

Simon McGillivray (b. 1791-1840)

Simon was born on March 1, 1791, the son of William McGillivray and Susan (a Metisse). Simon married Therese Roy¹ circa 1816 at Isle-a-la-Crosse. They had eleven children. Theresa was the daughter of “Freeman Vincent Roy: one-time interpreter in the North West Company’s Fond du Lac Department.”²

A contemporary describes Simon:

Mr. McGillivray is a half breed, and the most accomplished & intelligent of any that I have met. His travels in Europe, and European fashions are ill assorted, I mean the relation of the first, and display of the latter, with the squaw wife and savage inmates that surround him. His wife tho’ a native is a half breed, upon recollection.³

Simon was named after his uncle, Simon McGillivray. He was the first born and oldest of the twins. He was the twin brother of Joseph; they were born at Ile a la Crosse at the North West Company post in the Churchill River basin, where their father was stationed. He was baptized at Christ Church (later Cathedral) in Montreal. The church register records:

Simon and Joseph, twins, sons of William McGillivray, in the Indian country. Born on March 1, 1791. Baptised October 3, 1796. Godfathers Joseph Frobisher and Alexander Mackenzie.

Simone served on the British side with the *Canadian Chasseurs* in the War of 1812⁴ and entered the service of the North West Company as a clerk in 1813. He was stationed in the Columbia district for some years and then served for a number of years in the Athabasca department and was still there in 1820-1821. He was made a partner of the North West Company before the union of 1821. During 1821-1822 he was granted a leave of absence on account of indifferent health. After spending the summer of 1822 at Fort William, he was appointed to the Lac la Pluie (Rainy Lake) district, where he remained during the next three years.

¹ Therese Roy was born circa 1800 in Minnesota and died November 1869, at Ottetail. She was the daughter of Vincent Roy and Josephte “Ogiwens.”

² A Listing of the North West Company Staff at its Posts, 1805, With Notations of Financial Standing and other Remarks, Masson Collection, MG 19-C1, Volume 55, Page 13, LAC.

Delafield, Major Joseph. *The Unfortified Boundary: A Diary of the First Survey of the Canadian Boundary Line From St. Regis to the Lake of the Woods*. Edited by Robert McElroy and Thomas Riggs. New York: Robert L. Cheney, 1943: 423; R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-1831*, Toronto: 1940: 71.

³ Delafield, *Unfortified Boundary*, 432 (entry of 5 August 1823).

⁴ The Fifth Battalion attracted was reorganized and reformed as a light infantry unit, the *Canadian Chasseurs* after 1814. Several of the flank companies which had already seen much service with the Light Battalions were consolidated into the Chasseurs, while the existing personnel of the fifth battalion were dispersed among the other battalions. The Chasseurs wore substantially the same uniform as the Voltigeurs and were brigaded with them in the campaign in 1814 which ended with the Battle of Plattsburgh.

He is mentioned in Morgan's diary of 1822 as being in the Rainy Lake district. He told Morgan's men not to trade there but when they ran out of provisions in mid December Simon sold them some flour, corn flour and rice flour.

From 1825 to 1827 he was in charge of the Severn district and was then transferred to Fort Resolution, Great Slave Lake, where he remained until 1830. During 1831 and 1832 he took charge at Fort Nez Percés, and later he was stationed in the New Caledonia district until his retirement in 1834. In June 1833 he undertook a voyage by land from Fort St. James in a north-west direction to Simpson's River.

Simon re-entered the Hudson Bay Company's service in the capacity of a clerk in 1836, when he was appointed to establish the Esquimaux Bay district at Hamilton Inlet, on the Labrador coast, where he remained until 1838. He again became a Chief Trader in 1837 and was later in charge of Chicoutimi on the Saguenay River. In 1839, however, he was ordered to return to the Athabasca district; and he died, on his way there, in the summer of 1840. Charles Denney's papers say he died one day from Bois de la Rivière and was buried at the Red River.

According to a copy of Simon's will now preserved in Montreal the bequests were:

- (1) to son Edward MacGillivray £200 Currency
- (2) to son Montrose MacGillivray £200 Currency
- (3) to son Napoleon Bonaparte MacGillivray £200 Currency
- (4) to son Frederick MacGillivray £500 Currency
- (5) to daughter Cecilia MacGillivray, now married to Mr. William Fletcher Lane, HBC clerk, £300 Currency
- (6) to daughter Mary MacGillivray, married to Mr. James Isbister, "an interpreter or postmaster" with the HBC, £100. She has already upwards of £200 in London in Isbister's name as a marriage portion.
- (7) to daughter Anne Auldjo MacGillivray £300 [marginal note in another hand, "now married to St. Germain at Red River"].
- (8) to daughter Susan MacGillivray £300 Currency
- (9) to daughter Theresa Frances MacGillivray £300 Currency
- (10) to Therese Roy, "the mother of my aforesaid Children" £25 Currency per annum
- (11) to natural son John MacGillivray "now living with Joseph Garreaux at Berthier", £50 Currency
- (12) to "my Sister Elizabeth Jourdain of Berthier", £50 Currency
- (13) to "Mrs. Francoise Boucher Widow of the late Jos. MacGillivray Esq." £25 Currency
- (14) to "my revered friend Miss Mary MacGillivray the sister of my lamented Father" £50 Currency
- (15) to uncle Simon MacGillivray Esq. of London a rifle, hanger and other weapons "all these articles were given to me by my said Uncle and by my late Father"
- (16) residue to be distributed among the children by the executors, George Simpson and John George Mactavish.



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