marie Beauchamp), epitomized the Métis life when the prairies were boundaryless tracks of wilderness. His life was dictated to a friend, Guillaume Charette, whose notes were discovered and published as *L'Espace de Louis Goulet* in the 1970s. Louis accompanied his father on caravans that traveled for months at a time, hunting bison and trading goods. Caravans ranged as far south as the Mexican border (but more regularly to towns along Missouri River in Minnesota) and as far west as the Athabasca region (now part of northern Alberta). They included a dozen to a hundred families led by a council of elders supported by wildlife scouts, and guards always on the lookout for conflict with warring tribes (though they got on well with most Indigenous groups). A priest would accompany larger caravans to help maintain piety 'away from home'. As an adult, Louis continued to be a 'coureur des plaines' and freighter. In 1879, he served as a trader between an American enterprise (D.C. Powers, Broadwater, and Brothers) and an Indigenous camp of 2,000 dwellings including those of Sitting Bull's clan and three other chiefs, all of whom escaped Montana after participating in the 1876 Custer Massacre (a decisive Indigenous victory over the US army).

Louis Goulet served as a scout for the US government for two years because of his fluency in several Indigenous languages (Sioux, Cree, Saulteaux, and possibly Blackfoot), his in-depth knowledge of the prairies, his agility with horses, and his marksmanship. When assigned as a

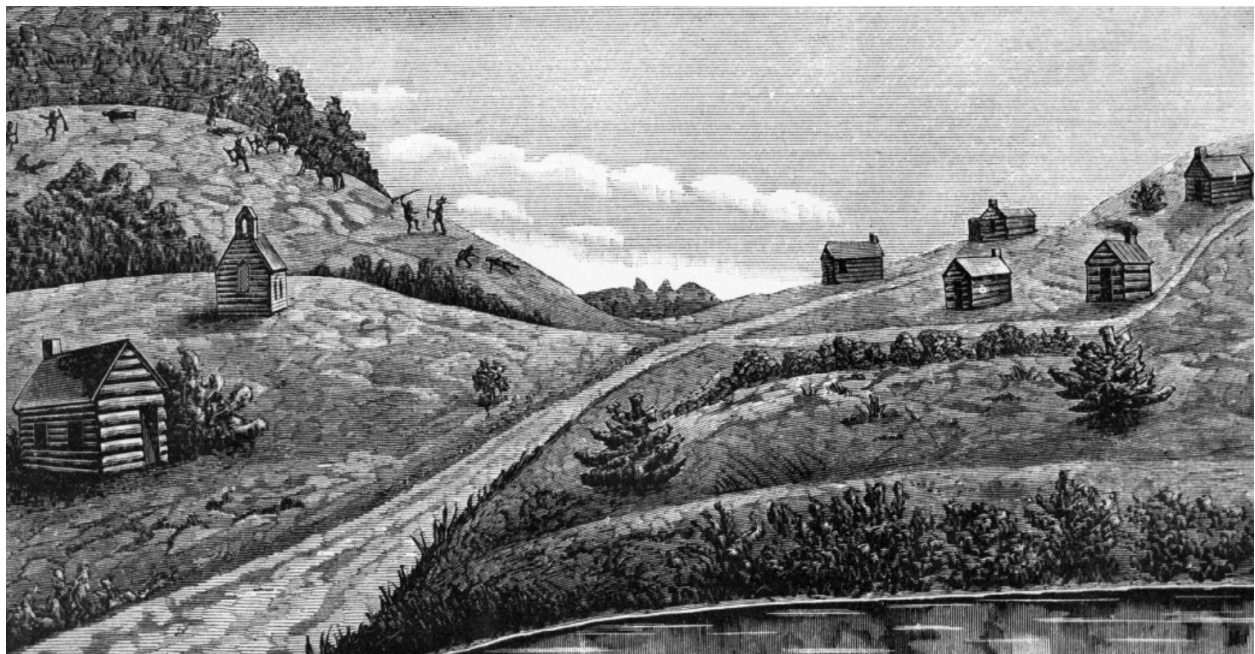
'scout at large', he traveled incognito, spying on cowboys, town folk, and Indigenous People looking for signs of trouble. The Wild West, he stated, was a far cry from the more docile prairie region north of today's 49th parallel, which was kept in check by the Catholic stranglehold (a silver lining). In 1881, government supplies destined for the soldiers of Fort Assiniboine were being transferred from four barges on the Milk River to 50 land-bound wagons. The horses and mules were sent out to pasture each morning during this four-day transition period. Sitting Bull's clan was stealthily surveilling the process, and just before the wagons were to be mobilized his men attempted to steal the horses. Louis Goulet was first on the scene and with his peers managed to retrieve them. He was hit in the leg by an arrow but thankfully it was not poisoned. Ten scouts/freighters and 25 Sioux died in the skirmish.

