

**« Virginie Fisher, daughter of Georges Fisher, mother of Marie de Savoye. »
(Source : Lawrence J. Barkwell - "Metis Dictionary of Biography")**

Fisher (Tourond), Virginie (1859-?)

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Virginie was born at Qu'Appelle in 1859, the daughter of Georges Fisher and Émelie Boyer. Virginie lived with her parents in the parish of St. François Xavier, part of the Red River settlement, next to the family of Joseph Tourond and his wife Josephte Paul.

In 1875, just before her 16th birthday, she married David Tourond, the eldest son of Joseph and Josephte. They began to raise a family and lived in the parish of St. François Xavier until 1882 when, as part of the large Métis move westward, they, along with their extended family, to Tourond's Coulee, south of Batoche.

Virginie gave birth to nine children during her marriage to David, however, only three, Marie, Alexandrine, and Urbain, survived to adulthood. Her first five children were born in the Red River Settlement. Joseph was born in 1876 at Baie St. Paul, but only lived for about six weeks.

Marie was born on November 20, 1877, at St. François Xavier and died on April 28 1959 in Edmonton, Alberta at age 81.

Marie Joseph Pierre was born on November 20, 1877, at Baie St. Paul, but died in March of 1882 at age four.

Jean was born in 1880 at St. François Xavier, but died in 1882.

Henry Alfred was born in 1881 at St. François Xavier and died in 1894 at age 13.

Virginie's next children were born in the parish of St. Antoine de Padoue near Batoche. Jean-Louis was born in September 1883, but died in July of 1884.

During the fighting in the 1885 Resistance, Virginie moved with her family to a tent between the village of Batoche and the South Saskatchewan River, after leaving Tourond's Coulee.

It was in this tent that Virginie gave birth to her child Marguerite Alexandrine, on April 30 1885. An oral history describes the events of the birth:

Virginie gave birth to a child, Alexandrine, on the night of April 30 or the morning of May 1, 1885 in a tent situated on a slope near Batoche's Crossing. She was along with her mother-in-law (Josephte Tourond). So frightened were they that they did not dare have some light which could have attracted the enemy's attention. However, they finally decided that some lighting was necessary. Such were the tragic circumstances surrounding the child's birth

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After 1885 Virginie gave birth to Urbain. Tragically, Urbain was killed in action on October 26, 1917, having enlisted in the Canadian Army. He is memorialized in the Menin Gate (Ypres) Memorial Cemetery in Belgium.

Her daughter, Virginie Augustine was born in 1887, but died in February of 1901 at Lebret, Saskatchewan.

During the Battle for Batoche, or rather, several days later, the women changed places constantly to avoid enemy fire. They hid behind trees or in damp holes. After the battle, while walking around the booty collected by the enemy, Virginie Tourond recognized one of her suitcases which contained the very clothes she needed. She tried to grab it. Some soldiers brutally shoved her back. But since she spoke English very well, she argued with them and answered them sharply. An officer arrived and asked what was going on. She explained to him that she had just had a baby; that she did not have any clothes to change into; and that this suitcase which belongs to her contains what she needs. The officer immediately gave it to her and apparently, he severely punished the soldiers who had been rude to her.

Her husband, David Tourond, was a member of Riel's Council (Exovedate) at Batoche during the 1885 Resistance. David Tourond did not surrender right away. He wanted to turn himself in at Prince Albert. He met Father André who was returning from Prince Albert, and who told him: "Don't turn yourself in; go to the other side of the border."

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Thus, he was not tried for his resistance activities having escaped to Montana. They then took up residence at Turtle Mountain, North Dakota. The family later returned to Batoche, and David died there on September 11, 1890.

Subsequently, Virginie married Napoléon (Leon) Hamelin and they relocated to File Hills, in the Qu'Appelle area, close to Virginie's parents and brothers. Virginie had one more child, a daughter Alice born in 1893, with Leon Hamelin.

In her own testimony to the Scrip Commissioners, on June 2, 1900, she indicated:
"Neither my husband David Tourond nor myself received treaty but we received scrip in Manitoba after the first rebellion. I am now the wife of Leon Hamelin. My living children by my first husband David Tourond are Marie (22 yrs), Joseph Pierre (dead), Marguerite Alexandrine (15 yrs), Virginie Augustine (12 yrs), and Urbain (10 yrs). Also Joseph who died in Manitoba when one month old. My husband David Tourond died in 1890. Alfred was thirteen years old when he died. Jean Louis was nine months old when he died. He was buried at St Laurent Sask. I have sent for a certificate of his burial but have not received it yet. My father's name was Georges Fisher. He is dead. Émelie Boyer was the name of my mother. I was living in the Territories and went there to be delivered of my children. My husband was a freighter on the plains."

Further, Virginie says:

"My daughter Marguerite Alexandrine is now living at Touch-wood Hills attending school and will appear before the Commission at Touchwood Hills."

In her statement in her daughter Marie's scrip application, Virginie dictated the following to the Scrip Commissioner on June 6, 1900:

"My husband was freighting in the North West at the time Marie was born and before. My father and our family lived and freighted in the North West. I remained at St. François Xavier to be de-livered of my children, and on such an occasion Marie was born "

Further insight into Virginie's life can be found in her dictation to the Scrip Commission on June 18, 1900:

“Joseph was six weeks old when he died. He was buried at Baie St Paul. Marie Joseph Pierre lived for four years and was buried at St François Xavier. I was living at White Horse Plain Baie St Paul from the time Marie Joseph Pierre was born until he died. My husband David Tourond was freighting to Prince Albert in the summer and lived with me at Baie St Paul in the winter “

The 1901 Census shows that Virginie and Leon Hamelin were living at File Hills with their children Marie, Alexandrine, Urbain, and Alice.

Another entry in the 1901 Census indicates that Alexandrine, Urbain, and Alice were attending a small Catholic residential school in April of that year.

The 1906 Census indicated that Virginie was living with her husband Leon Hamelin and children Alexandrine, Urbain, and Alice, next to her younger brother William and his family.

Virginie lost Alexandrine in March of 1909 from septicaemia (a severe infection), acquired during the birth of her only child, Helen Adolphe.

The 1911 Census shows Virginie and Leon living together with a daughter.

Virginie appears in the 1916 Census, living with Leon, her son Urbain already in the military, and granddaughter Helen.

Virginie lost Urbain in 1917, when he was killed in action in WWI, and lost Leon in 1918.

There is no known record of the fate of Virginie herself, nor of her youngest daughter Alice Hamelin.