HISTORICAL TIDBITS

OF THE MISSISSAUGAS OF THE CREDIT FIRST NATION

by Darin P. Wybenga

Published by Pillar 5

Mississaugas of the Credit Strategic Plan Pillar 5 Committee Members:

A. Mark LaForme
Ward LaForme Jr.
Erma (LaForme) Ferrell
Darin P. Wybenga
Members of MCFN

Table of Contents

BEFORE THE MISSION VILLAGE:
ORIGINS & TERRITORY

Mississaugas of the Credit Ancestors:
Three Great Migrations!

The ancestors of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation made three major migrations before arriving at their present location.

Oral tradition holds that MCFN ancestors, the Anishinaabe (Ojibway), lived on the East Coast of the continent on the shores of the Great Salt Water. In response to an ancient prophecy, it was determined that the Anishinaabe would migrate to the West to ensure their survival. Guided on their way by a sacred Megis shell, the people made several extended stops near Montreal, Niagara Falls, the Detroit River, Manitoulin Island, Sault Ste. Marie, and Spirit Island (Duluth, MN) before ending their journey at Madeline Island in Lake Superior. As the journey progressed, numerous small groups, including MCFN ancestors, split from the main body of the migration and established themselves in locations they thought best suited to their purposes. It is thought this migration began around 900 and lasted some 500 years. The French first wrote about our ancestors at the Mississaugi River, east of Sault Ste. Marie, in 1634. This was our first major migration

A second major migration explains how our people arrived on the north shore of Lake Ontario in the late 17th century. The ancestors of the Mississaugas of the Credit migrated into Southern Ontario by means of military conquest. After the Iroquois had expelled the Huron from Southern Ontario in 1649-50, they continued their attacks northward into the territories occupied by the Mississaugas and their allies. By the end of the 17th century, the Mississaugas and their allies had succeeded in driving the Iroquois back into their homelands south of Lake Ontario. At the conclusion of the conflict, many Mississaugas settled near the Trent River system and Bay of Quinte area. MCFN ancestors settled at the head of Lake Ontario with villages located on the flats of creeks and rivers draining into the lake. A favoured location was on the flats of the Credit River.

After being alienated from their lands through a series of Treaties, our ancestors settled in a Christian Mission Village at the Credit River and adopted an agricultural lifestyle. Our people prospered in the village but declining resources, encroaching settlers, and inability to gain title to their lands forced our people to look elsewhere for a new home. The need for a new home for 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 accepted an unsolicited offer of land extended by the Six Nations, and, in May of 1847, 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. This was the third major migration of our ancestors.

The Last Battle

Few Mississaugas of the Credit band members realize that within a thirty minute drive of their reserve, a major battle between our Anishinaabe (Ojibway) ancestors and the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) took place for the control of Southern Ontario.

According to Kahkewaquonaby (Rev. Peter Jones), Methodist missionary and Chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit, in his book, *History of the Ojebway Indians with Especial Reference to Their Conversion to Christianity*, the last battle for control of Southern Ontario between the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) and the Anishinaabe took place at Burlington Bay near the present day city of Hamilton. Although no specific year for the battle is provided by Jones, oral tradition and historians place the battle in the latter part of the 17th century before peace was established with the Great Peace of Montreal in 1701. The Peace of Montreal, brokered by the French, largely brought an end to years of warfare between the Iroquois and the tribes of the Great Lakes region for control of the fur trade.

During the mid-1600s, the Haudenosaunee had left their homes south of Lake Ontario, attacked into Southern Ontario, and succeeded in dispersing the Wendat (Huron Nation) and the Attawanderon (Neutral Nation) from the region. The Haudenosaunee would use Southern Ontario as a hunting ground and establish several agricultural villages in Southern Ontario by the 1680s. In their quest for greater control of the fur trade, the Haudenosaunee continued their attacks northwards into the lands of the Ojibway and their allies. Initially fighting a defensive war, the Ojibway, including our Mississauga ancestors, eventually went on the offensive and drove the Haudenosaunee back into their homelands south of Lake Ontario. According to Peter S. Schmalz, author of The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario, the period of defeat and withdrawal by the Haudenosaunee occurred between the mid-1680s and 1701.

Peter Jones records the battle at Burlington Bay as a ruthless affair with neither the Ojibway, nor the Haudenosaunee, giving the enemy any quarter. It is said that the victorious Ojibway allowed just enough Haudenosaunee survivors to tell their people south of Lake Ontario that the area of land between Lakes Huron, St. Clair, Erie, and Ontario was now in the hands of the Ojibway. In his History, Jones describes mounds of human bones-remnants of that decisive battle, still visible at Burlington Bay in the mid-1800s.

