

Minutes of 1800

In September 1800 there was a Council Meeting held in the community that spanned 8 days. This meeting was held to try to come to some resolution of the troubles that had been dividing the community at that time.

These minutes were recorded by John Chew, a Secretary for Indian Affairs.

Over the next few months we will be printing these minutes in the newsletter. A full copy of the document is available on MBQ and Kanhiote websites.

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

Present

Captain Claus Acting Depy. Superintendant General &c &c &c
Lieutenant Givens Agent Indian Affairs
Lieutenant McQueen Queens Rangers
Mr. David Price }
Mr. Nathl. Lines } Interpreters
Mr. Ferguson - Kingston

P. Selby Asst. Secy. Indian Affairs

with the Chiefs and other of the Mohawk Indians residing there.

Captain Claus addressed the meeting as follows:

Brothers - The melancholy business which has lately happened here induced your Father, General Hunter, to order me down to meet you, and to inquire into the cause of your disputes, and if possible to bring you together again as friends and relations should always be. The greatest misfortune which can possibly happen to you is that of living in a divided State - you lose all your domestic comforts and all your respectability as a Nation. You not only injure each other individually, but you bring disgrace and sorrow on all connected with you; Nor can I avoid telling you that I feel in a very sensible manner every circumstance that tends to weaken you as a Nation, or to interrupt the harmony and mutual good will of men who should live as one family and who should resolve that no consideration should disunite them. Your father, however, is desirous of knowing the grounds of your disputes which have terminated so unfortunately, and I shall be glad to hear what each party has to say tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock as it is now too late to proceed to business.

September 3rd

Present

the same as yesterday, with the addition of Lt. Fortier, P.

Captain Isaac spoke as follows:

Brothers - I only want to say a few words: it is to know how you received this bad news and from whom you received it.

Captain Claus answered: That he had heard it as he has always been accustomed to hear news, that is, from the Head of the Village and that he had come down to make a particular enquiry into the business that he might be satisfied of the Truth.

Captain Isaac then said: I will tell you, Brother, the whole business in a very short time.

There was some money brought from Albany, Viz., 500 dollars by Captain Brant and 500 by Captain John for the payment of the Lands sold, to the American Government, on the Mohawk River. When Captain John arrived here, we enquired whether he had sold the Lands and brought the money, and what news he brought with him; Captain John answered, the Americans and us are different people, and are not fond of communicating any news to us, knowing we belonged to a different Country. We then asked John what he had done in the business he went upon and he answered, "it would do very well for a Messenger to be questioned in that manner, which he did not consider himself to be." Captain Isaac says that they had heard what money he had brought and that he had made away with the greatest part of it, which made a great riot in the Village. This was three years ago last spring - sometime after that Captain John went to Montreal and no one knew on what business, until he returned, when he held a Council with the whole Village except Captain Isaac. That Captain John told them, he had assembled them and that it would be for the last time and he hoped they would consider well what he was going to say. He then told them a Chief who had the care of a Village should be a man of sense and good conduct, to lead people in a proper manner and instruct them in what was right. He then desired that all of them should speak their minds freely and not hang down their heads as they had always done, but to speak out and have no secrets among them, and after making this speech he quitted the Council and would have nothing more to say to them.

That two years afterwards the young men of the Village met, and he, Captain Isaac, was with them; and they appointed Chiefs of the Village, at which time

Laurence, one of the men who was killed and who was half-Brother to Isaac, said "as they could get no satisfaction from Captain John for the money he got at Albany, they would take his property and sell it as they were determined to get as much as they could from his property. That every time they met, Laurence was always repeating this, and said further, if Captain John resisted he would settle him as he was a very great thief. That he, Captain Isaac, told Laurence he should not repeat these things so often that it was of bad consequence to threaten in that manner, and that he had better drop the matter, and take no further notice of it as the loss of money was of no consequence, but a life was of great value - this was all that happened at the time.

