

Guinerius Smulan was born on April 20, 1873, the third son of Ole Larson Smulan and Tale Torrisdatter Hamsaas on the Smulan farm outside of Sparbu, Nord Trønderlag. He was confirmed at the Mære Church (a historical medieval church) on September 30, 1888 at the age of 15 years. He attended a country school, possibly the Mære Agricultural School – a short distance away. A story from the Sparbu Bygdebok tells of all the barns and stables being burnt to the ground on a Tuesday in August 1877 because a child had gotten hold of matches and was playing in a straw-shed, while his mother prepared dinner. (Guinerius would have been four years old??)

In 1893 at age 20, he set sail for America with his older brother, Lorents...they were difficult to find listed on the ship's records as they are listed as Guinerius Olson going to Quebec and Lorents Smaalán going to Grand Forks leaving Sparbu on the Dominion Line Tasso. Lorents had sold the Smulan farm after his father died in 1889 so he had to pay for his own ticket but his paid for other brother, Ole, who had left Norway for America in 1882 Guinerius's ticket in America. They sailed from Liverpool on the SS Oregon 1882 (there were 2 ships called the SS Oregon) on May 19, 1893 and arrived at Quebec City May 31, 1893. On that ship listing they are listed as G. Olsen and L. Smolan and are both listed as labourers. In the 1900 US census for Grand Forks County, Blooming Township, North Dakota, Gust (as he became know as in the US and Canada) is working for Ole Smulan's neighbours. Ole Smulan is married at this time with four children as listed on the census.

In 1900 Gust and Lorents, who had been working as hired hands, moved to Bottineau, North Dakota in the Turtle Mountains and on July 1, 1903 Gust Olsen Smolan receives his Land Patent for a piece of land in Bottineau County – one quarter section in Township 163-N Range 74-W of the 5th Meridian. On March 10, 1904 Gust applied for a homestead on N.E. ¼ of Section 24, Township 19, southeast of the Dubuc area of Saskatchewan (then known as the Northwest Territories) in Canada. In 1904 his bride to be, Sarah Branvold came to Dubuc and lived with her sister until Gust and Sarah were married April 24, 1905 at the home of Margot and Ole Venaas. Gust became a naturalized British citizen on April 4, 1907 (Canadian citizenship did not come into effect until 1947). Gust had proved up his homestead and filed for a patent on April 22, 1907.

Gust and Sarah engaged in mixed farming growing wheat, oats and barley after the difficult job of breaking land with a horse-drawn breaking plow. Other hardships endured were prairie fires that lit up the entire sky and extreme weather. There was frost in July of 1907 that blackened everything – no crops that year. There were bad snowstorms that made it necessary to follow a rope from the house to the barn as well as hauling grain seven miles to town with horses in sub-zero temperatures. There were late developing varieties of grain, rust, drought and insects to deal with. Then too, grain was sold on the open market and if it was not sold at the right time, the entire railcar could be lost for storage. Their herd of cattle helped supply food and bring in cash as many cows were milked and cream shipped to market, but often freight on the cattle took most of the money they should have brought in. Gust, with the help of his hired hands and his young

sons, grew some very good crops despite the setbacks, and was known as the “Wheat King” of the Larson District, which aroused some jealousy among his neighbours. In 1928 he purchased his first tractor, a Rumley Oil Pull and Rumley Separator.

Gust and Sarah had twelve children, all born at home with a midwife in attendance. Sarah would remain in bed for at least ten days after the births. Only ten of the children grew to adulthood, as one died accidentally at age three and one was stillborn. They all attended Larson School, the older ones completing grade 8, as they were needed to help on the farm; the younger ones going on to Dubuc High School. Four of them went on to Normal School and became teachers. The two youngest boys served in the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War.

The big house was built in 1918 for about \$3000.00 and ended up being built partly on the sod and partially dug basement as the contractors had to get back to Winnipeg before Gust could get the basement dug completely. The entire family attended church when services were held in Larson School and a visiting pastor was around. The family was Lutheran with strict taboos – no dancing, no card playing, no alcoholic beverages but they were happy and self-assured in these beliefs. Gust served on the Larson School Board and on the Lutheran Church Board, keeping books in the Norwegian language. The family enjoyed Christmas concerts, skating parties, skiing down “Larson’s Big Hill”, ball games on a Sunday afternoon or often visits to Crooked Lake for church picnics and fishing, Dubuc Sports Day once a year or just visiting with the neighbours. In 1922 Gust purchased a 490 Chev touring car with oval curtained windows and then in 1927 a Chandler, making transportation easier and faster. About the same time, he bought an older model “T” for driving in the mud. Favourite family dishes included roasts, meatballs, lutefisk, romegrøt, lefse, prune pudding and fruit soup. Music was important and the family would gather around the organ and sing hymns together as the children played organ and guitar.

In the spring of 1929 at the age of 56, Gust died of pneumonia, leaving Sarah to raise the children and manage the farm. She often did without so her children could have things and get an education. Sarah died in 1949 at age 67 and both she and Gust are buried in the Dubuc Village Cemetery.

The picture below is taken about 1911 of Gust and Sarah and the four oldest children, the youngest being the boy sitting on his mother’s knee and who had an accident and died at age three. My father was one of the youngest ones.



1932 Smulan family by car



1937 Family Reunion at Homestead



Copy of 1911 Portrait Sarah & Gust with Olger, Elmer, Thelma, Stella



Cousins from Canada USA and Norway 1989



Glen Ivy Orbin Olga Lily Stella Thelma Elmer



Raymond & Ingrid Smulan Family



Smulan - Simle Family in front of old house 1913