

History of the Riel River Lots in St. Vital

Occupation History:

The property was originally designated as lots 793 and 794 in the Hudson's Bay Company Register B records, later designated as lots 50 and 51. A fifty acre parcel of lot 793 (lot 51) was claimed and settled by Pierre Parenteau between 1835 and 1849. Lot 793 was to the north of lot 794. The lots ran from the Seine River on the eastern end to the Red River on the western end. See Parenteau on the 1843 census

In 1849, François Gendron acquired lot 793. Circa 1860, Gendron sold a 24 acre eastern parcel of this lot, identified as lot 50 post 1870 survey, to Benjamin Lagimodière, the brother-in-law of Louis Riel Sr. This portion comprised 24 acres at the south east end of Gendron's lot touching the Seine River. It was on this parcel that Benjamin built a water mill to grind wheat into flour. Louis Riel Sr. was a partner in this venture. Benjamin also built a home, storehouse and stables on the lot and farmed the land. It is speculated that both families lived here. At the time of Riel Sr.'s death in January 1864 they were living on the lot 793 (50) mill site.¹

The balance of lot 50, about 145 acres was sold to Joseph Landry on February 29, 1854. Indications are that both the Gendron and Landry families were living on the western end of the lot in the vicinity of present day Riel House.

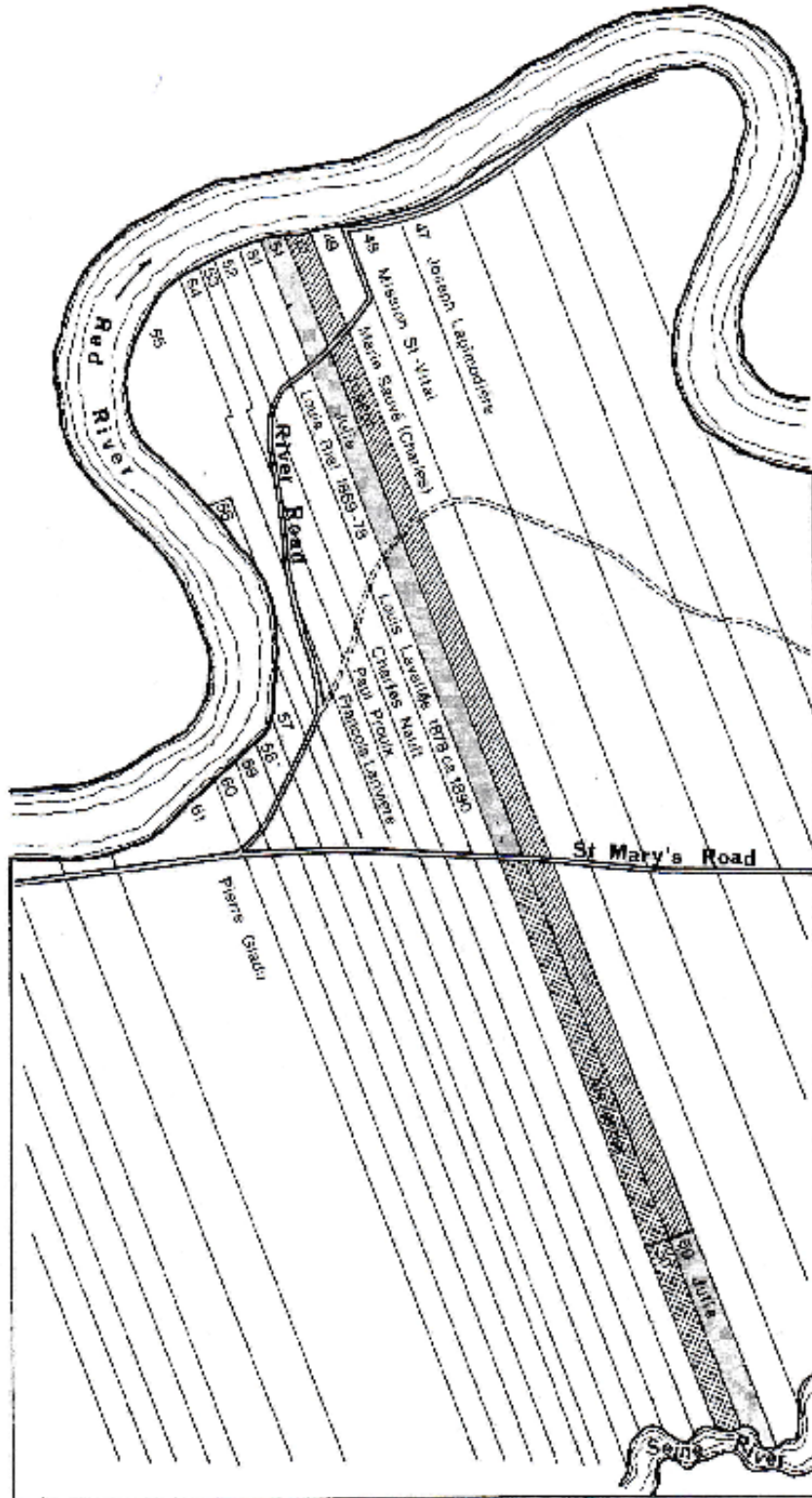
Sometime between Riel Sr.'s death in 1864 and 1867, Julie Riel and eight children moved to the west end of the lot along the Red River. This property (lot 793) was gifted to the Riels from Mgr. Tache who had purchased the land from Joseph Landry circa 1867. He made a declaration on October 30, 1882 that he had personally given the land to widow Julie Riel. Louis Riel returned from Montreal on July 26, 1868 and farmed the family land.