For the ancestors of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who had travelled down the Toronto Carrying Place Trail to help drive out the Haudenosaunee, the concluding battle now meant that they controlled, occupied, and exercised stewardship over approximately 3.9 million acres of land, water, and resources in Southern Ontario. Their territory extended from the Rouge River Valley westward across to the headwaters of the Thames, down to Long Point on Lake Erie and then followed the shoreline of Lake Erie, the Niagara River, and Lake Ontario until arriving back at the Rouge River Valley.

The Haudenosaunee would not return to Southern Ontario until 1784 when the British Crown obtained land from the Mississaugas of the Credit in order to resettle Six Nations loyalist refugees at the end of the American Revolution.

Pesshinneguning

Our ancestors called the Grand River, Pesshinneguning — *"the one that washes the timber down and drives away the grassweeds."* The Grand cuts through the heart of our treaty lands and territory as it flows from its headwaters near Dundalk, Ontario, some 300 kilometers south to its mouth on Lake Erie. Our people have been sustained by its waters since our arrival in Southern Ontario in the late 16th century and we retain our relationship to this very day. Even when the land was acquired from our people by the British Crown in 1784 for the purpose of settling Six Nation Loyalists on the Haldimand Tract, our relationship remained. In 1792, Deputy Provincial Surveyor, Augustus Jones, noted the presence of one of our villages on the west bank of the river as he surveyed the boundaries of the Haldimand Tract. Maps, created in 1815 and 1818, indicate our enduring presence on the Grand by showing a Mississauga village located between the villages of the Delaware and the Onondagas. Even as the late as the 1890's documents record our use of the river and its associated resources.

Rev. Peter Jones, Chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, recorded in his Anecdote Book the following story that took place within the vicinity of the Grand River. Although no date has been given, it might be surmised from the reading itself that it occurred after 1826 and the founding of the Credit River Mission Village:

P. Wompegoosh, an Indian residing in the township of Waterloo, on the Grand River, came on a visit to the Credit for the purpose of hearing the words of the Great Spirit, Being much interested, he tarried longer than he expected. On his return home, he found his family out of provisions and very hungry. P. Wompegoosh rose up very early in the morning in search of deer; he travelled till the middle of the afternoon without seeing a sign of one. He now began to despair; in this emergency he made known his wants to the Christian's God, and began to call aloud on him. To his first prayer he received no answer. He then travelled on some distance, again praying aloud as before that God would give him deer for his family. On rising from his knees, he looked and saw three deer standing not far from him; taking his rifle he shot one on the spot; when he discovered he had killed it, he again fell upon his knees and returned thanks to God. As he rose from his thanksgiving behold he saw another standing within gunshot; as soon as he could load, he shot the *second, and again gave thanks. After this he went in search of the third, and soon killed him. He was thus provided with an abundant supply for his family. Surely "God is a prayer-hearing, and a prayer-answering God, a very present help in time of trouble!"*

Jones, in his *History of the Ojebway Indians*, relates another story that takes place near the Grand:

On the west side of the Grand River, in the township of Waterloo, formerly stood a lofty pine-tree, with a large spreading closely matted top, which had a most imposing appearance from the distant hills, as this tree was taller than any others within view. On the top of this tree the eagles for many generations were wont to build their nests and rear their young, so that other lofty trees, towering rocks, and declivities, might become inhabited by the representatives of the "thunder-god." Old Jack, the Indian, whose hunting-grounds lay within the shadow of this remarkable tree, thought that he must have a god to worship, and therefore dreamed or fancied that this tree was to be his munedoo, or god, who would grant him and his family long life and success in hunting. He and they made periodical visits to it, bringing with them the best of the game they had taken, and offering the same at the foot of the tree. The offering was made in the usual manner, namely, by boiling the game, and burning part of it as a burnt offering, and the remainder being eaten by the invited guests, or by portions of the family. But old Jack would not taste a mouthful of it himself, as he intended that it should be a whole sacrifice.

When passing through that part of the country, I have repeatedly gazed upon and admired old Jack's tree. I have recently heard that the white man has been so daring and profane, as to fell to the ground the poor Indian's god, which no doubt was drawn to the saw-mill, and then made into lumber to build the white man's wigwam. How would the descendants of Jack, with the eagles that nestled on the branches of this tree, wail and lament to see that their father's god has fallen to rise no more! This is but too emblematical of the fate of the red man of the forest. The white man comes, and as he advances the trees vanish before him; thus the poor Indian disappears, as if crushed by the falling of the immense forests.

