

Jean and François Xavier LaPierre (LaPier). 1885 Resistance Fighters from Montana.

Jean Lapierre was born on December 6, 1845 at St. François Xavier, the son of Antoine Lapierre and Catherine Gagnon. He married Marie Landry, the daughter of Louis Landry and Isabelle Chalifoux on August 28, 1865 at St. François Xavier. They had four children Pascal, Jacob Robert, Moses, and Elizabeth. The latter two children were baptized at Sun River, Montana.

John and his brother François accompanied Louis Riel from St. Peter's Mission to Batoche in 1884. François was born on March 19, 1850 at Assumption Parish, Pembina, the son of Antoine Lapierre and Catherine Gagnon. His mother, Catherine Gagnon was from the Red River Settlement and his father Antoine was from Pembina. Antoine LaPierre had been an employee of the Hudson's Bay Co. and had worked as a fisherman from 1825-28 and as a labourer from 1829-43. He had become a hunter on the prairies of the west by the time François Xavier was born. François married Marie Rose Swain (1862-1938), the daughter of John Swain Sr. and Marie Arcand¹ at St. Peter's Mission, Montana in 1879. Louis Riel and his family were living in Swain's home while at St. Peter's Mission.

François and his brother John accompanied Louis Riel to Batoche in 1884 and participated in the Metis Resistance of 1885. John lost an arm in the fighting.²

Marie Rose's father and her uncle, John also travelled to Batoche with Riel. Her uncle, John Swain was killed in the fighting. Their children were Therese, born 1878 at Cypress Hills and Thaddeus, born 1896 at St. Peter's.

For more information on LaPier the reader should see also: Rosalyn R. LaPier, "“Between Hay and Grass”: A Brief Examination of Two Métis Communities in Central Montana in the 1880s.” In William J. Furdell (Editor): *Proceedings of the University of Great Falls International Conference on the Métis People of Canada and the United States*. Great Falls, Montana: University of Great Falls, 1996: 105-120. In this paper, LaPier gives an account of her great-great-grandfather François Xavier Lapier born in 1850. Her family's story illustrates various facets of Metis history and culture, and focuses on the Metis community at St. Peter's Mission, and on the Metis settlement on the South Fork of the Sun River. Oral family history is combined with traditional research to provide a description of Metis cultural, economic, and social history.

¹ John Swain was the son of James Swain Sr. and Joseph Descoteaux. He was married to Marie Arcand (b. 1834) at St. François Xavier in 1850. Their daughter, Marie Rose Swain was married to Resistance fighter Francois Lapierre another man who accompanied Riel to Batoche in 1884. James' second marriage was to Elsie Nommé. Riel's family shared his house at St. Peter's Mission in Montana in the early 1880s. James and his brother John travelled to Batoche with Louis Riel in 1884. John was killed during the 1885 Resistance. Gabriel Dumont noted that James Swain was making bullets from the lead found in the cases of tea.

² Art, LaPierre, Montana Historical Society Archives, April 3, 1979, *Oral History, Little Shell Band of Chippewa*, p. 13.

Marie Rose Swain Sr. and François Xavier LaPierre (1850-1928) were both buried at Augusta Cemetery. Marie Rose and François had twelve children: Mary Therese (1878), John Rommell (1881), Gevevieve (1883), Rosy (1885), John (1885), Alfred Joseph (1887), Mary (1895), Edward (1896), Thaddeus (1896), Clemence Irene (1897), Alexander Albert (1900), and Emma Daisy (1906). New information provided by Stephanie Hohn, April 2023.

Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research Louis Riel Institute