In 1868, Benjamin Lagimodière, Julie Riel's brother, moved to Rivière aux Rats (St. Pierre Jolys) and gave his lot 50 claim to his son-in-law Edouard Ellement dit Bode. They resided on this lot until 1871. Joseph Riel said that in 1871 Edouard sold the 24 acres of lot 50 to the widow, Julie Riel.

In 1875 Julie Riel made declarations for title of her land, lot 51, François formerly 793 and 794; the southern four chains of lot 794 having been purchased from Larivière by Louis Riel in 1869. This land is described as being south of Charles Nault and north of the land of Suzanne Marie Sauvé née Dease. Julie had also purchased lot 16 on the west side of the Red River from François Marion.

The Homestead Land Branch records confirm Louis Riel's claim to the southern four chains on lot 51 and other lands purchased by his mother. Lot 794 later the southern four chains of lot 51 (84 acres) was not part of the original family claim. It was first claimed by Charles Beauchamp and then by Antoine Desjardins in 1854.

¹ Due to flooding of their land on the Seine near the forks, the Riel family moved, obtaining accommodation with Prospere Ducharme who owned river lots 745 to 748. The dwelling was likely located on lot 746.



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Figure 6
 Subdivision of lot 51 by Julie Riel, 1884 - 90

In 1863 Desjardins had sold the lot to Francois Larivière, he occupied it for about six years and in 1869 sold it to Louis Riel. Julie lived there until her move to the Red River end of the lot and sold this parcel to Louis Lavalée. Because there was no paper work between Larivière and Riel, Larivière signed a quit claim deed to Lavalée in 1879. Louis Lavallée was Louis Riel's brother-in-law. When Lavallée moved to St. Vital from St François Xavier in late 1875 there was no suitable housing and Lavallée, his wife Octavie and daughter Marie lived with Julie Riel. The Lavallées lived on the property until about 1890 and were operating a store on this site. The family usually wintered in St. François Xavier after the death of his father (Pierre Lavallée) in 1879.

In the winter of 1885 there were 12 people living in Riel House, six adults and six children. Living in the home were Julie Riel, her son Joseph Riel and his wife Eléonore and a daughter Josephine born August 5, 1885. For at least part of the time Alexandre Riel and wife Eliza Poitras and their daughter Eléonore born April 1882 and son Louis born April 1884 and son David born in November 1885 (died April 1886); and daughter-in-law Marguerite (Louis Riel's wife) and two children, Jean and Angélique.

Between 1884 and 1890, Louison Lavallée and Octavie resided on the southern portion of lot 51 and Lavalée later farmed on lots 49 and 50. His house was at 569 Ste. Anne's Road. The family resided in this house until the 1960s. Lavallée's daughter, Henriette was married to Jean Marie Poitras in 1883, and they also resided on lot 51 in the 1890s.