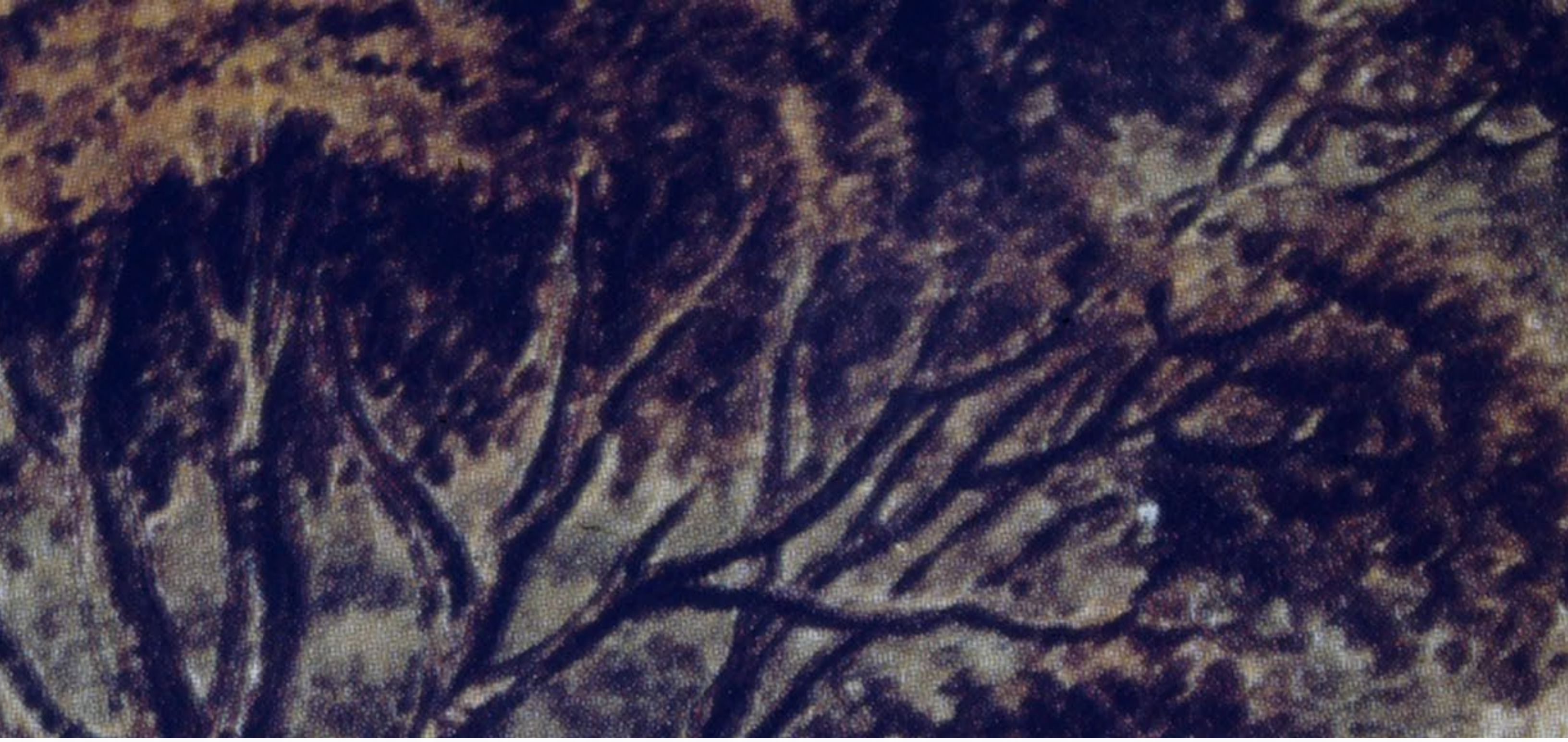
Dr. Peter Edmund Jones, son of the Rev. Peter Jones, was the Mississaugas of the Credit's medical attendant, their former chief, and the band's Indian Agent when he wrote to the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs regarding the death of a band member in April 1896:

Sir,

I have the unpleasant duty of reporting to you the death by drowning of Edwy Spencer No. 143 one of the oldest members of the Band. He and his son Abram No. 148 had spent the winter at the head of Grand River hunting and trapping. They were on their way home in their canoe coming down the river with the flood. The son says they stopped at Elora overnight, and he heard his father ask a man if it would be safe to go down the river, and he was told "Yes if you are a good canoe man." They left Elora about sunrise and had proceeded about half a mile when they came to a rocky gorge with perpendicular banks. Their canoe filled with water, they got out and hung on to it, the father about the middle; the son at the end. It was a wooden "dug out" canoe. They drifted some distance when the boat struck a rock, and they were both separated from it. Abram says his father went over the canoe and he thinks he must have struck a rock and have been stunned, for he was a good swimmer. Abram drifted down until he came to an eddy and then got ashore. The canoe and all its contents, except Abram, are so far lost.

