

## Guillaume “William” Godon (b. 1900)

William Godon was the son of Jerome born in May 15, 1866 at St. Agathe,<sup>1</sup> and Marie Madeleine Lilley. She was the daughter of James Lilley (b. 1841) and Marie Catherine Perreault dite Morin (b. 1848). Her parents were married on February 7, 1863 at St. Francois Xavier.

William married Florence Amyotte (b. 1905), the daughter of Louis Amyotte (b. 1867) and Philomene Mary Lafountain.<sup>2</sup> Louis Amyotte was the son of Jean-Louis Amyotte (b. 1839) and Isabelle Decoteau.

In about 1920 William (Willie) Goodon left his home at Sandy Lake. At this time he was about 20 years old. He left on foot with nothing but a rifle in his hands and no specific idea where he was headed. Eventually he turned up on Turtle Mountain, at the door of Louis Lee Racine’s home where he stopped to ask for a drink of water. Intending to visit for an hour, his stay stretched into a month. Figuring that Turtle Mountain was a good place to live, Willie and Louis travelled to Sandy Lake to bring back some of Willie’s family. They made the trip by horse and covered wagon, which took three days to travel on the way back. Returning to Turtle Mountain they were accompanied by Willie’s mother Madeleine and two of his sisters, Alice and Roseanna (Rosna).



Willie’s three female family members found husbands at Turtle Mountain. In 1923, Willie’s mother Madeleine married Louis Racine Sr. Rosna and Billy Gosselin got married in 1931 and Alice married Louis Racine’s son, Louis Racine Jr.

After bringing his mother and sisters to Turtle Mountain, Willie Goodon lived in North Dakota for several years. There he met his wife, Florestine Vilneauve (nee Amoyette) and had three children. After 1926 they returned to Turtle Mountain to live and had four more children. Their descendants still live in the area.<sup>3</sup>

Guillaume Godon (photo courtesy Will Goodon)

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<sup>1</sup> Who was the son of Joseph Godon and Caroline Larocque. Caroline Larocque (b.1843) was the daughter of Joseph Larocque<sup>1</sup> (b. 1819) and Sophie Marchand. Sophie was the daughter of Benjamin Marchand and Marguerite Nadeau.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Philomene Lafountain (b. 1900) was the daughter of Pierre V. Lafontain and Isabel Delonais.

<sup>3</sup> Teyana Neufeld, “Stories from Turtle Mountain Elders,” *Vantage Points Vol. II*, Brandon: Turtle Mountain-Souris Plains Heritage Association, 2010: 9. Mary Conway, personal communications, 2012.

**Guillaume Godon and Florence Amyotte** had the following children:

- Frances (Frank), born 1924.<sup>4</sup>
- Norman, born 1926.
- Ernest Godon, born 1927.
- Roger Godon, born 1929.
- Edward Godon, born 1932.
- Irwin Godon, born 1933.
- Annie Celia Godon, born 1936.
- Alex Godon.

William Godon's namesake and grandson Will Goodon, son of Irwin (b. 1933) won a significant Metis rights case in 2009:

On January 8, 2009 Will Goodon won a five-year legal battle against the Manitoba government with a landmark court ruling on Métis hunting rights.

Provincial court Judge John Coombs ruled on the case of Will Goodon, who was charged with hunting without a license after he shot a ring neck duck near Turtle Mountain in October 2004.

Goodon argued his Manitoba Métis Federation harvester card was all he needed — but Manitoba Conservation officials disagreed and Goodon was charged under the Wildlife Act.

Métis, unlike status Indians and Inuit, do not have an automatic right to hunt, the province argued, since they had not established hunting was a traditional occupation of their ancestors outside Manitoba's original 1870 "postage stamp" boundaries.

The judge didn't buy that argument.

"Many community witnesses [some related to the accused] gave evidence about their ancestors hunting at the Turtle Mountains from the 1800s to the present day," the judge said in a 28-page ruling.

"I have determined the rights-bearing community is an area of southwestern Manitoba that includes the City of Winnipeg south to the U.S. border and west to the Saskatchewan border. This area includes the Turtle Mountains and its environs."

Jean Teillet, a Métis Lawyer who represented Goodon gives the following summary:

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<sup>4</sup> Frank's World War II military experience is written up in A. Brian Cyr; "Metis Veterans of Manitoba: From Buffalo to Battlefields." Winnipeg: Manitoba Metis Federation, 2010: 84.

In Goodon, the court held that the historic rights-bearing community includes all of the area within the present boundaries of southern Manitoba from the present day City of Winnipeg and extending south to the United States and northwest to the Province of Saskatchewan including the area of present day Russell, Manitoba. The community also includes the Turtle Mountain area of southwestern Manitoba.

The trial judge agreed with the experts who testified at trial that the Métis were highly mobile. He used the word “transient” to describe the Métis and noted that they led a “nomadic life” on the prairies returning to established settlements such as Pembina and Red River (present day Winnipeg) for marriages, baptisms and to bury their dead. There was constant interaction between the families in various settlements. The trial judge noted in particular that the Métis community included such settlements as Pembina, Fort Ellice, Fort Brandon, Oak Lake, Red River, etc. He agreed with the experts that mobility was a central feature of Métis culture. The trial judge found that the historic Métis community in southwestern Manitoba was more extensive than the Métis community described in Powley.<sup>5</sup>

### **Metis Scrip:**

Joseph Godon (b. 1839) received Halfbreed Scrip under the 1863-64 Red Lake and Pembina Chippewa Treaty:

Gadon, Joseph (1838) [1850 U.S.]

Godon, Joseph [R.L. Scrip #391]

Minnesota Territorial Census, Pembina, 1850, family 42/42, born Red River Br. National Archives, RG 75, Entry 363, "List of Persons to Whom Scrip was Issued under Red Lake & Pembina Treaties...." Halfbreed Scrip No. 391 issued May 8, 1874, under the authority of Secretarial Decision, May 6th, 1874, delivered May 8, 1874 National Archives, RG 75, Entry 364, "Treaty of April 12, 1864, Red Lake and Pembina Half-Breeds," Scrip Stubs, Number 391, dated May 8th, 1874, 160 Acres, delivered May

Louis Godon also received Halfbreed Scrip under the 1863-64 Red Lake and Pembina Chippewa Treaty.

**Goddon, Louis** [R.L. Scrip #362]

Minnesota Territorial Census, Pembina, 1850, family 42/42, born Red River Br., Hunter

National Archives, RG 75, Entry 363, "List of Persons to Whom Scrip was Issued under Red Lake & Pembina Treaties...." Halfbreed Scrip No. 362 issued April 21, 1874, under the authority of Secretarial Decision, April 18, 1874, delivered April 21, 1874

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<sup>5</sup> Jean Teillet, “Metis Law in Canada: 2011”: p. 20

National Archives, RG 75, Entry 364, "Treaty of April 12, 1864, Red Lake and Pembina Half-Breeds," Scrip Stubs, Number 362, dated April 21, 1874, 160 Acres, delivered April 21, 1874, issued to Louis Goddon, delivered to Agt. Douglass

husband of: Gadon, Isabella (1820), born Red River Br.

issue: Gadon, Louis (1836), born Red River Br.

Gadon, Joseph (1838), born Red River Br.

Gadon, Marguritte (1840), born Red River Br.

Gadon, Cathrin (1843), born Red River Br.

Gadon, Gelbert (1846), born Red River Br.

Gadon, David (1849), born Red River Br.

Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell with contributions from Mary Conway.

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