Interview with Gerard Wilfred Berriault born 1932²:

Gerard is the son of Joseph Alcide Berreault and Bibiane Riel (b. 1911). His grandfather was Louis Alexandre Riel (b. 1884) and his great grandfather was Alexandre Riel (b. 1863).

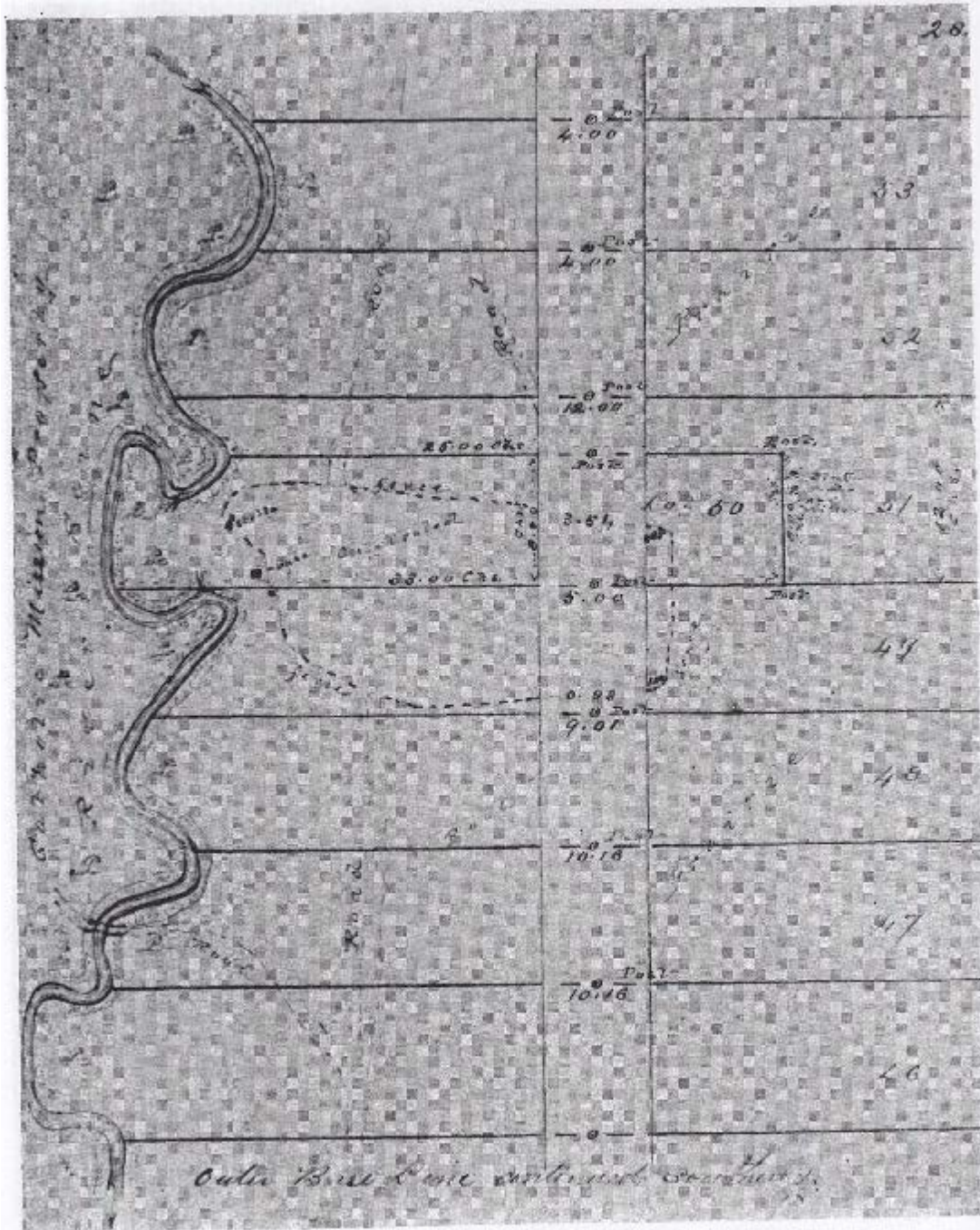
Alexandre and Marie Louise' son Louis Alexandre Riel was born 01/04/1884. He married Bibiane Marie Alexandrine Dufault, 6/04/1910, the daughter of Simeon Dufault and Marie Louise Gagnon. She died in either 1911 or 1912. They had one daughter, Bibiane Riel born in 1911 (actually lived in Riel House). Bibiane married Alfred Berreault and their son Gerard (Gerry) was born in 1932.

