

Waiting For The Day That Never Comes:
The Story of a Canadian War Veteran and Métis Hero from Turtle Mountain
Francis Godon, Sr.

The International Peace Garden was set up on the Canada / USA border in 1932 as a symbol of ongoing friendship, with Manitoba to the north and North Dakota to the south. The “Like No Other Place On Earth” Garden is in the heart of the Turtle Mountains, where the north and south are drawn together in many other ways than by the vision of the Garden. The Turtle Mountains are the home to the Métis, one of the three Aboriginal people recognized in the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982, and the Michif relations who made their home in the United States of America, now members of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

The waters of the Turtle Mountain lakes are the home to many ancient beings, like the turtles who enjoy the hot summer sun perched on a fallen tree or beneath the sands of the lake during the winter months. This northern glaciated plains eco-region of rolling hills, wetlands, large lakes and forest cover of birch, oak, elm and ash attracts a variety of big game species, including moose and deer and abundant small game and waterfowl. Amongst its human inhabitants, both past and present, were the Métis who came into the area from Red River as part of the North American fur trade traveling the waterways and later on their Red River Carts, many of French descent - Morin's, Bellgard's, Cardinal's, Trottier's, Gosselin's, Larocque's, St. Pierre's, Goddin's, Parenteau's and many more prominent Métis names. On the Canadian side of the border, the settlements of Boissevaine, Deloraine, Lake Metigoshe and outlying areas mark the territory of the Métis, and in the case of Francis Godon Sr, is home to his trappers cabin and line, his most private and personal space where he continues to practice his traditional ways.

The Métis, with their Michif (Cree / French) language, their powerful fiddle tunes, the infamous Red River Jigging, the brightly colored flower beadwork clothing on hide, the fringes, the sash and the pride of many languages from the many relations born into and created by the fur trade economy along the river systems which ran from the ocean to the plains and back again. The Red River Carts, the Buffalo Hunts, the Fishing and Game provisioning upon which the nations of Canada and the United States were built. These free traders, “the people who owned themselves”, the Michif, are the relations of the many Métis families who reside today on their traditional territories, now overcome by settlement and development, and among them a Canadian War Veteran and Métis Hero, Francis Godon Sr. It is through his story that we learn our history. Who was it that said, the only thing new under the sun is the history that remains to be told?

In this documentary, we capture a glimpse of the Canadian story untold and we begin to unfold the vision of the International Peace Gardens, where the steel girders of the New York Trade Centre are laid in memory of 911, a reminder that peace will prevail when the will is there to hear the stories of all. In this documentary, the story of Francis Godon Senior, and other Métis men who served in the Canadian Army during WWII and other battles, to protect world peace, the story of men who quest for justice and honour and recognition for service to all. This is the story of a man who served with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, who faced the emotional and physical suffering of a World War II Métis Veteran's ordeal during D-Day, June 6, 1944, and the strong Métis pride that kept him alive in the German POW concentration camps for the eleven months that followed their capture by the German 12th SS Panzer Division on June 8, 1944. This is a reflection of what it means to be a Métis man serving in the Canadian Forces, what it meant to fight for his country, his homeland, and now to have to fight his country's government for recognition of his Métis identity and nationhood. It is about living and praying and waiting for the day that never seems to come.