

## 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#P2>)

**JEAN-SIMON PRADET\ST-GELAIS**<sup>(1)</sup> was born on 12 Dec 1708 in St. Andre de Niort, Deux Sevres, Poitou, France. He was baptized on 13 Dec 1708 in St. Andre de Niort, Deux Sevres, Poitou, France. He died on 12 Jun 1797 in Baie St. Paul, Charlevoix, P. Q.. He was buried on 13 Jun 1797 in The Parish Cemetery, Baie St. Paul, P. Q.. He was also known as Simon, Jean-Simon Pradet Singelais. He was also known as Jean-Simon Pradet dit Saint-Gelais & dit Laforge. He was also known as Symon Pradet dit St. Gelet (Death record). JEAN-SIMON PRADET (dit) ST. GELAIS & (dit) LAFORGE, Son of GASPARD PRADET & ELIZABETH CHAIGNEAU (CHAIGNON) IS THE FIRST ANCESTOR BORN IN FRANCE TO SETTLE IN (New France) CANADA. HE WAS A SOLDIER.

### THE ORIGINS OF THE SURNAME SAINT-GELAIS

Surnames beginning with "SAINT" The compound is sometimes fused or blended into one word, These surnames are almost always names of localities. Some are names of nobles. Some can be ancient nicknames. Sometimes " Saint" is ironically placed before a name given at Birth or Christening. Ancestors of the families Saint-Gelais, Pradet, & Bradet, are originally from the area of Poitiers, in Poitou, France. Born on the 12th & Baptized on the 13th of December 1708 at St. André de Niort, Deux Sevres, Poitou, France, Jean-Simon Pradet (dit) roughly translated , means (aka) (also known as) Saint-Gelais and (aka) Laforge was the son of Gaspard Pradet and Elizabeth Chaigneau (Chaignon). When Jean-Simon was about 17 yrs old, he enlisted in the military company of "Monsieur de Rigaud" to participate in the defense of the "Young Colony". He was given, at that time, the surname " Saint-Gelais." It was a common practice among soldiers to attribute amongst themselves a nickname or what is known in French as a "Sobriquet" upon entering the military ranks. It is also known in French as "le Bapteme du Regiment", (The Christening from the Regiment). These nicknames or "Sobriquets" are selected somewhat in the same manner as many surnames, that is to say, after a place of birth, geographic characteristic of an area where the individual lives, or lived, and also at times, the type of work or trade in which the individual was involved. And, at times, even a physical or psychological trait that the individual possessed.

### THE MARRIAGE OF JEAN-SIMON PRADET dit ST-GELAIS and dit LAFORGE.

On February 20, 1730, the "Ancestor", JEAN-SIMON, married at St-Pierre parish, Ile d' Orleans, GENEVIEVE CHARON,(Charron) daughter of Jean Charon (Jean-Baptiste Charron) and Genevieve Dupile. Jean-Simon continued to exercise his craft as a soldier, and participated in many campaigns of the "Rigaud Company" against the Iroquois Indians and the English. The family Pradet dit St-Gelais & Dit Laforge was constantly on the move from L'Ile d' Orleans to Baie-Saint-Paul, then to Beaumont, and then to Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatiere, and to Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies, to finally return to settle in Baie-Saint-Paul. JEAN-SIMON settled on a small farm where he owned and operated a "FORGE". Some records suggest that he may have been a blacksmith while in the military. That is how the other surname was acquired (dit) (aka) "LAFORGE". JEAN-SIMON PRADET dit SAINT-GELAIS and dit LAFORGE'S death record has been found. He is listed on that record as SYMON PRADET dit ST. GELET, and, it indicates that he died June 12, 1797 in Baie St. Paul, and was buried the next day in the parish cemetery. According to Tanguay Vol 6, page 439, Jean-Simon was the father of 11 children.

(See \*Note#1) His sons, JEAN-MARIE-FRANCOIS and \*JEAN-BAPTISTE-FRANCOIS remained in Quebec and adopted the surname SAINT-GELAIS. Then, his son LOUIS-SAMSON-DAVID married in Detroit and left many descendants in the United States. Louis-Samson-David and his descendants adopted the surname "LAFORGE".

Today the majority of Jean-Simon's descendants use the surname Saint-Gelais and can be found in Charlevoix, Matane, and in The Saguenay- Lac- Saint-Jean area of Quebec. There are also the Bradets and Bradettes a variation of Pradet and some Laforges residing throughout Canada and the United States particularly in the New England area. As for the Pradets a few can be found in Montreal.\*NOTE #1: The Genealogy of the French Families of the Detroit River Region 1701-1936 Volume I by Rev. Christian Denisson lists Peter (Pierre) Laforge, husband of Geneveva Canada as son of John Simon Pradet & Geneveva Charon. I have also found another Genealogy record indicating that Louise Laforge, married to Joseph-Marie Hamelin in 1764 is the daughter of Jean-Simon Pradet & Genevieve Charon.

\*NOTE #2:(Translated from sections of the French version by Robert St- Gelais descendant of Jean-Simon Pradet-Saint-Gelais-Laforge). Eleven of Jean-Simon's children appear in Tanguay's Vol VI, page 439. Child # 3, Jean-Francois, b 1734, Married to Marie-Victoire Potvin. He is generally referred to as JEAN-MARIE-FRANCOIS, and child # 7. " Francois", Born 1743, married to Suzanne Caroline Duchesne. He is generally referred to as JEAN-BAPTISTE, or JEAN-BAPTISTE-FRANCOIS. I shall refer to child # 3 as JEAN-MARIE-FRANCOIS , and child #7 as JEAN-BAPTISTE-FRANCOIS in this Genealogy. From JEAN-SIMON'S known children, 5 died shortly after birth. The remainder have been fairly well accounted for with the exception of child # 6 , LOUIS- MARIE-JOSEPH, Baptized at Ste. Anne-de-la-Pacatiere 26 Oct,1740. Louis-Marie-Joseph may have died young, as to date, no other record mentions him other than his birth. As to why Jean-Simon was GIVEN the Surname SAINT-GELAIS, Well..... I HAVE INDEED LOCATED A VILLAGE IN FRANCE, IN POITOU ON THE SEVRE RIVER CALLED SAINT-GELAIS. The Village of Saint-Gelais is located just a few Kilometers north, northwest of Niort, France in Poitou on to the Sevre river.The City of Niort, France has a street running through it called Rue St. Gelais. There is in this same area a Chateau de Cherveux which was occupied by the Aristocratic St-Gelais family. It is 70 KMs East of La Rochelle or 60 KMs west of Poitiers or about 20 KMs north of NIORT which is just a few KM from the village of SAINT-GELAIS. For more information about The Chateau de Cherveux that was occupied by the St-Gelais family, visit their French-English website. The village of Saint-Gelais in France also has a website which has the history of the village of Saint-Gelais. It is in French. It is very likely that the Pradet family was from the village of St. Gelais, and it would account for the surname SAINT-GELAIS that JEAN SIMON PRADET received at "Le Bapteme du Regiment". Being somewhat of an unusual name, I am sure it did not pop out of the blue the day it was given to him. Here is the website for the Village of Saint-Gelais.  
<http://perso.libertysurf.fr/foyergelasien/photo.htm> Some information on the Surname Saint-Gelais, was received from: The Center of Genealogical Research of Quebec. (Centre de recherches généalogiques du Québec)