Adam Family - Early Pioneers of Manitoba

Our Adam Family originated in Normandy France and genealogy records go back to 1625. The first Adam to come to New France or Quebec, Canada was Guillaume Adam dit Laramée around 1684. The descendants of our Adam family can proudly affirm that we come from one of the very first settlers in what would later be known as Canada. As of 2014 our Adam family can be traced back thirteen generations.

I feel some of the members of the Adam Family mentioned below deserve to be acknowledged either as early Manitoba pioneers and or at least as memorable individuals based on their contributions towards the growth and betterment of Manitoba including what they accomplished in their own respective communities. From their early arrival shortly after Manitoba was established in 1870 they faced countless trials of hardship. In most places where they established themselves roads were practically non-existent and modern conditions were unheard of. Communications was restricted to letters and postcards and a few perhaps visits by horse and buggy or buckboard wagon. I can only imagine the loneliness many of them suffered. These were very hard times indeed.

One has to again keep in mind that Manitoba was somewhat primitive insofar as conditions existed especially outside of the capital city of Winnipeg. As an example when these first four Adam men, three who were married moved to Manitoba Winnipeg only had a population of about 8,000 including only two known persons of Asian descent. And so it would seem that many of the Adam relations eventually numbering close to twenty at last count managed to establish themselves in similar businesses around the Dauphin - Ste Rose du Lac - Winnipegosis, Skownan - Toutes Aides, Crane River, Berens River, and other areas of northwest Manitoba. Not too many Manitoba families can attest to having so many in the same profession as Merchants and Educators contributing to the development and expansion of Manitoba. I have only mentioned a few members of the Adam family who worked as merchants. There are several other sons/daughters and grandsons/granddaughters who also operated stores in northwest Manitoba but too many to mention at this time without additional research. Many became school teachers as well prior to the turn of the century and in the early 1900s.

The trek to Manitoba all began at the bequest of the Catholic Bishop of Saint Boniface Adélard Langevin. Etienne Adam was a Municipal Councillor for the Parish St Antoine de Longueuil, Quebec. Etienne was asked around 1881 if any of his children might be interested in relocating out West from Montreal to the newly created Province of Manitoba. The Church felt that the French influence was falling behind during this period in Manitoba's history. These four brothers who made the move were Wilfred Adam, Isaie Adam, and twins Arthur Adam and Gedeon Adam.

1. Wilfred Adam the first brother was born 15 September 1861 in Longueuil, QC and he was the first to arrive in Manitoba in 1882. Wilfred Adam in the beginning was a school teacher at Waterhen River, Crane River, Duck Lake, and Skownan, Manitoba. After leaving his teaching post in 1889 Wilfred Adam then became a merchant and postmaster for a while for the newly created Town of Dauphin, Manitoba then known as Gartmore. Wilfred never married. It is said he was mentioned in one of Pierre Berton's novels when he lived in the NWT. Wilfred moved from Dauphin to Stewart, NWT. From his registered placer gold claims it shows that Wilfred in 1898 was working as a mining inspector in Dawson City, Yukon during the Klondike gold rush. In December 1914 he relocated to Los Angeles, California travelling by boat from Vancouver. Wilfred Adam died 28 July 1930 in Los Angeles, California.

Wilfred Adam, circa 1886

2. Isaie Adam (my great grandfather) was born on 31 April 1851 in Longueuil, QC. Isaie Adam came to Manitoba in 1887. Isaie came to teach school and to replace his brother Wilfred in Waterhen, Manitoba. Isaie later became a merchant as well operating a fishery on Lake Winnipegosis exporting to Winnipeg and the USA. Later Isaie began a ranch operation in his final years. Isaie Adam died 30 March 1922 and is buried in Toutes Aides, Manitoba. Isaie and his wife Aimee Adam nee Primeau had eleven children.

