

Mississaugas of the
NEW CREDIT
First Nation



Past & Present



Logo contributing artists: Kyle Sault and R. Stacey LaForme Graphics by Shelda Martin

After several years of consultation, the logo of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation was accepted in 1993. The Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation is a part of the Mississauga (Anishinabe language) Nation. The symbols on the logo are representative of five important aspects of our Nation's history:

Eagle

The Eagle is used because it is the predominant totem of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. The Eagle is viewed as the messenger—the Mississaugas were once considered to be great messengers, some days, traveling up to 130 kilometers on foot.

Three Fires

The three fires is symbolic of the Mississaugas traditional and political alliance with the Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomi Nations. A council, the Three Fires Council, was established and still exists today.

The Circle of Life

Within this category there are two aspects. One, First Nations teach that every living thing is related and interconnected—we are all a part of the Circle of Life. Secondly, the blue writing symbolizes the interconnectedness to the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, and to the water of the Credit River and Lake Ontario.

The Peace Pipe

The Peace Pipe is the New Credit people's equivalent of a Parliamentary Mace. The Pipe was given to Peter Jones by Queen Victoria's cousin Augustus d'Este. It is used in special opening ceremonies to thank the great spirit, mother earth, and the sun.

HISTORY OF THE CREDIT RIVER MISSISSUAGAS



Dancers at New Credit's Three Fires 2014 Pow Wow

(left to right) Daniel Secord, Catherine Shawana-Sherry, Scott Norton, Madison Macdonald, Lucus Shawana, Shannon Bomberry, Waskwaabiish Jonathan

ORIGINS

The story of the people of New Credit begins not in Southern Ontario where the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation is currently located, but rather begins in the area around Georgian Bay and the northern shore of Lake Superior. The First Nations' people living in that area were members of the Algonquian linguistic group and have been known historically as the Ojibwa or the Chippewa. The people then, and today, refer to themselves in their language as the Anishinabe—"human beings or men".

GUIDED BY THE SEASONS

Guided by the passing seasons, the Anishinabe lived lightly on the land as they harvested its bounty. Small and large game was hunted year round for food and for pelts; other resources would be gathered as they became seasonally available. Spring found families gathered around sugar bushes to tap maple trees, and later, after the ice had melted from the waters, the people moved to their fishing grounds. Summer was the time to plant corn and other vegetables that would be harvested later in the fall. Berries, mushrooms, and other wild foods were gathered throughout the summer months with the harvest of wild rice occurring in the early autumn. The Anishinabe congregated, again in the fall, at their fishing grounds to catch and preserve the fish they would consume over the winter months. Breaking into small family groups the people would move into winter camps where they would harvest the thick winter furs of the woodland animals and await for the yearly cycle of movement to begin anew.

MIGRATION

The migration of the Ojibwa into Southern Ontario occurred in the later part of the 17th century. The allies of the Anishinabe, the Huron, occupied what is now much of Southern Ontario and carried on a lucrative fur trade with the French established along the St. Lawrence. In 1649-1650, longtime enemies and trade rivals, the Iroquois, succeeded in dispersing the Huron and occupying their lands. Not surprisingly, the Anishinabe and their Algonquian allies also found themselves under attack by the Iroquois. Initially the Anishinabe fought a defensive war against the attackers from the Five Nations Confederacy, but later they commenced a series of fierce attacks that, by 1700, had forced their Iroquois enemies back to their homelands beyond the southern shore of Lake Ontario. At the close of the conflict, one group of the Anishinabe settled in the proximity of the Trent River system and the Bay of Quinte; another group of the Anishinabe settled at the western end of Lake Ontario near the mouths of rivers and creeks that flowed into that body of water. The Anishinabe people who had settled on the north shore of Lake Ontario became known as the Mississaugas.

