

Minutes of 1800 – cont'd

This is a continuation of the Minutes of 1800. As mentioned in May's newsletter, in September 1800 there was a Council Meeting held in the community that spanned 8 days. Again, this meeting was held to try to come to some resolution of the troubles that had been dividing the community at that time.

Reprinted in this edition of the newsletter is day 2 of the Council Meeting.

Proceedings of a Council held at the Bay of Quinte beginning on the 2nd and ending on the 10th of September 1800, in the Mohawk Village

September 4th:

Present:

The same as yesterday.

Captain Claus desired that as Captain Isaac had been heard patiently yesterday, he hoped and expected Captain John should be heard without noise or interruption. Captain John then addressed the meeting in the following manner:

Brothers - I salute you all and am happy to see you assembled in this place.

Brother - You said you was ordered by General Hunter to enquire into the circumstances of this Bad report, which I am very sorry there was occasion for. Now, Brothers, as you are come, we hope you will do us justice, and do the best you can for the good of us all.

Brother - I hope you will be attentive and do the best you can to ease my troubled breast and from you I expect justice.

In 1775, when the troubles broke out between our Father and the Americans, we joined the British and left our Country. Having been worsted, by the Americans, the different Tribes of the Mohawks went to different parts of the Country, some to Montreal and some to Niagara. I do not wish to detain you too long, but wish to come to the point. Our great Father thought a sufficient quantity of Blood had been spilt and, therefore, made peace with the Americans. When peace was made we were told we were to go to Nova Scotia, but not liking that situation we went to General Haldimand 27th May 1783, who told us if we did not like Nova Scotia, we might go to any of the unsettled Lands in this Country.

We, therefore, came to this spot, where we now are. We returned to Quebec and informed General Haldimand we had found this place and he expressed his satisfaction that we had found a place that suited us, and that we and the Loyalists who would be among us would live happily together. General Haldimand also said he would send a surveyor to run out the Lands for us that we might know what was ours and he sent Major Holland with us for that purpose, and the General added, you have now your choice in picking out such Lands as you like and he hoped we would always live happy and comfortably upon it.

The Tribe now here fixed on this place, and another Tribe fixed on the Grand River. Colonel Claus wished to know what Indians were going to the Bay of Quinte and what to the Grand River. I told him I meant to set myself down at the Bay of Quinte, among the Loyalists, and Captain Brant at the Grand River. I informed Colonel Claus I was not fond of going to the Grand River owing to their being so near to the Americans and told him I thought I could not live in peace so near these people and made choice of this place as being at a greater distance from them. The Americans are like a Worm that cuts off the corn as soon as it appears. Sir John Johnson and Colonel Claus told us on leaving LaChine they were happy we were going to a place we had appointed for ourselves. They hoped we should be happy and live in peace.

When we quit LaChine, Capt. Isaac and his family thought proper to quit us and go to the Grand River to live there. On the 10th May 1784, Sir John Johnson and Colonel Claus desired us all to come together, but Captain Isaac paid no attention to what they said and he separated from us and went to the Grand River. Sir John Johnson and Colonel Claus also told me to guide my people in a proper manner and as we were going to a Country where there were other people (Messassagues) we ought to cultivate their friendship and live happy together.

We arrived here on the 22nd May and found a great number of the native Messassagues at this place who were very glad to see us and we were happy to be met in so friendly a manner. We then held a Council with the Messassagues and informed them our great Father had purchased these Lands for us, and that we had come to sit down on them. I told them the King's people were also coming to inhabit this Country which the Messassagues had sold to the Crown. We told them also that the people who were coming to settle among us were bringing Cattle and other stock and we hoped they would not disturb them or do them any damages. I also added, "We shall be great friends, & I hope you will not forget what I say".

On the 25th August 1785, Colonel Claus wrote to me from England that he was happy we were so comfortably settled and hoped we would abide by our Religion and not give it up on any account whatever; I then assembled my people and read them his Letter. At this time all the people of the Village were friends. I told them to continue in friendship and live in the manner we then did, and we should be happy and contented and they assured me they would do so and we were in peace and quietness.

On the 27th August 1788, Lord Dorchester and Sir John Johnson came to see us in this house where we now are and told us they were very happy to see us so comfortably settled and that they had heard a very good character of us and that we had conducted ourselves very properly with the people of the settlement. After Lord Dorchester and Sir John Johnson were gone I called my people together and told them what had been said of them and advised them, as they had a good character to behave well and preserve it.

