

WW1: Honouring Those Who Volunteered in May 1915

In May 1915, the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte had one member volunteer to serve in World War One. Details from his military file are below. This file can be viewed at Kanhiote Library.

John Alexander Culbertson

According to the 1901 census, John Alexander was born on the 21st of August 1885, but according to his Attestation (or Sign-up) Paper he was born on the 21st of August, 1891. He was the son of Alexander Culbertson and Sarah Penn. Before the war, he was a lumberman.

John volunteered on the 7th of May, 1915, in Belleville, Ontario, for the 39th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). His Regimental Number was 413012. John began his service as a Private, but during service advanced his rank to Lance Sargent.

From his military personnel file we learn the following:

- John arrived in England in July, 1915.
- In January, 1916, he was transferred from the 39th Battalion to the 19th Battalion while in the field.
- In December, 1915, John went "Absent without leave" for 3 days and forfeited 3 day's pay. He was fined \$2.00 and was awarded 14 days Field Punishment "(For Drunkeness)".

On the 15th of September, 1916, at Martinpuich, France, he suffered shrapnel wounds to the right buttock & right side of his chest, and a sprained left ankle. The shrapnel wounds went septic,

but healed without disability. The battle at Martinpuich in September, 1916, was part of the notorious Battle of the Somme.

In September, 1917, John was hit on the head by timber. He suffered headaches and pains in the shoulder and ankles. He also suffered from a skin ailment.

Documents in his military files state that he was promoted to Acting Lance Corporal in September, 1918. He was promoted to Corporal in October, 1918. On the Library and Archives website, his rank is given as Lance Sargent, which means he was a Corporal acting in the rank of a Sargent.

After the Armistice on the 11th of November, 1918, John was reprimanded to being “absent without leave” for 24 hours and forfeited a day’s pay.

He was discharged on the 24th of May, 1919 and received the British War and Victory Medals in 1923.

Unfortunately, we do not have good information about what happened to John after the war. There are records which indicate that he may have moved to Quebec. There are also records that he enfranchised as a single man in 1939.

According to his military file, John Alexander Culbertson died on the 27th of May, 1955.

We know so very little about John’s life after the war. If anyone has more information about John or his family, please let us know.

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Historical Council Minutes

The following are transcriptions of the earliest recorded elected council meetings of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. These minutes are from the meetings of the Chiefs in Council and from the general council meetings that involved the whole community. The meetings were irregular, and in some cases they are adjourned until the Chiefs are notified to return.

NOTE: The council minutes reprinted here have been modified (in format only ie; spelling corrected, format adjusted, put in chronological order) for the ease of reading.

Mohawk Reserve
Tyendingaga August 19th, 1871
Council of Chiefs met at 2-20 PM
Present Samson Green
John Loft
W.J.W. Hill
Archd. Culbertson
Seth W. Hill
& John Claus

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It was moved by W.J.W. Hill and seconded by John Loft that Archibald Culbertson be appointed Chairman at this meeting of Council. Carried

1st The propriety of granting leases to certain persons was considered. This Council approved a lease to Samuel Caldbick for 20 acres of E1/2, lot 20, Con. A., at \$25.00 per annum. Rent for Mrs. Catherine Hill, wife of late J.W. Hill.

2nd And of granting a lease of 20 acres of E1/2 of 18, Con. A and 20 acres of broken front of same lot to John Lewis @ \$30.00 per annum. ½ of the rent to W.J.W. Hill & the other half to the Nation.

It was moved by John Claus & seconded by John Loft that the broken fronts of all lots not disposed of by the Nation are to be retained as their property or leased for the benefit of the whole Band.

Carried

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Council of 19th August, 1871
Continued

3rd Court[?] Losie[?] Wrightmyer to have lease. See page 28.

4th John Murphy to have a lease of the South 50 acres of lot 12 in the 1st Con. south range. Rent \$45.00 per annum for Nation.

5th Frederick Brown to have 70 acres of the South part of the E1/2 of lot 19 in 2nd Con. Rent \$35.00 per annum, and to clear and fence 10 acres in addition to rent. Rented for benefit of Joseph Hill.