The Grand River has nurtured our people for well over three hundred years. How are we as a people giving back to the River? How do we convey thanks for the bounty of the waters of the Grand, or for that matter, all the waters in our treaty lands and territory? We engage in a reciprocal relationship with the waters—how are we as a First Nation holding up our end of the relationship?

Partial map of the Niagara frontier, 1818



THE OLD CREDIT:
LIFE BEFORE NEW CREDIT

Grandfather and Grandson

In 1812, Chief Quinipeno[1], the principal chief of the Mississaugas at 12 Mile Creek, was concerned as he reflected upon the plight of his people. His once vibrant band had seemed to slowly waste away before his very eyes. Times had not been good for the Mississaugas as disease, famine, and death itself seem to be their companions. It seemed that things had begun to go awry when the Mississaugas began negotiating treaties with the British Crown. Expecting to share the land with the newcomers and live their lives as they had always done, the people were sorely disappointed with the advent of the settlers. Farms and settlements sprung up throughout the countryside with fences and ploughed fields that hindered the movements of the people. When attempting to camp on their own territory, angry farmers sometimes drove them away at the point of a gun. The newcomers polluted the waters and took more fish then they needed; hunting worsened as wild game became scarce as more settlers arrived in their lands. His people struggled to feed themselves. Quinipeno had expressed his people's disappointment and disillusionment as she spoke on behalf of the people during treaty negotiations with the Crown in 1805[2]. The feelings he expressed on behalf of the Mississaugas fell on deaf ears. To make matters worse, the Mississaugas would become involved in the war between Britain and the United States. Quinipeno needed to strengthen his people for the calamitous times they were facing.

Drawing upon the traditions of his people, Quinipeno sought to inspire his band. While alone, during a period of fasting and prayer, the chief had dreamed of a spearhead which was interpreted by him to mean that he was now invincible against arrow, tomahawk, or bullet. Soon after, Quinipeno gathered his people to inspire them with a demonstration of the gift he had acquired in the dream- just as the chief could not now not be overcome by arrow, tomahawk, or bullet, the people would not be overcome by the problems that assailed them. Taking an old tin kettle in his hands, he explained to those assembled that he would use it to catch a musket ball fired at his face. Moving a short distance away, the chief held the kettle before him and commanded one of the warriors to fire. Quinipeno lay sprawled on the grass dead. Rather than providing inspiration, Quinipeno's unnecessary death would erode the peoples' faith in their traditions and help set the stage for the advent of change.

The primary agents of change were the Rev. Peter Jones (Kakkewaquonaby) and Chief Joseph Sawyer (Nawahjegezhegwabe). Under the guidance of Jones and Sawyer, the Mississaugas had become fervent Methodists and began enthusiastically transforming themselves into successful farmers at the Credit River Mission Village. Interestingly, Chief Quinipeno's own grandson, Joseph Quinipeno, born about 1815, caught the spirit of change as it took hold of the people. Joseph would have been one of the first pupils at the schoolhouse when the Mission Village was established. Rev. Peter Jones wrote of Joseph Quinipeno:

> *An Indian lad, named Joseph Quenchenau [Quinipeno], belonging to the Credit tribe, showed great love for his books, and was very punctual and attentive at school. But best of all, he loved his Saviour, and regularly, night and morning, offered up his private prayer to God. In the twelfth year of his age he was taken ill, when he committed himself into the hands of his Maker, saying he was not afraid to die, for he knew God would take him to heaven. After he was dead, his friends placed all his books, consisting of his Bible, Indian hymn-book, and spelling-book, on the top of his coffin, because he had loved them so much. I was very sorry to lose such a promising boy from our little society; but God saw best to take him, and therefore we must bow to His sovereign will.* - from Peter Jones's, History of the Ojebway Indians

Joseph Quinipeno, so full of promise, died young and would never witness the achievements of his people during the 19th century. For that matter, neither did his grandfather, Chief Quinipeno, see the changes that raised his people's spirits from despair to hope. One wonders what grandfather and grandson would have thought about the changes that had taken place. Would the grandfather lament the loss of tradition; would the grandson rejoice at the "progress"? If both, were somehow able to see the Mississaugas of the Credit at this point in the 21st Century, what would they say?

