

From on-line genology: The St-Gelais Families of North America
(<http://www.familyorigins.com/users/s/t/g/Bob--Stgelais/FAMO1-0001/d1335.htm#P73>)

GASPARD PRADET⁽¹⁾ was born about 1680 in Poitou, France. He died before 1730. He was a "Boulangier" = Baker. from Baptism record of Jean Simon Pradet & Notes of Bernard St-Gelais). GASPARD (1) PRADET. The estimated date of birth and date of marriage for Gaspard Pradet is based on the date of birth of his sons André who was buried at the age of 12 on 25 May 1715, and, Jean-Simon who was born & Baptized on Dec 13, 1708. We know that GASPARD PRADET died before 1730 as his son Jean-Simon declared this fact in his marriage contract dated Feb 1730. We know that GASPARD PRADET & his wife ELIZABETH CHAIGNEAU (Chaignon) had several children. To date 7 of their children have been found. They are:(#1) André, born about 1703. André's burial record indicates he was buried at St. André de Niort, Deux Sevres, Poitou, France on May 25, 1715. Andre was 12 years old when he died. (#2) Elisabeth Pradet born about April 1706 & died when she was 18 months old on Oct 12, 1707.(#3) Jean born about July 1707 and died when he was 3 months old on Oct 21, 1707. (#4) JEAN-SIMON PRADET dit SAINT-GELAIS & dit LAFORGE "THE ANCESTOR' of all the SAINT-GELAIS of North America was born Dec 13, 1708. (#5) Jean-Bernard Pradet Born Jul 6, 1710, died 4 yrs old on Sept 29 1714. (#6) Felix or (Philippe) Pradet Born Sept 10, 1718 at Frontenay, R. R. France and died Aug 11, 1719 when he was about 11 months old. And, (#7) Pierre Pradet probably born abt 1720, was married on Nov 27, 1747. I have a copy of Jean-Simon's baptism record which clearly states that JEAN-SIMON PRADET was born on 13 December 1708. That same record indicates that GASPARD PRADET' s occupation was "boulangier" which is the French word for "baker". Most of my adult life, I thought that I might be related somehow to the Aristocratic St. Gelais family of the 16th and 17th century, The St. Gelais family that occupied the Chateau de Cherveux in Poitou, France or other Illustrious St. Gelais of the period, like Mellin de St. Gelais, a Court poet etc . I carved out a wooden plaque of the "St-Gelais Family Crest" over 25 years ago, and to this day it is still hanging on my living room wall. Since working on my genealogy for the past few years, I find this more and more NOT to be the case. Moreover my oldest paternal ancestor found is GASPARD PRADET, mentioned above, and to this day, not one link either by blood or marriage to the SAINT-GELAIS families has ever been established. There is indeed a Chateau de Cherveux in Poitou which was occupied by the SAINT-GELAIS Family. (The Chateau de Cherveux has a wonderful French-English website) and I have indeed located a village in France called SAINT-GELAIS. It is located very close to the Chateau de Cherveux in Poitou. GASPARD PRADET and his children are from the area of St. André-de-Niort, Deux -Sevres in Poitou, France. The village of SAINT-GELAIS of which I speak is in the same area. The only logical conclusion is.... that the Village of St-Gelais must have been named after the St-Gelais family that occupied the Chateau de Cherveux and that the Pradet family must have been from the village of St-Gelais and that would explain why Jean-Simon Pradet dit St. Gelais and dit Laforge was given the "dit name" SAINT-GELAIS by his military regiment, which is the surname used by most of the Pradet descendants to this day, myself included. Being somewhat of an unusual name, I am sure it just did not pop out of the blue the day it was given to him. In conclusion, I am

just as happy and proud to have descended from a humble and brave soldier, the son of a baker, as if I had descended from a member of the Aristocratic St. Gelais family. Here is a brief history of the Village of St. Gelais. It is in French and hope to translate it soon.

Origine et Histoire

L'église de Saint-Gelais fut construite à partir de 1109 par Raoul de Lusignan. Celui-ci avait un fief en ce lieu et vénérât particulièrement Saint-Gelais, successeur de Saint Hilaire, évêque de Poitiers au IV^{ème} siècle. Il dédia cette église prieurale en l'honneur de Saint Gelais. Enfin, le village avait une identité avec un saint patron dont la fête serait célébrée tous les 26 Août. Les pèlerins de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle, descendant de Parthenay, trouvaient en haut de la Cueilie Saint Jacques recueillement en notre église et repos aux Jacquetières.

En 1530, 10 ans seulement après que Luther ait brulé la bulle du pape, un bourgeois de Saint-Gelais nommé Martin, fut condamné comme Luthérien par le Parlement de Paris, c'est dire la rapidité de l'extension du Protestantisme en Poitou. En 1544, Calvin séjourne à Poitiers et ses disciples convertissent une grande partie des Poitevins à la Réforme. En 1569, 1574, et 1585, Louis de Saint-Gelais, fidèle d'Henri de Navarre, fut assiégé par trois fois dans son château de Cherveux par les troupes catholiques. En 1598, devenu Henri IV, le Roi essaie d'apaiser les combattants en donnant le droit de cité aux protestants par l'Edit de Nantes. En 1635, les protestants rejetés des cimetières catholiques reçoivent à Saint-Gelais un cimetière à part au Bourg Neuf. Craignant que les corps des descendants des fondateurs de l'Eglise devenus protestants ne soient exhumés et jetés à la décharge publique, les protestants de Saint-Gelais retournèrent la dalle recouvrant l'escalier de la crypte. La croix de Saint-Gelais étant en dessous, la crypte passa inaperçue au moment des exhumations exigées par les catholiques, et les révolutionnaires de 1793 n'eurent pas l'idée d'y descendre pour récupérer le plomb des cercueils pour en faire des balles. En 1681, le Roi envoie ses dragons, pour convertir les protestants par la force. Nos registres paroissiaux témoignent de 436 conversions sur environ 800 âmes.

En 1791, l'église et le prieuré sont vendus comme biens nationaux.

En 1925, l'église fut inscrite à l'inventaire supplémentaire des monuments historiques.

En 1945, elle fut classée comme monument historique.

A partir de 1962, de grands travaux ont été entrepris, et leur achèvement s'est fait en 1998.