6th James Kennedy to have a lease of lot 25 south range of 2nd Concession and the SE1/4 of lot 26 in 2nd Con. and all those parts of lots 25 & 26 in Con. A enclosed by Thomas Loft, say in all 220 acres more or less at a rental of \$150.00 for the 1st year and two hundred dollars per annum for the three following years, and to build barn and furnish rails in fence according to agreement in lease or to be entered in lease. Rent for Thos. Loft subject to having such portion of the rent as may be fair for the rent of the South E1/4 of lot 26 in the 2nd Con awarded to Isaac Green should claim to that part of the land be established.

Council of 19th of August, 1871
Continued

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7th Peter Daynard 5 acres of E1/2 lot 14 in Con. A lying North of and adjoining the road laid out across the said lot to repair fences on the land leased and put new fencing on when required. Rented for benefit of Seth W. Hill

8th Isaac Cole to have a lease of parts of lots 33 & 34 Con. A and parts of the W [?] same lots in 2nd Con. 70 acres more or less. To pay \$40.00 per annum rent and in addition to rent to build a barn 24 by 37 feet with 13 feet posts on the lot leased. Rent for the benefit of Wm. P. Claus (owner of lot).

It was moved by John Loft and seconded by Seth W. Hill that the Chiefs approve of exchanging the west part of lot 33 Con. A (at present leased to William Hill) with Samson Green for the East ½ of lot number 11 Con. A and that application be made to the Secretary of State to have the exchange approved of. The Nation to have the rent of Hills farm until the 1st of February 1872, and Green to have the rent of his lot to the same date. Carried

Signed Archibald Culbertson
Chairman

W. Frizzell
acting as Secretary

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Mohawk Reserve
Tyendinaga August 26th 1871
Chiefs met in Council
Present Thomas Green
Joseph Penn
John Loft
Seth W. Hill
Archd. Culbertson
& Cornelius Maracle

It was moved by John Loft and seconded by Seth W. Hill that Cornelius Maracle be appointed Chairman. Carried

Moved by John Loft and seconded by Seth W. Hill that Thomas Claus is to put a new floor in the Lower Church to put in new Joice[joists?] when required and splice or attach sound joice[joists?] to any that may be partially rotten so as to make the floor and joice[joists?] under it substantial. For which he is to have all the old lumber seats etc. in the Old Church. Carried

Moved by John Loft and seconded by Seth W. Hill that the coping stone now on the Church may be used again. The stone to be cemented in such a manner that all water is to be excluded from the wall.

Carried

Signed C. Maracle
Chairman

W. Frizzell
Act. Secretary

Mohawk Reserve
Tyendingaga Sept. 11, 1871
Mohawk Chiefs met in Council
Present Joseph Penn
Samson Green
John Loft
Seth W. Hill
W.J.W. Hill
Archd. Culbertson
John Claus
& Cornelius Maracle

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Moved by Samson Green and seconded by John Loft that this Council will hold six meetings in each year. The first meeting to be held on the 1st Monday in October next and on the 1st Monday every second month thereafter.

Moved by W.J.W. Hill in amendment to the above that this Council adjourn from time to time as business may demand their attendance. Seconded by Archibald Culbertson and Carried.

This Council adjourned.

Signed John Loft
Chairman

W. Frizzell
act. Secretary

Mohawk Reserve
Tyendinaga Sept. 14th, 1871
Chiefs Present

Joseph Penn
John Loft
Seth W. Hill
W.J.W. Hill
Cornelius Maracle
Archibald Culbertson
& John Claus

It was moved by Cornelius Maracle and seconded by Archibald Culbertson that John Loft be appointed Chairman. Carried

Moved by Cornelius Maracle and seconded by John Claus that W.J.W. Hill be, and he is hereby appointed, a delegate to go to Ottawa to represent and explain matters to the Secretary of State and the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs certain matters in connection with the rents and lands of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Seth W. Hill and seconded by Cornelius Maracle that Samson Green be a delegate to accompany W.J.W. Hill to represent the interests of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte at Ottawa. Not carried.

Moved in amendment by John Claus, seconded by W.J.W. Hill that Cornelius Maracle be a delegate to Ottawa. Amendment Carried.

.....**To Be Continued!**