It is uncertain how the name “Mississauga” was bestowed upon the people by the colonial powers, but it has been speculated that the name was given in recognition of their northern roots along the Mississagi River prior to their migration to the south. The Mississaugas themselves differed on the acquisition of their name. The Mississaugas living near the eastern end of Lake Ontario believed their name came from the Ojibwa word Minzazehegeg meaning “people living where there are many mouths of rivers”. The Mississaugas at the opposite end of the lake believed their name referred to the eagle clan to which many of them belonged- the name sounded like Ma-se-sau-gee when spoken in the Anishinabe language.

THE MISSISSAUGAS OF THE CREDIT

The defeat of the Iroquois found the Mississaugas at western end of Lake Ontario as the stewards of approximately 3.9 million acres of lands, waters and resources in Southern Ontario. Their territory extended from the Rouge River Valley westward across to the headwaters of the Thames River, southward down to Long Point on Lake Erie and then following along the shoreline of Lake Erie to the Niagara River, and then northward to Lake Ontario and following its northern shore until reaching the Rouge River Valley. One creek in particular, the Missinnihe, was a favourite of the Mississaugas who used it and the surrounding area for hunting, fishing, gathering, healing and spiritual purposes. A trading post established at that location by the French, in 1720, enabled the people to trade the pelts they had gathered over the winter for European trade goods. The Missinnihe was later named the Credit River due to the traders’ practice of extending credit to the Mississaugas in the fall and then being repaid the following spring with the winter’s catch of furs. The Mississaugas located at the western end of the lake became known to the Europeans as the Mississaugas of the Credit.

For the Mississaugas, the yearly cycle of hunting and gathering continued but became easier with the acquisition of European trade goods. The availability of guns, the durability of metal pots, and the utility of tools such as metal axe blades led the Mississaugas into a dependency on European trade goods that would eventually cause them to lose some of their traditional knowledge and ways. One trade good in particular, rum, would have a devastating impact on the social fabric of the First Nation.

A SHIFTING WORLD

The American Revolution was to have far reaching consequences for the Mississaugas of the Credit. The defeat of the British in 1783 brought a flood of loyalist refugees to the remaining British possessions north of the nascent United States. Many of the loyalists settled in the Maritimes, but many others followed the St. Lawrence River and settled on the lands of Southern Ontario. Among the loyalist refugees were approximately two thousand members of the Six Nations Confederacy (Iroquois) who had fought for the British cause. In order to reward the Six Nations for their loyalty, the British purchased land from the Mississaugas of the Credit and allowed the Iroquois to settle in the valley of the Grand River. Not only did the Six Nation loyalists need land on which to settle, but so did the other loyalist refugees from the south. The loyalists’ hunger for land was great and the Mississaugas, under pressure from the colonial government, ceded their lands in eight treaties with the Crown. By 1820, only 200 acres on the Credit River were all that remained of the 3.9 million acres of territory the Mississaugas of the Credit had attained upon the defeat of the Iroquois.

With the loss of their land, the Mississaugas were no longer able hunt and gather as they had once done. Fish and game stocks were depleted by the settlers. The First Nation people were unable to travel the land at will and were now regarded as trespassers by the settlers who now farmed their former lands. Disease ravaged the native population as did the effects of alcohol. Promises made by the colonial government made in exchange for the land were often not kept. Strangers in their own lands, the Mississaugas’ traditional worldview seemed to collapse as did their population. In 1787, the Credit band had over five hundred members; in 1798, there were three hundred members; in 1811, there were two hundred and eight members; and in 1827, there existed slightly fewer than two hundred band members at the River Credit. It appeared to both the government and the Mississaugas themselves that they were close to extinction.

THE CREDIT MISSION VILLAGE

Fortunately, the Mississaugas were able to overcome their difficulties largely through the efforts of Kahkewaquonaby (Sacred Feathers) better known as the Rev. Peter Jones. Born in 1802 at Burlington Heights in Upper Canada, Jones, the son of a Welsh surveyor and a Mississauga mother, was familiar with both native and non-native ways. His early years were

spent among his mother’s people, and later, while living with his father, he received an education among the white settlers. He converted to Christianity and became a Methodist missionary among the Mississaugas. He worked tirelessly to convert his people to Christianity and to help them cope, and even thrive, in the circumstances in which they found themselves.

