

Zacharie Blondeau (1856- 1939)

Zacharie was born on December 19, 1856 at Fort Qu'Appelle, the son of Simon Blondeau¹ and Francoise Desjarlais. Zacharie married Florence Desmarais, the daughter of Michel Desmarais and Josephthe Rochon on February 16, 1877 at Lebret. They had four children: Marie Rose (1878), Ernestine (1880), St. Anne (1883) and Zacharie (1885).

The Lebret Community history book records the following story about Zacharie Blondeau:

MOCCASINS ALWAYS WORN BY BUFFALO HUNTER OF VALLEY

-- written by J. Zenon Larocque, 1939

The death recently of 81 year old Zacharie Blondeau, at his home at Fort Qu'Appelle, removed the last of the great buffalo hunters of the Qu'Appelle Valley. His last hunt was recorded 60 years ago in the hills to the west of Moose Mountain and northeast of the present site of Kisbey.

It is doubtful if there remains in the Qu'Appelle Valley more than four or five of those famous hunters of the past. They were men who, if not armed with rifles, could still get their buffalo by riding their ponies and using stone axes to stun the beasts — and, if this could not be done, steal up on the great animals and hamstring them, or down them with bow and arrow. Efficient hunter Blondeau was efficient in the best-known ways of killing buffalo in the old days. His exploits still form the topic of story telling, wherever the Metis gather for their weekly visits during the long winter evenings.

Zacharie Blondeau was born 81 years ago, at the Fort of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, about six miles south of what is now Qu'Appelle and known in the earlier days as Troy. His father, Simon Blondeau, moved to the Qu'Appelle country more than 90 years ago from the Red River Valley; and, for years the family were faithful servants of Archie McDonald, then Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Qu'Appelle, who moved the Headquarters to what is now Fort Qu'Appelle.

Incidentally, interested persons have recently attempted to located the site of the first Fort of the Hudson's Bay Company (in the district), but were unsuccessful. In recognition of the services of the Blondeau Family to Mr McDonald, one of the Avenues in Fort

¹ **Blondeau, Simon. (b. 1827)**

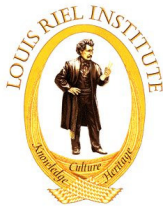
Simon Blondeau was born on the Pembina River, the son of Louis Blondeau and Marie Louise Laframboise dit Franche. Louis Blondeau worked as an interpreter for the North West Company at Fort des Prairies in 1804 and at Cumberland House in 1815-16. He was present during the aftermath of the Battle of Seven Oaks. Simon Blondeau married Francoise Desjarlais, the daughter of Antoine Desjarlais and Marie Catherine Allery, in 1850 at St. Boniface. Their son John was married to the Augustin Brabant's daughter Caroline. Simon worked for his father-in-law, Antoine Desjarlais at Fort Desjarlais in the Souris River Valley in the 1850s.

His nephew Louis Blondeau Jr. was one of the men who manned the barricades on the La Salle River to prevent the entry of Canadian government officials in October of 1869.¹

Qu'Appelle was named Blondeau when the original townsite was mapped out and the Avenue still bears that name. It is also worthy of note that Simon Blondeau and his wife, Francoise (nee Desjarlais), celebrated their 75th Wedding Anniversary in the summer of 1905 in the little Church at Lebret (Saskatchewan); where Father Hugonard celebrates mass and attended the complementary function for Mr and Mrs Blondeau. In those days, gifts to jubilarians were not diamond rings; nor radios, silverware or any the present day glamorous outbursts. A well-filled hamper containing eatables was presented to the couple; and, it generally took two men to handle the hamper, for it contained enough food to last for the celebration which was never shorter than three days.

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— from the Lebret Community History Book (pp.593-594)...



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