To read more of Chief Quinipeno, see Donald Smith's book, *Sacred Feathers; The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquanaby) and the Mississauga Indians.*

[1] The Dictionary of Canadian Biography provides several spellings of Chief Quinipeno's name including: Quenepenon, Quenebenaw, and Kineubena.

[2] Chief Quinepeno participated in the Toronto Purchase and Head of the Lake Treaties. Although both treaties were negotiated in 1805, the Head of the Lake Treaty was ratified as Treaty 14 in 1806.

Davisville

"One day, while at the mission-house with several of our Indian brethren, we descried, away in the distance, a long line of persons in Indian file, winding in and out among the oaks of the plain, and making towards us. We called attention to them, and they were immediately pronounced by our brethren, as the Mississaguas." - Rev. Alvin Torry

Rev. Torry, the first Methodist Minister to work among the Six Nations of the Grand, wrote about the arrival of approximately thirty Mississaugas from the Credit River at Davisville in the spring of 1824. While many people today are aware that the Credit River Mission Village was the principle home of Mississaugas of the Credit ancestors from 1826 to 1847, very few recognize the role that the village Davisville played in transforming the lives of the people.

Davisville, near Brantford, was a settlement of Christian Mohawks that had sprung up around the home of Mohawk Chief Thomas Davis during the early 1820s. Chief Davis had fought in the American Revolution and the War of 1812 and, in his later years, had become preoccupied with matters of faith. The old chief was an adherent of the Anglican Church, but dissatisfied with its lack of spiritual passion, he became a devout Methodist upon finding its message more spiritually suited for his life. Many Mohawks also found the Methodist message transformative and began settling near the home of Chief Davis. The Mohawk Christians of Davisville abstained from alcohol, were models of personal piety, and set themselves to adapt to a changing society that radically differed from their traditional mode of life. Peter Jones, who later became Chief of the Mississaugas, was an enthusiastic convert to Methodism. Beginning in 1823, Jones spent much time at Davisville teaching reading, writing, and the Christian faith to the young people of the village.

Concerned about the fate of his own Mississauga people, Jones paid a visit to the Credit River in 1824 and invited his people to visit Davisville in order to get the "good religion". Among the Mississaugas that made their way to the Christian village from the Credit River was Peter's own mother, Tuhbenahneequay. No sooner had the Mississaugas arrived at the village then they were invited into the chapel to hear about the Creator that Peter had spoken of earlier at the Credit River. Once inside the chapel, the Mohawk Christians raised their voices in prayer and song and asked the Creator's blessing on everyone present.

During an especially fervent prayer, led by Peter Jones in the Anishinaabe language, many of the Mississaugas cried out, "*O, my sorry, wicked heart, O, my sorry, wicked heart, I shall go to the bad place!"* Despair gave way to hope as almost all of the thirty Mississaugas that entered the chapel that day became Christians- among them the mother of Peter Jones. Peter's hope that his people would accept the Gospel message had come to pass. The Mississaugas had begun a spiritual reformation; it was then time to reform their lifestyle as well.

Fearing the new converts would return to their former ways if they returned to the Credit River, the Mohawk Christians induced the Mississaugas to stay at the settlement by providing them with as "much land as they would wish to till". The offer was accepted with many of the Mississaugas building their wigwams within a stone's throw of the mission house. Children of school age were taught to read during the week while their fathers were taught how to farm the land by Peter Jones.

The Mississaugas did not completely give up their ways of moving about the land to harvest the foods they needed, but now they observed the Sabbath during their hunting activities. Rev. Torry noted with some satisfaction that "at such times they would spend the day in prayer and praise, observing it as strictly as they were at home. Not infrequently they met with some of their own nation, who were also hunting, and they always invited them to come to the Grand River and get the ""good religion" "which they enjoyed."

By the time the Mississaugas left Davisville to return to the Credit River in 1826, it was estimated that about 150 of the roughly 200 Credit River band members had become Christians. Within a short time of their arrival back at the Credit, they established, with the help of the government of Upper Canada, the Credit River Mission Village. The work that began at village of Davisville would be a pivotal point in the history of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

You can read about the Mississaugas at Davisville in the Autobiography of Rev. Alvin Torry at online.canadiana.ca

Education at the Credit River Mission

The Mississaugas of the Credit, while living at the Credit River Mission Village, were enthusiastic supporters of day school education. Not surprisingly in a Christian village, one of the main objectives of the school at the mission village was to create a literate population that could read and understand the Bible. A second objective, related to the first, was the use of the day school as a first step in training teachers and missionaries to convert other First Nations people to Methodism. To that end, curriculum at the mission school focused on reading, writing, Bible study and the singing of hymns. The Mississaugas' of the Credit enthusiasm for education was shown in 1827 when a second school had to be started as "50 scholars are too many in one school." In 1830, out of 70 children at the Credit River Mission, 50 were enrolled at the school.