Jones had largely converted his people to Methodism by 1826 and with the aid of the government was able to construct a Christian mission village on the banks of the Credit River. The village initially consisted of twenty wooden homes with more added over time. The homes were comfortably furnished with curtains, trunks, and boxes. European cooking utensils and dinnerware were adopted by the Mississaugas as was the European mode of dress. Small vegetable gardens found a place around each house and eventually the Mississaugas were able to fence and cultivate 900 acres of land outside the village. Corn, wheat, and rice were grown as were potatoes and other root vegetables. Pork, beef, and fowl were also raised. The Credit River village also contained a hospital, two public stores, two sawmills, a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop, and a chapel that also served as a school house. Recognizing the importance of education, the children were instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic and the basic tenets of the Christian faith. The enterprising Mississaugas were also two-thirds shareholders in the Credit River Harbour Company, were able to construct a port for ships plying the River Credit and Lake Ontario, and a schooner, the Credit Chief, was constructed. The Mississaugas of the Credit prospered in their village and showed that they were able to transition themselves from a hunting and gathering lifestyle to one that focused on agricultural pursuits. The village at the River Credit was considered a success and the government of the day would regard it as model to follow in the establishment of other First Nation agricultural communities.

THE NEW MISSISSAUGAS OF THE CREDIT

The Mississaugas at the Credit prospered for over a decade before concerns regarding their welfare began to weigh heavily upon them. Continual encroachment by settlers, the depletion of the area's game, salmon, and wood, and also the poor moral examples set by some of the settlers before the village youth made life difficult for the people of the religious community. Also of great concern was the Mississaugas' fear that without legal title the government could suddenly take away the lands that they had worked so hard to improve. For such reasons the Mississaugas began to cast about for a new home. In the 1840s, the Mississaugas sought new village locations at Muncey Town and Saugeen – both were found wanting. The people were devastated in February 1847 when the land at Saugeen was discovered unfit for agricultural purposes; the matter was made even worse as the Mississaugas, in anticipation of the impending move, had already turned their homes at the Credit River over to the government for sale. The Mississaugas, for all intents and purposes, were homeless.

Fortunately, the plight of the Mississaugas had become known to the Six Nations of the Grand. Remembering that the Mississaugas had agreed to sell part of their lands to the British in order to provide the Six Nations with a home after the American Revolution, the Six Nations now sought to return the favour. The Mississaugas gratefully accepted the offer of land extended by the Six Nations, and, in May of 1847, they moved to forty-eight hundred acres of land in Tuscarora Township, Brant County, with an additional twelve hundred acres of land to later follow in Oneida Township, Haldimand County. The new settlement, named after their old village, was named New Credit.

The Mississaugas of New Credit worked hard to build another prosperous agricultural community. Farmers were faced with the daunting task of clearing large amounts of land in order to put crops in the ground. Other difficulties

included the impassible roads in the spring and winter, the necessity of driving squatters from the land, and even the destruction of the community's sawmill at the hands of an arsonist. Diligence and perseverance allowed the people of New Credit to overcome the obstacles they faced. Visitors remarked on the full barns, the well-fenced fields, and the fine crops found in the community. The people of New Credit were justifiably proud when their produce won prizes at the local fairs. Also a source of pride to the community was the construction of two fine public buildings – a church and a council house. The New Credit Mission Church was built in 1852 and provided a place of worship for the Methodist population of New Credit as well as for Methodists from outside the reserve community. In 1882, a large council house was constructed to serve not only as New Credit's seat of government but also as a community centre. By the late 1880s, the population of New Credit reached a high of over two hundred and fifty band members – the largest the population had been in over 50 years.

Just as the seasonally migrant lifestyle of the Mississaugas gave way to a lifestyle that was primarily agrarian, the lifestyle of the people of New Credit made another shift in the 1900s. The small farms of New Credit were struggling to be profitable and could no longer support families as they once did. Many of the Mississaugas of the New Credit took up trades in the nearby urban centres of Brantford and Hamilton while others found occupations in the nearby quarry and gypsum mines of Hagersville. Many other band members, especially in the later part of the 20th century, took advantage of programs that allowed them to access education at high school, college, and university levels and to find employment off-reserve.