Last summer he, Captain Isaac, and a part of the Mohawks went down to Lower Canada, and held a Council with the 7 Nations of Canada at LaChine, from whence they went to Sir John Johnson's where they received presents. Laurence was dissatisfied with what he received and applied to Mr. Chew to give him more, which Mr. Chew refused saying he had no authority, tho he notwithstanding gave him some trifle. Laurence was nevertheless dissatisfied, it being so trifling. They then came off from LaChine to return home and they conceived that Laurence was dissatisfied the whole way up. The people of the Village, on the arrival of the party, desired they might meet and hear what had been done in Lower Canada, and they met accordingly, except Laurence who not being satisfied would not appear in the Council.

That the last spring He, Isaac, and his people Appointed a meeting to be held on Easter Sunday for the purpose of erecting a Saw Mill on the Indian Lands. That after the Council, the people staid at his (Isaac's) house that they might be in readiness to go to put up the Mill the next day, and in the morning a Messenger was sent up by Captain John saying if they attempted to build a mill, it would not be good, as he was going to build a mill there himself. That when they received that message, they said they would drop it as it would occasion confusion among them; and as there were two rapids, they would take the upper one as they did not wish to make any disturbance.

That on the 4th of June He, Capt. Isaac, assembled his people and Capt. John assembled also his people, at different places and made themselves merry. That on the next day John Mircle and Seth went into the plain to Hunt up Horses and met Laurence; that Laurence struck Mircle severely with a stick three times. That on the 9th June he, Isaac, met Laurence's son, Thomas, and desired him to tell his father not to make a practice of beating people when he met them in the woods, for that was not their ancient custom & desired him also to tell his father if he made a practice of beating people he might repent it; and that Laurence sent him back an answer the same day that it was very wise, that was what he wished for. That He, Isaac, sent his negro boy the same day for some

seed corn to Seth's house and desired him to avoid Laurence for fear of accident. That notwithstanding this precaution the negro boy and Laurence met and Laurence desired him to tell his master, Isaac, to appoint any place he thought proper and he, Laurence, would meet him. Laurence added "If you do not tell your master then, I will kill you the first time I see you, and if he does not send me a message back I certainly will kill him, and if he does not point out a place where we are to meet, I will do it for him the first time I see him". Capt. Isaac says further that Laurence was not drunk and that if Mircle had not run away when Laurence struck him, it was his design to have killed him upon the spot. That when the negro boy delivered him the Message to appoint a place to meet Laurence, he was much affected and after considering some time and that it was a matter of great consequence and that he was a man, he took his sword in his hand.

That very early in the morning of the 10th June last, he, Captain Isaac, sent his Black boy to Laurence to inform him he had appointed a place of meeting which was half-way between their two houses - and that soon after the negro boy returned with an answer from Laurence saying he was ready. That he, Capt. Isaac, then got up and went to meet him, three others with him. When they came to the place appointed no one was there, but in the course of a little time Laurence and two others appeared, and did not appear to be armed. Capt. Isaac then told his men, about 5 minutes before Laurence arrived, that they were not to interfere in the matter at all, that he and Laurence would decide the matter themselves and that they, by no means, were to interfere in the business. That when he, Capt. Isaac & Laurence met, they mutually saluted each other and said good Morning. He, Capt. Isaac, then asked Laurence if he had received the message he had sent him - Laurence said he had - and told Capt. Isaac he was always abusing his sons and immediately came up with a stick and knocked Capt. Isaac down, so that the sword he had was of no use to him. He, Capt. Isaac, says that he hoped to have settled their differences by speaking to Laurence, but he was struck down so suddenly, he had not an opportunity. That after laying sometime, he got up and was knocked down again with the same stick and also a third time in the same manner, after which he was incapable of getting up, but when he recovered and looked round him he saw the ground Bloody, not knowing in what manner it came there.

Adjourned till tomorrow at 10 o'Clock. Captain John wishing at that time to prepare himself to speak.