Isaie Adam, circa 1900

Isaie Adam and Aimee Primeau, first house built circa 1888
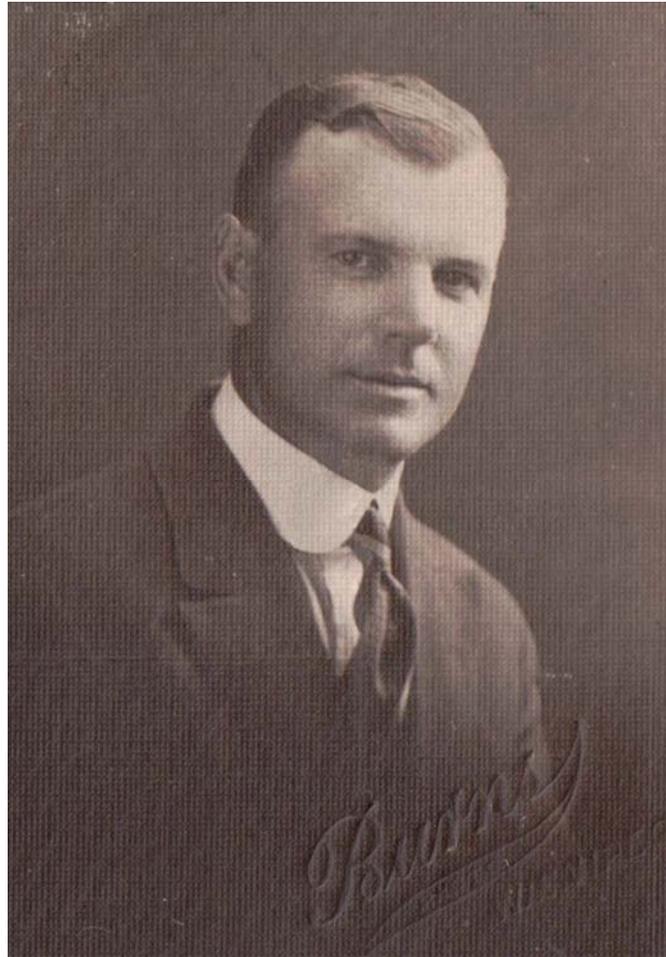
Adam Family - Early Pioneers of Manitoba

Antoinette aka Blanche Adam a daughter of Isaie Adam married two times. First to Rene Meysonnier in 1910 where together they owned and operated a dry goods store in Radville, Saskatchewan established just after they married. Blanche divorced and then married a fellow named Conrad Erickson in 1918 in Havre, Montana and they owned and operated at least four other dry goods stores of which two were in partnership with a Winnipegosis born nephew named **Charles Conrad Adam** in Montana and North Dakota. Blanche Erickson nee Adam died on 22 May 1965 and is buried in Scobey, Montana. She had no children. Charles Adam's son **Conrad Adam** born in Plentywood, Montana acquired a State Farm Insurance business and he operated that enterprise for 40 years in Kalispell, Montana until his retirement.

George Adam was a son of Isaie Adam. George was born 28 January 1879 in Montreal. George upon his arrival in Winnipegosis first took over the HBC store operation on McLeod's Island. He later became a trader and owned the store in Skownan, Manitoba. George married Ruth St Vrain who was born in Mora, New Mexico on 31 August 1915. The St Vrain family are quite famous in their own right throughout New Mexico and Louisiana. George and his wife Ruth Adam nee St Vrain had eight children. George Adam passed away on 7 October 1943 and he is interred in Toutes Aides, Manitoba. **Roy Adam**, a son of George Adam, subsequently took over the store operation in Skownan, Manitoba. Roy currently resides in Winnipegosis, Manitoba. **Marie Adam** is a daughter of George Adam. After her marriage to Arnold Luke she began working as a music teacher at the Ste Rose School for over 20 years.

Juliette Bretecher nee Adam is a daughter of Isaie Adam and she was born 20 July 1887 in Montreal, QC. Juliette, along with her husband Martin Bretecher including three other Bretecher's and their wives, are the original founders and pioneers of Toutes Aides, Manitoba.