NEW CREDIT TODAY

Currently, in 2018, the population of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation is made up of approximately 2500 individuals with two-thirds of the members living away from New Credit. The First Nation boasts a strip mall, a school, a modern community centre, a daycare, a social services building, a library, and an administrative building. A scattering of small businesses owned by band members are found on the reserve and the band is constantly looking for sustainable economic development opportunities. The people of New Credit are no strangers to change and are adept at transitioning themselves to meet the challenges of the times. As the Mississaugas make their way through the 21st century there is little doubt that they will be required to transition themselves again; there is little doubt they will be able to meet the challenge.

THE NEW CREDIT UNITED CHURCH

The Credit River Mission Village was a religious community of Christian Methodists; therefore, it is not surprising that the first public building constructed upon their arrival from the River Credit was the New Credit Mission Church. Constructed in 1852, the church was of clapboard construction but was later given a brick veneer in 1890. The New Credit Mission Church became part of the United Church of Canada when that denomination organized in 1925. In front of the Church is a small cemetery containing the graves of three esteemed members of both the River Credit and New Credit Communities: George King was the first chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit elected under the Indian Act in 1871; Chief Joseph Sawyer and his council made the decision to move from the "Credit" to the New Credit; Rev. William Herkimer was missionary and minister among the First Nations of Ontario. The church and the graveyard provide a tangible link to New Credit's Methodist past.

THE COUNCIL HOUSE *(pictured)*

Built in 1882, the Council House served as the seat of government for New Credit over a span of one hundred years. Constructed primarily as a meeting place for chief and council, the building also served as a community centre where the Mississaugas could gather to discuss matters of importance to the community or even listen to a concert. A versatile building, the Council House during its lifetime has also served as a schoolhouse, public library, a car seat cover factory, and the home to the First Nation's administrative offices. Since the opening of the administrative building in 1988, the Council House has been used as a meeting venue and has hosted the offices of the Duty to Consult and Accommodate Department as well as that of the Cultural Committee. Historic plaques, in front of the Council House, commemorate the life of the Rev. Peter Jones and recognize the founding of the New Credit Reserve and Mission.

VETERANS MEMORIAL *(pictured below)*



Located in a grove of Carolinian forest behind the Council House, the Veterans Memorial pays tribute to the warriors/soldiers of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. Band members of New Credit have participated in the War of 1812, the American Civil War, the Boer War, World War One and Two, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War. Band members have been involved in peacekeeping missions and have served in the military during times of peace. The monument is unique in that it memorializes all New Credit service people- not only those who lost their lives in conflict. The Veterans Memorial is constructed to resemble a First Nation’s burial mound. Four granite slabs, facing the four directions, list the names of veterans and the conflict in which they participated. Three granite flames situated around the memorial are symbolic of the Three Fires Confederacy to which the Mississaugas belong.

*“The Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation look to our Anishinabe roots to guide our vision for the future as a **strong, caring, connected membership** who respects the Earth’s gifts and protects the environment for future generations. Our identity includes our history, language, culture, beliefs and traditions which we strive to incorporate into the programs and services offered to our membership.”*

Vision statement of MNCFN

AGIMAW GAMIG (LEADERSHIP LODGE): ADMINISTRATION BUILDING *(pictured below)*

The Administration Building is located beside its predecessor, the Council House. Opened in 1988, it too, like the Council House, was the location of the Council Chambers until the meeting place for Chief and Council was moved to the MNCFN Community Centre in 2016. As Chief and Council do not directly administer the day to day affairs of the First Nation; the building hosts the offices of administrative staff tasked with carrying out the directions of the chief and council, and ensuring that the people of New Credit receive the best programs and services possible. The Department of Public Works, the Department of Sustainable Economic Development and the Department of Housing and Finance are also quartered within the administrative building. Committee meetings often take place in a meeting room located in the building.