Brother - Those who are attached to me have to this time continued to behave well as formerly. Some few days after Lord Dorchester went away, Captain Isaac & Captain Aaron arrived here with their parties from the Grand River. On the evening of the same day I held a Council with them and they informed me there had been a great dispute among them at the Grand River and that they, Capt. Isaac and Capt. Aaron, with their parties intended to kill Capt. Brant, and took arms for that purpose and that they left the Grand River in consequence of that dispute. Capt. Isaac and Capt. Aaron with their parties went down the Country and held a Council with Lord Dorchester on the 16th

September, in the same year, when they told his Lordship they could not live in peace and quietness at the Grand River and had been obliged to leave it. When Lord Dorchester heard their story, he said he could not conceive it was Capt. Brant's fault, but that it must be owing to some of themselves who had behaved improperly and added it was in consequence of the ill behavior of the family of the Hills. Capt. Isaac & Capt. Aaron then told his Lordship that the dispute at the Grand River was in consequence of Capt. Brant bringing white people to settle on their lands. Lord Dorchester then told them, if that was the case of disagreement, he could easily settle it, for he would order all the white people off the Lands. If his Lordship had done so, none of the disturbance, or the late unfortunate business which has happened here, would have taken place, as what has happened was thro' the means of a white man among us of the name of Mircle.

It was mentioned yesterday that I went down to Montreal and no one knew on what business. I went down 10th October 1797, to ask the favor of Sir John Johnson to assist me in repairing the Church. Mr. Stuart had formerly obtained £50 for that purpose, but it was expended, but £10 which Mr. Stuart informed me of and at the same time requested that the young men of the Village might cut timber to erect a steeple, but none of them except my own people would do it. I, therefore, went down to Montreal to solicit some more assistance towards erecting the steeple and getting a place fixed for the 10 Commandments etc etc that they might be out of danger from the weather or other accidents. That in consequence of this application the matter was laid before General Prescott by Sir John Johnson and directions were accordingly sent to Major Spencer to send up a carpenter to make an estimate of the expense, which was done and the repair of the Church completed accordingly. Captain John then produced a copy of Major Green's Letter to Major Spencer dated Quebec, 30th October 1797, directing the Estimate to be made by the Master Carpenter Russell and sent down for the General's approbation.

On the same day that I applied to Sir John Johnson for assistance towards the Church, he told me it was not intended by Government that white people should settle on our lands which were for the Indians only and their children's children to the latest posterity and that no individual should make any regulation among them without the consent of the whole. When I returned from Montreal, I called the Village together to acquaint them with what I had done, and they all Assembled but Captain Isaac, who did not think proper to attend as usual, he always making excuses for not appearing in any Council saying he was sick or at work. When Isaac's people were assembled I asked them where was their Chief and why he did not come, that he never made his appearance when I called a Council, tho' I always strove and did my best for the good of the Village. I wished the Chiefs would consider and pay more attention to the good of the Village as well as themselves. There can be no excuse for your Chief never coming, he has a house and can come if he pleases. A Chief named Peter, one of Isaac's Band, then told me, Capt. John, in the Council, that they would leave the transacting of all their business to me, and that I might do as I pleased. I told them I meant to take care of the Village and that as I had established it, it was proper I should do so.

About the same time, Capt. Isaac called a Council among his own people and said, "We will be a seperate party by ourselves and have nothing to do with Captain John or his party", and they have continued a seperate party ever since. They talk of the money received at Albany; that was long after they broke out in their parties and divided, which had been partially the case for 7 years past. I am accused with regard to the 500

dollars. Isaac has had a grudge against me for 20 years; if they meant to spill blood, why did they not aim at me, as I am the Person they blame? They say the Blood which has been spilt is on account of this money. But how can that be? Capt. Aaron went down to Albany in 1784 and disposed of a piece of Land belonging to the Mohawks, to the amount of a considerable sum in goods and in money. In the year 1790, Capt. Brant and Capt. David went to Fort Stanwix and sold the same Lands, the property of the Mohawks at Fort Hunter, for which they were to receive 1,000 Dollars. On Capt. Isaac's first coming here, I requested him to ask Capt. Aaron who was his relation what was become of the money and goods he got for the Land he sold at Albany. The answer I received from Capt. Isaac was that they had lost their Country; he paid no attention to it and gave it up and refused to ask Aaron any thing about it; altho' at the same time Capt. Isaac had received his dividend of the money and goods received by Aaron for these Lands, and as a proof that he did so, calls on Justus Thomas to declare what he knows about it.

Justus Thomas being called upon says he did not see Capt. Isaac receive any thing for these Lands, but that the Widow Hill saw a payment made to Isaac and she asked him, Justus Thomas, whether he had received his share of it. His answer to her was "No, I have not, altho' I have an equal right with others".

Captain John proceeded

Soon afterwards it was mentioned in Council that they had heard there were yet Lands at Sockendagah undisposed of and they though it proper to send a part thither to enquire about it. The intelligence was from a white man named Miller of Balls Town, stating the Mohawks had still Lands their property in that place.

Adjourned till tomorrow morning 10 o'Clock.

*Source: Library and Archives Canada RG10 Volume 26 pp. 15307-15354
Microfilm Reel C-11,007*

**If anyone has any questions regarding these minutes please contact Mohawks of
the Bay of Quinte Research Department.
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