

Our Family Story  
From Sydney's perspective

We are connected to the Metis people. I also just learned we are connected to the Algonquin and Ojibwa people.

Because it makes me sad to think about it, we don't talk about our connections much at home. Mama is slowly putting the pieces together, talking to me about the people we are connected to and what kind of culture they had. The more I learn about them, the sadder I feel because they had to hide who they were. Maybe one day I will be ready to hear everything about them and the culture we've missed out on.

This is the story about my heritage from my Nanny's point of view...

**A Tribute to My Family**

September 30, 2022

This is a piece to a puzzle which I call 'My Family'. Recently, my oldest daughter began questioning our family background. So, through her dedicated research on the internet and talking to family members, she came upon a few small but very heartwarming and intricate pieces, which I now know to be a large part of our family history.

My grandmother and her 3 siblings were able to dodge the wrath which was unfolding around them. It was through the actions of her parents and grandparents that they avoided the repercussions of the Residential Schools.

"They were French" if anyone questioned them. French was learned and spoken at home. Despite their true Indigenous background. No one was to speak of the truth... under any circumstances, or face being taken from their home. They blended in as farmers in Tilbury, Eastern Township of Kent County in Ontario.

Their true identity was kept locked away in their minds. This was due to the preaching at all church pulpits... "We will take the Indian out of the Indians, even if we have to beat it out of them." I am told that the Nuns became responsible to carry this task out, as it was determined that they needed to have something to do to hold their place in the church.

The true secret is that my Great Great Grandfather is Illinois Algonquin and Saultaux Ojibwa descent with a mix of French Canadian, better known as Metis of Turtle Island.

However, my mother (RIP) did a little research of her own in her younger years, and was able to leave little hints for us without saying a word. Throughout our home, and in her house to this day you can find turtles in almost every room.

Mom was part of the Turtle Island Clan of North America, and this is a little piece of "Our Family Puzzle". As well as my small Tribute to my roots...

Sydney Sereda & Verna Oke-Lafontaine