In 1884, Louis Goulet was invited by Gabriel Dumont (below) to partake in a secret meeting in Batoche regarding the need to defend Métis rights; he attended under oath. It was decided at that meeting that Louis Riel would be encouraged to come up from Montana to take up the



cause given his higher education. Louis Goulet declined further involvement because he had had misunderstandings with Louis Riel and didn't want that to have a negative impact on the cause (they later became friends). The battle of the Northwest Resistance, which pitted Canadian Authorities against a force of Indigenous and Metis People, occurred a year later (1885) in Batoche, Saskatchewan. At one point, Louis had to be a witness for his friend André Nault who was falsely accused of being a spy for Louis Riel, and questioned by Charles Dickens' son Captain Francis Dickens. André was a French Canadian buffalo hunter, farmer, and leader for the Métis people. In the 1870 Red River resistance in Manitoba, he was in charge of the party that seized Upper Fort Garry, NE of Winnipeg. This may have contributed to the government's suspicions.

In the midst of the 1885 Northwest rebellion at Frog Lake (below), a large band of Plains Cree under the leadership of Big Bear (Mistahimaskwa) moved onto Chief Phneepahao's Frog Lake



Frog Lake settlement scene 1885.

reserve for the long and bitter winter. Their traditional food source, the buffalo, had disappeared from the prairies and at this established reserve, they were food rations from the Indian Department in exchange for labour¹². Big Bear had been holding out on signing the Treaty (No. 6) in hopes of negotiating better treaty provisions with the Canadian government. His son Aysimissis and war chief Wandering Spirit (Kapapamahchakwew), however, decided to instigate a rebellion at the Frog Lake village (below) in March. They were frustrated with the English for not keeping to the promises of Treaty 6. The clan was starving and they wanted food and supplies. They had the clan disarm and gather everyone, with the intention of accessing store supplies. Ayimissis and approximately twenty members of the Big Bear clan barged in on Louis' nearby winter camp, where he and his trading friends had signed on to a contract to square logs for the winter. Ayimissis wanted Louis to be the English interpreter requesting that the trading post open its doors. Louis Goulet declined to help and was made prisoner along with two of his trading friends and three HBC employees. Big Bear's clan members pillaged the store then took their prisoners to their camp, where other traders, HBC employees and their families, two priests, and some RCMP officers were also being held.

Two Indigenous men, Wandering Spirit and Wolverine, shot Indian Subagent Tom Quinn, in charge of meting out supplies and funds, for not wanting to walk through a mud puddle (Louis knew all the Bear Clan men by name). This man, whose father was involved in the Dakota War of 1862 in Minnesota, was known to be very hard on the Indigenous people despite being Métis himself, and they resented him deeply. They called him the dog agent. This first shooting unleashed a battle that resulted in the massacre of several prisoners at Frog Lake including trader Charles Gouin, Father Felix-Marie Marchand, Father Léon-Adélarde Fafard and his assistant John Willis Craft, mill operator John Gowenlock and his clerk William Gilchrist, store owner George Dill, John Delaney the agricultural teacher for local Indigenous Peoples (a Treaty commitment due to declining buffalo populations), and school teacher Vital-Justin Grandin. Louis was partly spared because his Big Bear clan friend Wechan looked out for him. Louis received permission from Big Bear to lay the group of bodies nearest him in the cellar of the church. The church, trading post, and houses of some HBC employees/agents and the RCMP office were burned to the ground. Two English wives were kidnapped but Louis managed to negotiate their release (trade them for horses). The remaining 15 prisoners were ordered to support the Big Bear Clan.

