

**THIS IS A LETTER TO RESPOND TO THE MATTER OF
VELDON COBURN'S ALLEGATIONS TO SUPPORT THE REMOVAL OF
MICHEL McDONALD
AS AN ALGONQUIN ROOT ANCESTER IN WHICH I CHALLENGE ON
BEHALF OF MYSELF AND MY DESCENDANTS**

SUBMITTED BY:

**BRENT WHETUNG
STONEY LAKE, ON**

March 27, 2023

Boozhoo, Members of the Algonquin Tribunal:

Brent Whetung, I am of the Fish Clan, specific Turtle and registered under the Indian Act as an Indian in the Registrar in Ottawa.

In 2013 my family attended a semi-judicial inquiry in Pembroke Ontario regarding a significant challenge to my Great Grandfather Michel McDonald by requesting to have him removed as an Algonquin Root Ancestor. It is my understanding that a “beneficiary criteria” regarding this matter was used and extensive research was also conducted by a team of individuals including Joan Holmes and Associates. As a result, it was determined by the Hon. James B. Chadwick QC and upon review of the evidence and probabilities that Michel McDonald shall remain as a root ancestor. The dispute was closed as the challenge had no merit.

It has now come to my attention that certain individuals have once again challenged the authenticity of documents and are requesting the removal of Michel McDonald as a root ancestor they may now be participating in a double jeopardy action. This action to my knowledge is a result of recent changes to the beneficiary criteria set forth in an effort to remove Michel McDonald once again. This in my opinion is an invasion of our rights as individual descendants as well as unwarranted harassment by multiple challenges. It is apparent that similar arguments that are being presented by Mr Veldon Coburn, Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa are similar in nature to those in 2013. Upon review of his submission, I do not see any “new” or “relevant” arguments to support the removal. It should be noted that at no time has my family presented false documentation or lied about our Algonquin ancestry prior to, during or after the hearing. We were always taught about who we are, where we came from and what our responsibilities are as First Nation people.

It is also very unfortunate that this newly created Tribunal is relying solely on colonial documents of Canada that historically can be proven to be riddled with systemic racism, cultural genocide and discriminatory practices. It should be understood by the Tribunal that the role of Canada, was to rid the country of the problematic “Indians” and it appears that this process is being continued to be carried forward today in similar fashion towards my family.

May I bring to your attention that nowhere in this current challenge is the record of my Oral History that was very much a part of the submissions to Hon. James B. Chadwick. At that time, I did challenge Joan Holmes of Joan Holmes & Associates on the validity of oral history and admissibility and that oral histories should be placed on equal footing with other kinds of historical evidence. It does not appear that the Veldon Coburn report places any emphasis on oral history and therefore may not be inclusive to *Delgamuukw v British Columbia 1997* and

Mitchell v Minister of National Revenue 2001 upheld and defined by the Supreme Court of Canada.

My grandmother Elizabeth (Eliza) Ellen McDonald was born in Canonto Ontario and was the daughter of Michel McDonald. Throughout our time together my grandmother referred to herself as Algonquin and French. Her first language was fluent Algonquin, second language was French and she later learned English after marrying my grandfather, Edgerton Ryerson Whetung, Band #76 of the Mud Lake Reserve, now known as Curve Lake Reserve. My grandmother often talked about her father and referred to her relative as “the Indians over there” referring to the Ottawa area. Those “Indians” over there, came yearly to our home on Stoney Lake to visit and keep our family history alive. Grandma Whetung often spoke of her father (Michel McDonald) being an Algonquin Indian and how he was beaten throughout his childhood and early teenage years since because he was an “Indian” and taken in by a settler family caused him to be treated horribly.

My grandmother was raised a strong Catholic and converted upon her marriage to Protestant with my grandfather. My grandmother never described her father as being from the Province of Manitoba and I resent anyone who refers to such. It also appears that the Coburn reports makes assumptions regarding Michell McDonald and a specific example is references to Sarah Whiteduck and her relationship to our family. It should also be noted that the honesty and integrity of the Canadian enumerator must strongly be challenged as Canada displayed cultural genocide throughout its legislative bodies and history. It should also be understood that colonial records are not always a reliable source and are settler-centric in both design and in their execution. These colonial forms of record keeping were also not created to accommodate First Nation traditional ways of life which often resulted in ignorance and erasure of the true historical record.

I understand Mr. Coburn disagrees with my position on colonial documents as he states we must not challenge the “honesty and integrity of the enumerator.” Mr. Coburn also place heavy emphasis on the 1871 Census and places a lesser emphasis or just plainly ignores the 1881 Census that clarifies Michel McDonald was born in Ontario. We are not Cree or Metis as Mr. Coburn suggests. I do not believe my grandmother lied about her identity as she was a proud Indian and raised a proud Indian family regardless of the discrimination she faced in her life.

Given that oral history has been omitted in the Coburn report and the courts have ruled in favour of oral history and given that the Coburn report remains inconclusive with no new compelling evidence, I am requesting that Michel McDonald remain on the Algonquin Root Ancestry, my grandmother’s oral history as passed down be accepted and that the process of determination by the Hon. James B. Chadwick QC be upheld.

Sincerely,

D. Brent Whetung