After his wife's death, Louis Alexandre Riel married Anne Vermette, the daughter of William Vermette and Mary Vandal on February 22, 1923.

Gerard Berriault says that as a youth they lived on his great grandfather's property on Ste. Annes Road. Bruce Road backed onto Alexandre Riel's property. Joseph Lavallée the namesake of Lavallée School lived on Bruce Road. Gerard attended the original two room Lavalée School. His uncle Wilfrid Riel also lived on Alexandre's property.

Gerard notes that Ignace and Alex Riel joined the army in World War II and the Riel brothers were introduced to the Queen while in England.

² Interviewed May 2016.



1. Survey of lot 50, PAM, G. McPhillips. Ntbk. 555, (1871) 1873, p. 28.

Neighbours:

In 1854, both the Gendron and Landry families were living on the western end of lot 51 in the vicinity of present day Riel House.

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Lot 48 was less than a mile north of Riel House. It belonged to the Catholic Church. In 1862 a chapel and school were established on the Red River side of the lot. The school was operated by the Grey Nuns.

Lot 49 was next door to the Riel family. This lot was occupied by Charles Sauvé (1859-1932) a cousin and supporter of Louis riel. He was the son of Joseph Sauvé and Marie Dease. Charles was married to Julie Larivière the daughter of François Larivière.

Hudson's Bay Company Register B records (title prior to 1870)

730 – 738 Sisters of Charity
750 – 752 Catholic Mission
739 Nolin, Augustin
741 Cire, Jean
743 – 753 Sisters of Charity
743 Lagimodière, Jean-Baptiste
743 Valiquette, Jean-Baptiste
744 Valiquette, Jean-Baptiste
745 -748 Ducharme, Widow
750 Sayhs, _____
751 Wellable, _____
754 Carrière, Audie
755 Carrière André
756 Rielle dit Irelande, Louis
756 Lapine, Baptiste
757 Flammand, _____
760 Laroque, Joseph
760 Marchand, Benjamin
761 Grandbois, Alexis
762 Daigneau, Joseph
763 Laroque, Joseph
763 Laviolette, Charles
763 Ray, Joseph
763 Fisher, Henry
764 Simpson, Sir George
764 Fisher, Henry
766 Laboucan dit Lafournaise, Joseph
769 Ryne, Michel
770 Thyfault, Basil
771 Ryne, Michel
772 Paternaude, Michel

773 Kittson, Norman W.
773 Marion, Francois
773 Sargent, Albert
774 Marion, Francois
774 Sargent, Albert
774 Kittson, Norman W.
775 McMillan, William
777 Bruce, Louis
777 Thyfault, L.
778 Dumont, Iacaste
779 Fisher, Alexander
780 Paternaude, Baptiste
781 Hamelin, Solomon
781 Houle, Antoine
782 Lapierre, Pierre
782 Houle, Antoine
782 Nault, Boniface
783 Hudson's Bay Company
784 St. Germain, Jacques
785 Larance, Jean-Baptiste
785 Lepine, Jean-Baptiste
784 Caron, Antoine
786 Larance, Jean-Baptiste
788 Caron, Antoine
788 Larance, Jean-Baptiste
788 Landrie, Joseph
789 Nault, Amable
789 Hamelin, Solomon
790 Nault, Amable
790 Contois, André
791 Laferte, Louis
792 Laferte, Louis
793 Landrie, Joseph (793 becomes lots 50 and 51)
793 Gendron, François (793 becomes lots 50 and 51)
793 Lariviere, François (793 becomes lots 50 and 51)
794 Desjardine, Antoine
795 Desjardine, Antoine
796 Lesperance, Joseph
796 Proulx, Paul
797 Hamelin, Solomon
797 Laberge, widow
798 Plouffe, Baptiste
798, Savoyard, Joseph
799 Savoyard, Joseph

Reference:

Payment, Diane. *Riel Family Home and Lifestyle at St.-Vital, 1860-1910*. Ottawa: Parks Canada, Manuscript Report Number 379, 1980.



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