The prisoners remained at Frog Lake until April 13, at which time they were taken to Fort Pitt to 'support' negotiations with administrative agent W.J. McClean, who was known to be sympathetic to the Indigenous cause. Tensions were high there too, and two more mounted police officers were shot (Cowan and Lowsby). Captain Dickens (famous author Charles Dickens' son) who was in charge of the fort, thought it best to surrender the fort. More prisoners were taken at Fort Pitt and all returned to Frog Lake.

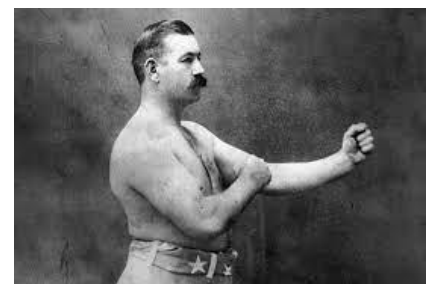
¹² Allen Ronaghan. 1995. Who Was The "Fine Young Man"? The Frog Lake "Massacre" Revisited. Parks Canada History. Accessed July 2025 at: parks.canadahistory.com/publications/froglake/sh-v47n2-1995.pdf

The prisoners were still with the Big Bear Clan in May, seemingly on their way to Batoche where the Métis were rebelling against Mounted Police. At French Butte, they were attacked by government forces. Louis pretended to be involved in this next fight but a Big Bear clan member threatened to kill him if he didn't aim properly, knowing he was a good shot. Louis eventually escaped with two friends in the night, but was arrested the next day at Battle River while buying supplies. He was detained with Louis Riel and other Métis and Indigenous people for months but eventually acquitted (Gabriel Dumont saw the writing on the wall and escaped to the US for a time). That Louis helped two English women prisoners played a role in his release. Louis and many Métis traders and freighters were not political men, they were simply caught in the cross-fire. Louis Goulet gives a play by play account of this 1885 Frog Lake massacre, which is of great value historically¹³. He is pictured below at Fort Pitt during some earlier trading.



Four Sky Thunder, Sky Bird, Napasis, Big Bear, Angus McKay, Otto Dufresne, Louis Goulet, Stanley Simpson, Mr. Rowly, Alex McDonald, Captain RB Sletch; front row Matoose, Mr. Edmund, Henry Dufrain; trading at Fort Pitt

A few last interesting facts about Louis: He won a boxing match against the famous John L. Sullivan (right) during his stay in the Wild West. He had a soft spot for Marguerite-France Bourbon whose great-great-grandfather was the eldest son of King Louis. He had avoided an inevitable future crowning by escaping to Canada. Marguerite-France wanted to dedicate herself to a religious life so Louis shied away from proposing to her.



¹³ Guillaume Charette. 1976. L'Espace de Louis Goulet. Pemmican Publications. 199 pp.

How does this tie in with our direct Goulet ancestor Mathias? He would have arrived in St-Boniface 15 years after the Métis plight and the execution of Louis Riel. He was more than 10 years younger than Alexis' children and six years younger than Louis Goulet. He would have been only remotely acquainted with these distant relatives through church and community functions. His pious nature, agricultural background, and life as a simple business man in Saint-Boniface would have led to ties in the French community rather than the Métis one. Given that communities were small and sedentary until the mid-1800s, it is likely that the Goulets of l'Ile d'Orléan and La Beauce were aware of their relatedness through the generations. That is, Damase, Elzéar and Louis Goulet's grand-fathers may have known they were third cousins.