One of the reasons for the success of the mission school was that instruction was carried on in both English and Ojibway. Peter Jones, and his brother, John Jones, translated learning materials into Ojibway that were readily embraced in the mission schools. Also important was the adaptation of teaching methods that were appropriate for First Nation learners. Whereas in the settler schools, students were taught by the simple method of memorization and recitation, Mississauga students were taught using learning materials such as the abacus, picture cards, maps and globes that helped the students obtain direct experience of the information they were to learn. Also different from the settler schools was the number of subject areas covered during classes. While basic arithmetic and reading were taught in the settler schools, the Mississaugas were taught not only mathematics and literacy, but also geography, astronomy, geometry, English grammar, and science. Settler schools were rare in Upper Canada and, when they did exist, were often staffed with extremely unqualified teachers. The Mississaugas, on the other hand, erected schools in their villages soon after their conversion to Christianity that were staffed by competent teachers—many of them of First Nation origins. The children of the Mississaugas of the Credit, during the existence of the Mission village, were far more literate that the settlers surrounding their village at the Credit.

Democracy at the Credit River Mission Village

It is interesting to note how the people of the Credit River Mission Village made their laws in 1830. Today, laws are made by duly elected officials who make laws at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. The vast majority of citizens have very little say in the laws handed down to them from above, and might, during the next election, turn out the government if its legislation is largely unpopular.

The 1830 By-Laws for the Credit River Mission Village prescribes a way of constructing laws that was far more democratic and reflective of the needs of our ancestors:

A General Council of the whole nation in the village (two-thirds at least of resident householders shall be present) shall be held on the first day of January in every year, except when that falls on the Sabbath, then the day proceeding the first of January; for the purpose of regulating the affairs of the nation, and choosing public officers for the ensuing year. These councils shall be conducted according to our old customs, the chief presiding.

At these general councils any new law or regulation may be made by a vote of the majority; and any old law repealed by a vote of two-thirds.

To this Council the Chiefs themselves shall be amenable, and for great offenses, gross immorality, or notorious incapacity, may by a vote of two-thirds, be deposed, and a new chief or chiefs chosen.

Upon reflection, would the band members of the 21st century Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation be comfortable with our ancestors' methods of the 19th century; would our ancestors be supportive of our modern methods?

Justice at the Credit River Mission Village

In 1830, the Mississaugas residing at the Credit River enacted "By-laws and Regulations" drafted by Methodist missionary and Mississaugas of the Credit Chief Peter Jones. At the time the by-laws were written, the community was governed by three chiefs, and who, according to the "By-laws and Regulations", exercised a great deal of discretion in the punishment of offenders. Note the role of chiefs in the section of the by-laws entitled- Laws Relating to Various Offences:

1. *Any Indian inhabitant convicted of stealing shall restore fourfold, or at the discretion of the chiefs, if they think a less amount sufficient according to the circumstances of the case. For a repetition of the crime the offender shall be punished at the discretion of the Chiefs and Council.*

2. *Any one assaulting or beating another shall be fined at the discretion of the chiefs.*

3. *For slander the offender shall make such amends to the injured persons as the chiefs shall direct.*

4. *For bearing false witness, injuring a neighbour's property by fire, by throwing down his fences, killing or wounding his cattle or offences of the like kind, the offender shall be punished by fine or by banishment as the chiefs and council shall determine.*

5. *Young persons who are disobedient to their parents, disorderly in their conduct, or otherwise misbehave to the injury of the public shall be corrected at the discretion of the chiefs, either by their parents, or by the officers of justice.*

The chiefs at the time the by-laws were enacted were elected by a majority vote for a life term. The chiefs were to act as judges in all trials for theft, debt, drunkenness or other offences against the laws and customs of the Mississaugas of the Credit. When the chiefs gathered to judge a case, the verdict was decided by a majority vote. Offenders not wishing to be tried by the chiefs could elect to be tried by a jury of six men.

