

Alexandre Brien dit Breyan dit Brillant. (1850-1926)

Alexandre was born in Pembina, Minnesota Territory on 5 January 1850, the son of Antoine Brien¹ and Josephte Azure. Alexandre married Adelaide St. Denis in 1872 at Lebret and had four children.

Children of Alexandre and Adelaide:

- Marie Alphonsine, born June 29, 1873, Wood Mountain, died 1888 at Willow Bunch.
- Alexandre, born December 1, 1875 at Milk River. He married Mary Decouteau, then married Mary Jane Belgarde.
- Joseph G., born circa 1877, married Elise Parisien, then married Adeline Morin.
- Theodore, born circa 1879 at Hinsdale, married Rose Houle. (see note below).

Alexandre Sr. then married Helene Landry in 1882 on the Milk River and had 7 children. Alexandre and Helene lived principally at Willow Bunch. He passed away on 19 December 1926 in Medicine Lake, Montana.

Children of Alexandre and Helene:

- Ulric, born circa 1882.
- Lucy Seraphine, born June 4, 1881 at Willow Bunch.
- Patrick, born June 15, 1885, married Mary Jane Ducharme.
- Mitchel, born September 24, 1890, married Rose McGillis.
- Mary Ann, boern 1892 at St. Niches; married Michael Grandbois.
- Napoleon, born circa 1897.
- Robert, born circa 1903 at Malta.
- Josephine, born September 21, 1903 at Willow Bunch.

¹ Antoine Brien was born on June 15, 1820, the son of Antoine Brayant (b. 1790) and Genevieve Grant. He married Josephte Azure, (b. 1826 at Baie St. Paul) the daughter of Antoine Azure and Charlotte Pelletier on January 9, 1849 at Pembina. Under the Pembina and Red Lake Chippewa Treaty of 1864, Antoine received scrip certificate # 490 in 1882. The couple had thirteen children:

- Alexandre, b. 1850, married Adelaide St. Denis, then married Helene Landry.
- Josephte, b. 1851, married a Lucier.
- Antoine, b. 1852.
- Theodore, b. 1854, married Marie Rose Breland.
- Marie Josephine, b. 1858, married Ambroise Ouelette then William Allard.
- Adele, b. 1859, married Joseph Ladoceur, then Edouard Sansregret.
- Joseph, b. 1860.
- Gregoire, b. 1862, married Nancy Cardinal.
- Jenoir, b. 1868, married Mary Anne Lucier.
- Isaie, b. 1871, died 1871.
- Marie Ste. Anne, b. 1872, died 1874 at Lebret
- Marie Eloise, b. 1874 at Qu'Appelle, died 1874 at Lebret.

- Harris, born circa 1904 at Willow Bunch.

Alexandre and his family were enumerated on the Rocky Boy Reservation in 1917:

- # 71 Alexandre Brien, born east of Belcourt N. D. age 75.
- #72 Ellen Brien, born east of of Belcourt N. D. age 62.
- #73 Napoleon Brien, born on the Flathead Reservation, age 20.
- #74 Robert Brien, born at Malta, Montana, age 14.
- #75 Norrie Brien, born St. Xavier Mission, age 11.

Notes: From “Summary under the Criteria and Evidence for Final Determination Against the Federal Acknowledgment of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.”
October 22, 2009.

Theodore Brien was born about 1879 in Malta (along the Highline) in Phillips County. His father was Alexander Brien, born in the Turtle Mountain region of North Dakota around 1840 (sic). His mother Adelaide St. Denis was born in 1853. Her place of birth was unknown, but may have been in St. Boniface or St. Francis Parishes. The Brien family was intermarried with the Azure and Pelletier families. These three families had connections to the Métis settlements of St. Boniface and St. Francis Parishes in Manitoba, and in Pembina County in North Dakota. In the 1860’s and 1870’s, members of all three families were documented on Pembina scrip and annuities, and during the 1880’s and 1890’s were recorded on Turtle Mountain Reservation censuses. The St. Denis family was more closely connected to St. Norbert and St. Boniface than Pembina, but they did trace to a Jerome family which had one member identified as a Pembina Band of Chippewa mixed-blood on annuities in the 1860’s.

Theodore Brien’s father was listed on the 1850 Pembina County census, but he spent most of his time moving between there and the Turtle Mountain region until the early 1870’s when he married his wife at Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan. They had four children between 1873 and 1879, one born in Saskatchewan, two in Montana, and one in an unknown place. Adelaide Brien died in 1880 in Valley County, Montana. Theodore Brien’s father married his second wife Helene Landry, originally from the Turtle Mountain region, in 1880 on the Milk River in Montana. Between 1882 and 1903 they had 11 children. The first four were born (1882-1890) in North Dakota near Turtle Mountain, six of the last seven (1892-1903) in Montana, mainly in Valley or Phillips County, while one was born in Saskatchewan. There are many descendants in the modern membership through both wives.

After Theodore Brien was born, his father, grandfather, and their families continued to move back and forth in the region of the Turtle Mountain Reservation and the Milk River in Montana, with excursions into Saskatchewan. Some portions of the extended Brien and Azure families went to the Turtle Mountain region, while some eventually settled in Montana. The descendants of this Brien line in the modern membership come from either Theodore Brien or just two of his half-siblings.

Theodore Brien's family probably spent much of the 1890's roaming around Montana, most likely with periodic stops at the Turtle Mountain Reservation. He married his wife, Rose Houle, on the Crow Reservation in Southern Montana in 1912. She was born in St. Joseph in 1896. The Houle Family was originally connected to the Métis settlement areas at Pembina County and St. Francis Parish, and portions of it were later documented at the Turtle Mountain Reservation.

Between 1912 and 1927, Theodore Brien and his wife had six children. The first was born in North Dakota. The next two were born in 1915 and 1917 on the Crow Reservation in southern Montana. A third was born in 1923 at Wolf Point Reservation in north eastern Montana in Roosevelt County. The fourth was born in 1924 at an unknown location. The final child was born in 1927 in Sweet Grass, Toole County, in north central Montana on the Canadian border, but baptized in Hingham in Cascade County on the edge of the Front Range near Great Falls. One year later, Theodore Brien died in Malta in Phillips County along the Highline. His wife Rose remarried a non-Indian. She had one child in 1936 in Havre in Hill County along the Highline. She died sometime after 1936 in the same place, and has only a few descendants from her second marriage in the modern membership.

The Federal census data from 1900 to 1930 showed that Theodore Brien or his close family members were found in Malta (1900) in Valley County along the Highline, then in Wilder (1910) in Fergus County, then back to Malta (1920), and finally (1930) in Box Elder (1930) in Choteau County, Harlem in Blaine County, and Wolf Point in Roosevelt County, all of which were on the Highline.

Most of these settlements were made up of large populations of non-Indians of varying ethnicities. In most cases, the Brien relatives were living among small collections of extended family members, sometimes among small groupings of other people of Métis ancestry. Yet the number and makeup of the Brien family members and relatives, and the Métis living near them, changed dramatically from one census year to the next. The available evidence did not show the migration and settlement pattern of the Briens was group based. Rather it indicated the migration and settlement was very individualistic and widely dispersed.

Scrip Application

Brien, Alexander; heir of his deceased children: Marie Alphonsine, born: June, 1872 at Cypress Hills, died: 1888 at Willow Bunch; Lucie Seraphine, born: 4 June, 1881 at Willow Bunch, died: 1893 at Willow Bunch; address: Malta, Montana; claim no. 1617; father: Alexander Brien (Métis and deponent); mother: Ellen Landry (Métis).



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell

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