Lionel H. Adam (my grandfather) is a son of Isaie Adam. Lionel Adam was born on 11 December 1882 in Montreal, QC. After the move to Manitoba in 1887 Lionel enrolled at the St. Boniface College around 1897. He became an honour student and majored in calligraphy and business administration. In 1908 Lionel married Marcella Adam in Winnipegosis where they subsequently opened up a dry goods store. Shortly thereafter Lionel Adam and his wife decided to move to Radville, Saskatchewan and there purchased a second dry goods store from his sister Antoinette aka Blanche Meysonnier nee Adam. Lionel and his wife Marcella's baby Marie Alice died in infancy and is buried in Radville, Saskatchewan. The Radville store did not last very long and they apparently opened up another store for a time in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. Eventually they moved back to Toutes Aides, Manitoba where another store was opened up in the 1920s. Later on Lionel Adam and his wife decided to start up still another dry goods store in Crane River, Manitoba around 1930. This store also operated as the only post office for the Métis community and Crane River Indian Reserve. Lionel Adam in addition to selling dry goods and other merchandise bought furs, seneca root, and fish from the locals. Because the roads were so bad at times they had to transport these goods by schooner to Winnipeg for resale in Canada and the USA. Lionel Adam eventually became fluent in the local native dialect of Saulteaux/Ojibwe as well as French and English. He was his whole life including his children consumed with politics. They loved nothing more than to have company drop by for some card playing. After Lionel Adam retired he relocated to Winnipeg and purchased and operated the Adam's Motel at 1500 Pembina Highway which he later sold. Lionel H. Adam died in Winnipeg on 27 September 1969. Lionel H. Adam and his wife had six children five who also became merchants in their own right. They are **Aimé "Pete" Adam**, **Rene Adam**, **Romeo Adam**, **Karl Adam**, and **Lucille Stoppel née Adam**.

Lionel H. Adam, circa 1922

Rene Adam the oldest son of Lionel Adam was born 9 July 1908 in Winnipegosis, Manitoba. Rene also worked as a merchant with his father Lionel in Crane River, Manitoba in the beginning. Rene married Anne Tremblay in 1928 and they later moved to Berens River, Manitoba where he opened up his own dry goods store which they operated for several years. Rene Adam in his middle years moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba and purchased the land and architectural plans for Motel 75 on Pembina Hwy which he eventually sold. Rene then applied and became the first police Harbour Master for the City of Winnipeg patrolling the Assiniboine and Red River on a daily basis. Rene held this post until his final retirement. Rene Adam died in Winnipeg on 6 May 1991. Rene Adam and his wife had two daughters. He loved playing and listening to "olde tyme" fiddle music.

Romeo Adam, the next oldest son of Lionel Adam, was born on 11 February 1911 in Skownan, Manitoba. Romeo also worked as a merchant for his parents in Crane River, Manitoba and later with his brother Pete Adam entered into a partnership in Ste Rose du Lac, Manitoba operating a farm machinery dealership. Some years afterwards Romeo due to poor health moved and established his own real estate business in Calgary, Alberta just prior to the real estate boom. Romeo loved singing and calling square dances and was a big supporter of the Calgary Stampede. Romeo died in Winnipeg, Manitoba on 18 April 2004. Romeo and his wife Lorraine

Adam Family - Early Pioneers of Manitoba

Adam nee Bilodeau had two children. There was another older son from Romeo's prior marriage who became a merchant jeweler in Brandon, Manitoba until his passing.

Aimé R. "Pete" Adam the third oldest son of Lionel Adam was born on 5 December 1913 in Radville, Saskatchewan. Pete Adam started off as a merchant in Crane River, Manitoba working for his parents. Aimé better known as Pete Adam later opened up a farming implement dealership business in Ste Rose du Lac, Manitoba along with his brother Romeo Adam in 1949. Pete Adam also tried his hand at ranching and farming around Dauphin, Manitoba. Pete Adam subsequently ran for and was elected as a provincial MLA in the Schreyer and Howard Pawley cabinets where he held several cabinet posts. He is responsible for introducing a Bill in the Manitoba Legislature which encouraged every town in Manitoba to put Christmas lights up and down their streets as well as flower gardens and planters during the summer months. Pete Adam and his wife Mary Adam nee Didychuk from Rorketon had four daughters. Two became government directors, one daughter owned and operated a business dealership, and one along with her husband owned and still operate a surveying business in Dauphin, Manitoba. Pete Adam also loved his fiddle and his olde tyme music. Pete Adam at the age of 96 passed away on 7 Jan 2009 in Dauphin. (see http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/adam_ar.shtml)

Lucille Stoppel nee Adam another daughter of Lionel Adam was born on 24 September 1919 in Toutes Aides, Manitoba. Lucille and her spouse Christian Stoppel purchased the store in Crane River from her brother Karl Adam and they operated this business for several more years. The store was eventually sold to a non-family member and it has now unfortunately burnt down. The infamous still unsolved murder of 1983 in St Boniface of 16-year-old Barbara Stoppel was Lucille's niece by marriage. Lucille loved singing country music and having company. Lucille died in Winnipeg on 5 January 2010. Lucille had four children.

