

## ST. GERMAIN DIT GAUTHIER-COOROUGH HOUSE

Help the Prairie du Chien Historical Society restore the St. Germain dit Gauthier-Coorough House.



Once upon a time, French-Canadian houses, like the St. Germain dit Gauthier house, stretched along the Mississippi River and French Town Road in Prairie du Chien. Now, all but a handful has been demolished. One of the survivors is this small log house at the corner of Fifth and Boilvin Streets.

The St. Germain dit Gauthier house is located in the former Main Village of Prairie du Chien. It is constructed of hewn logs set horizontally and joined at the corners by dovetails. Within its structural details are several elements consistent with a method of French-Canadian construction called *piece sur piece a que d'aronde*: the length of the house is a multiple of thirteen feet, the hewn logs are on average five inches wide, and Roman numerals are present on most timbers in the house.

The St. Germain dit Gauthier house was constructed on Main Village Lot No. 7 as delineated in the 1820 Isaac Lee map. Main Village Lot No. 7 was confirmed to Jean Baptiste Caron

as the lot had been occupied since 1790. Jean Baptiste Caron came to Prairie du Chien from Montreal in the employ of Berthelot and Rolette, Prairie du Chien fur traders.

The next occupant of Main Village Lot No. 7 was Guillaume St. Germain. He was from Yamaska and engaged to work for Forsyth, Richardson & Company at Michilimackinac for three years. At the end of his engagement, St. Germain remained in the *pays d'en haut*. He moved to Green Bay where he married Magdelaine Brunet and then arrived at Prairie du Chien about 1825.

Three generations of the St. Germain dit Gauthier family occupied the house and property until 1890 when the property was sold to Nina Dousman McBride. Mrs. McBride first rented and then sold the house to Charles Gremore. He moved the house in 1900 and relocated it to its present location. George Coorough purchased the house and property from Charles Gremore in 1902. The house

stayed in the Coorough family until the relocation of the residents of the Prairie du Chien 4<sup>th</sup> Ward in the 1980s.

The St. Germain dit Gauthier-Coorough house was one of three homes that were not demolished or relocated as part of the relocation overseen by the Corps of Engineers and US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The house has stood vacant for many years. The City of Prairie du Chien will give the house to the Prairie du Chien Historical Society. Under the Society's guidance, the St. Germain dit Gauthier house is being placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It will then be restored and open to the public.

***Funds are greatly needed for the restoration of this early house. Please consider donating to the project. All gifts are tax-deductible. Thank you.***

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