THE NEW CREDIT COMMERCIAL PLAZA

(pictured right)

New Credit has always tried to ensure that its band members have ample employment opportunities available. One of the ways that the New Credit Administration has contributed to this is by the development of the New Credit Commercial Plaza, officially opened in 1997, located on the corner of First Line and Highway 6. Located here is the New Credit Variety and Gas Bar, a band operated gas station.



MAAMWI-GNAWENDING (CARING TOGETHER): SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES BUILDING *(pictured below)*



Those working at Social and Health Services in the Maamwi-gnawending building represent the core meaning of the Ojibway word, which means “caring together.” The staff is able to provide a wide range services to benefit the health and wellness of community members. A few of these services include Home support, Long Term Care, Community Wellness Workers, Employment and Training, Skills and Development for adults and children, a Meals on Wheels for the elderly, as well as a breakfast program provided to the students at the Lloyd S. King Elementary School.

MNCFN COMMUNITY CENTRE

(pictured right)

The community centre was officially opened on June 22, 2013. A spacious main hall provides a venue for community meetings and less serious “get togethers” such as the annual community Christmas party. A smaller meeting room has hosted weekly MNCFN Council Meetings since 2016. The Annual MNCFN Historical Gathering has made its home at the community centre since 2014. As the largest rentable space at New Credit, the community centre is often the location of many other events.



“nimaawanji - idimin” (Gathering of Hearts)
“kiinwi maanjiwegamik” (Our Gathering Place)



LLOYD S. KING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (pictured above)

The Lloyd S. King Elementary school welcomed its first classes in the September of 1998. Named after a respected teacher and elder, Lloyd S. King, the school provides education for students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. In addition to the standard subjects taught in elementary school, students are taught the Anishinabe language and the culture of the Mississauga people. Unique to the school is the mural “Kiinwi Dabaadjmowin” meaning “Our Story” which provides a visual history of the people of New Credit. Many visitors have visited the school to admire the mural and learn of the history of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

EKWAAMJIGENANG CHILDREN’S CENTRE (pictured below)

It is our belief that our children are our sacred gifts. The children that attend Ekwaamjigenang Children’s Centre are well looked after. Ekwaamjigenang Children’s Centre (ECC) has a license capacity of 63 childcare spaces for ages 0-6 years. The trained staff provides a culturally based positive learning environment for the children through a variety of weekly planned activities. The centre is inspected annually under the Child Care Early Years Act Regulations. Ekwaamjigenang Children’s Centre follows the principles of Emergent Curriculum. The goal of Emergent Curriculum is to enhance children’s SPICES development (Social, Physical, Intellectual, Creative, Emotional, and Spiritual growth) based on individual and group strengths/needs. Ekwaamjigenang Children’s Centre is continually striving to provide the highest quality care to the children of this community.



NEW CREDIT PUBLIC LIBRARY (pictured below)



The New Credit Public Library was officially established in 1990 and its purpose was to maintain a collection of resources that would help to inform the New Credit Community of its Anishinabe heritage. The library maintains and continues to build a large collection of books pertaining to First Nations’ history, culture, and issues. The library also holds a collection of artifacts and photos related to the military heritage of the Mississaugas of the

Credit. Six computers are available for public use. The library, in 2013, published *From the River Credit to New Credit: The Chiefs and Councils of the Mississaugas of the Credit 1871-2013*. In 2015, *The Collected Writings of Lloyd S. King on the History of the Mississaugas of New Credit* was updated and republished.

Other departments under the MNCFN Organization that occupy other spaces include Lands, Research and Membership, Education Department, Records Management and the Department of Consultation and Accommodation.



Artwork from the mural “Kiinwi Dabaadjmowin” (Our Story) by Phillip Cote, Tracey Anthony, Rebecca Baird, Carolyn Cote and LSK Students Jocelyn Styres, Rachele King and Eric LaForme.

The mural is located in the library of the Lloyd S. King Elementary School and was completed in 2002. Parts of the mural are used to illustrate New Credit: Past and Present.



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