Good Conduct at the River Credit

At a band council held at the River Credit on June 6, 1836, it was decided that due to the poor conduct of the young people and children, the chiefs and other principle men of the band would monitor the conduct of the children and youths and then punish them whenever they deserved it by a whipping. In a further attempt to curb immorality at the village, James Tobicoe was ordered to put away his fiddle. Being of the Methodist persuasion—fiddle music contributed to dancing—an act considered highly immoral to the Christians of the Credit River Mission Village.

Mississauga Courtship

Those of us living in the 21st century might be surprised to discover that in many cases there was not a great deal of courtship prior to a man and woman being united in marriage. For the Mississaugas, marriage contracts were often arranged by parents without the consent, or even the knowledge, of the children involved. It was not unheard of for people to enter into marriage before any courting had occurred or before the couple had even spoken to each other.

In the case of a young man left to his own devices to find a wife, once he had set his eyes upon a likely marriage prospect, he engaged his mother, or perhaps a friend, to intercede on his behalf with the parents of the prospective bride. Loaded with presents for the potential wife, as well as her parents, the mother or friend of the young man would make known the young man's intentions regarding his love interest. If the bride-to-be and her parents accepted the presents the two young people were officially engaged. A short period of engagement followed- of not more than a few months, and then the couple went off together on a wedding trip. The wedding excursion was spent either hunting or fishing with the newlyweds returning with the fruits of their hunting or fishing trip presented to the mother of the bride. The married couple then lived with the family of the bride until such time as they had their own family to maintain. Note that no public vows or particular ceremonies were performed for the marriage.

- Summarized from: History of the Ojebway Indians: With Especial reference to Their Conversion to Christianity: with a Brief Memoir of the Writer by Rev. Peter Jones

Mississaugas in Fergus, Ontario

A. D. Ferrier (1830-1890), a Scottish immigrant, arrived in Fergus, Ontario in 1834. A pillar of the community, he served as a Justice of the Peace, Lt. Col. Of the Militia, member of the provincial legislature, and in numerous other roles. In 1864 and 1865, he delivered a series of lectures that were later compiled in a book, *Reminiscences of Canada: and the Early Days of Fergus*. The town of Fergus is located on the Grand River, in Centre Wellington Township, and thus located within the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Of special interest to the MCFN, is the description Ferrier provides of a Mississauga encampment on his lands during the winter of 1841 and 1842:

... in the winter of 1841 or 1842 a large encampment of Indians was made in my woodland, and of course I went up to see them. They were very respectable people from the river Credit, and Wesleyan Methodists. We used to hear them in the evenings singing hymns, and they had testaments in their wigwams, and many of them could read. They were well behaved and honest, and the [women] made quantities of baskets and sold them in the village. Some of the men were fine, big, handsome fellows, and some of the women very fair and comely looking. They had one long shaped wigwam, and two or three small round ones, and were quite pleased when lady visitors, especially, called upon them. I paid them a visit once with a lady visitor, and we sat and cracked away as well as we could for some time. One merry old lady was a great snuffer, and showed us her stock, which she was to take home with her. I remember she had one bladder of Scotch snuff quite full, besides some other parcels of it. I think their minister was a chief called Jones, but he was not with them. They will eat almost anything, and their cookery did not appear very choice. They were very fond of turnips, and got a great many from my farm. I asked one of their hunters one day why he did not kill more wolves, as the bounty was so high. His answer was, " Indians no care to kill wolves; they hunters as well as Indian." They often passed my door, and I had a fine thorough-bred colley, whose house was close to the door, but she would not make friends with the Indians at all. Even when I ordered her into her house she lay and growled and showed her teeth. They killed a great many deer, and stayed almost till spring. A winter or two afterwards another lot of them camped near the village, but of a very different character, being drunken, thieving fellows, and the people in the village were in constant fear of them, and heartily glad when they took themselves off.

What makes this piece so interesting is that despite the fact that the Mississaugas had been living at the Mission Village on the Credit River since 1826, many band members were still moving about their territory as their ancestors had done since time immemorial. It seems that the town of Fergus was a favourite location for some of our people to spend the winter. There is no clue as to the identities of our ancestors written about in this piece, although it is known that George Henry (Maungwudaus), the paternal ancestor of the Henrys living at New Credit, was born about 1807 near the upper waters of the Grand River. It is not too difficult to imagine that perhaps some of the Henrys returned, from time to time, to their ancestral hunting grounds in that region.

Within five or six years of their encampment at Fergus, the Mississaugas would remove themselves from the Credit River Mission Village and relocate to their present location in Brant and Haldimand Counties.