Karl Adam (my father) was the youngest child of Lionel Adam. Karl was born on 14 August 1922 in Crane River, Manitoba. Karl Adam eventually bought the store in Crane River from his brothers Romeo and Pete Adam. Karl in addition to the dry goods business also introduced sport fishing, guiding and tourist cabins as well as some cattle ranching. Even the great New York Yankees baseball slugger and Hall of Fame recipient Mickey Mantle came to Crane River with some of his friends to try his hand at the great pickerel/walleye fishing back then. Karl Adam sold the store to his sister Lucille. Karl's passion in addition to politics was jokes and storytelling. He loved making people laugh. Karl Adam died in Winnipeg on 22 September 1966 at the young age of 44. Karl and his wife Anna Adam nee Bilodeau had four children including a little girl which passed away in 1947.

Crane River store and home, circa 1945.

3. Arthur Adam, the third brother from Quebec, was born on 4 September 1858 in Longueuil, QC. His twin brother was Gedeon Adam. Arthur first moved just West of Ste Rose du Lac, Manitoba around 1892. Later on Arthur Adam worked as a merchant primarily in the Toutes Aides area of Manitoba. One of Arthur's daughter's **Bernadette Adam** in 1915 became the first school teacher in Toutes Aides, Manitoba. Bernadette later rose to some prominence after she married Joseph Thomas an RCMP constable who subsequently became the head and personal security guard to Governor General of Canada Georges P. Vanier. The couple travelled and met leaders of countries all over the world as part of the Governor General's entourage. Two other daughters, **Honora Adam** became a school teacher in Waterhen during the years 1908-1909 and her sister **Marie-Louise Adam** also began teaching in Waterhen in 1908. Arthur Adam and his wife Eliza Adam nee Lanctot had between thirteen and sixteen children. Arthur Adam died 11 February 1939 in Ste Rose du Lac, Manitoba and he and his wife Eliza Adam nee Lanctot are both buried in Toutes Aides, Manitoba.

4. Gedeon Adam, the fourth brother from Quebec, was an identical twin to Arthur and he too was born on 4 September 1858 in Longueuil, QC. In 1893 Gedeon Adam arrived and began construction of his house in the town of Ste Rose du Lac. Gedeon then started a small confectionery store where he stayed which operated until around 1905. In 1911 Gedeon decided to turn his confectionery building into a boarding house. He then started renting one-bedroom suites similar to a hotel and this became the stopping place for many new settlers and travelers to the area. This same building was later turned into a general store around 1920 as a partnership with one of his daughters **Eva Houde nee Adam**. Gedeon Adam and his wife Noemie Adam nee Dupuis had eleven children. Gedeon Adam died on 11 May 1947 and he his wife and daughter Eva Houde nee Adam are all buried in the Ste Rose Cemetery.

Wilfrid A. Adam, a son of Gedeon Adam, owned and operated a store in Toutes Aides, Manitoba for a short time before moving to St. Boniface.

Adam Family - Early Pioneers of Manitoba

Eugene Adam, a son of Gedeon Adam, in 1938 took over the store ownership and operation from his sister Eva in Ste Rose du Lac. One of Eugene Adam's sons, **Ronald C. Adam**, also worked in the Ste Rose store for a time until acquiring another business in Edmonton, Alberta.

Adeodat (Dode) Adam another son of Gedeon Adam bought the store from his brother Eugene in the 1960's. In 1974 Adéodat sold it to his sons **Charles Adam** and **Paul Adam** until they retired. These last two brothers had the store enlarged but it is still the very same building today.

I have likely missed many more Adam relations who contributed in some fashion and apologize if some have been omitted inadvertently. As a footnote during my family research I began following an Adam family line which took me to the Casselman, Ontario area. There I discovered another Adam ie. Dyane Adam who came from a large family. Dyane including her husband attained very notable academic skills including Masters and Doctorate degrees. In 1999-2006 Dyane Adam was appointed Commissioner of Official Languages by former Prime Minister of Canada Jean Chretien. In addition she is a recipient of the Order of Canada. I was happy to discover that just like ours her lineage also goes all the way back to Guillaume Adam the first to arrive in Canada. I could not be more proud for what they all accomplished.

Ronald J. Adam
St. Pierre-Jolys, Manitoba
(204) 433-7983
adamr1@mymts.net