Thanks to Professor Jonathan Ferrier of Dalhousie University for pointing out this excerpt from *Reminiscences of Canada: and the Early Days of Fergus.*

Taking the Pledge

The June 1842 edition of the *Monthly Visitor*, a newspaper dedicated to sobriety and abstinence from alcohol, reported on a “Temperance Soiree held at the River Credit Mission” earlier that month. Considering that our ancestors at the Credit Mission were, for the most part, devout Christians of the Methodist persuasion, it was not surprising that a tea party promoting such a cause was held at the location. The Council House, the building chosen to host the event, was decorated with evergreens for the occasion and a large British flag was displayed at the head of the room. Of the 150 people in attendance for the event, roughly two-thirds were Mississaugas of the mission village while the remainder consisted of local settlers.

The “party-goers”, while promoting abstention from alcohol, did not abstain from partaking of the food supplied by the ladies of the village and their neighbours. As was custom in those days, all present participated in a toast to Queen Victoria—“May the Great Spirit bless our Great Mother the Queen!” and enthusiastically sang two verses of God Save the Queen. A toast for the Temperance cause was then given and followed thereafter with a rousing chorus of Rule Britannia. Tea cups were refilled after the toasts were given and the children from the mission school were ushered into the Council House to hear about the evils of alcohol and the benefits to be gained by its avoidance.

Mississauga speakers alternated with settler speakers to deride the use of alcohol. The conclusion of each talk was punctuated by an appropriate song. The highlight of the tea party was an energetic speech given by Joseph Sawyer, a chief of the Credit River people. If anyone could bear ample witness to the evils of alcohol, it was Sawyer. The Chief had been personally ravaged by the use of alcohol and had seen the degradation of his people arising from their use of “fire-water”. At one point in his life, Sawyer, desperate for more alcohol, bartered his son, David, to a settler for two gallons of whiskey. The boy fortunately escaped the settler and later in his life would become Chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

A prodigious drinker, Joseph Sawyer was a violent man when intoxicated and it took several fellow band members to restrain him from terrorizing the people. Upon his re-commitment to Christianity in 1824, he quit drinking and diligently applied himself to farming and spiritual activities. Sawyer, no doubt, was pleased to see the Credit River Mississaugas reap the benefits of their conversion to Methodism and its teaching of abstinence. Prior to the band’s conversion in the mid-1820s, members were suffering the ill-effects of alcohol, were ravaged by disease, and found themselves in the midst of a rapid decline in population. The government officials of Upper Canada, and even the Mississaugas themselves, thought they were on the path to extinction. Once the band had converted to Christianity, alcohol was no longer the menace it once was, and the people would go on to build a successful and prosperous agricultural village. A decade after founding of the Mission Village, the band had put 800 acres of land under cultivation, owned a herd of cattle as well as a number of pigs, sheep, and horses, operated two sawmills, lived in forty comfortable homes, and were the major shareholders of the Credit River Harbour Company. Perhaps, best of all, they had escaped the extinction that so many thought imminent. Joseph Sawyer could be pleased with the progress his people had made since they had sworn off alcohol.

The speech given by Chief Sawyer was characterized as a happy one and it was supposed that the spirit of intemperance would be driven away by the eloquence of the Chief. The speeches made that day were deemed a success as twenty-two people responded by taking the temperance pledge. Perhaps abstention from alcohol would help to transform the newly minted teetotalers' lives just as it had for the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Support for Manual Labour Schools

The people of both the New and the Old Credit have always been anxious to ensure that their children receive a good education. On July 22, 1844, Chiefs Joseph Sawyer and Peter Jones, on behalf of the River Credit people, pledged 100 British pounds from their land payments towards the establishment of Manual Labour Schools among the First Nations, and a further 25 pounds was pledged annually for their maintenance. Also promised was land at the Credit River flats if the River Credit village was selected as a location for such a school.

The Schooner: Credit Chief

The schooner CREDIT CHIEF of 140 tons burden,
was launched at Port Credit on May 1st.

- Toronto Globe (May 19, 1847)

It was a proud day for the people of the Credit River Mission Village. It seemed only a generation ago that they had relied on birch bark canoes to convey themselves throughout the waters of their territory, and now here they were -the owners of a schooner that would soon travel the Great Lakes. The seventy foot long vessel was named the Credit Chief by Eliza Field Jones, the wife of Sacred Feathers (better known as Rev. Peter Jones), and was built at Port Credit with its sails, rigging, and anchor obtained in Kingston. The Mississaugas had financed the schooner using their own funds, and many of the band members had been employed obtaining the timber for the schooner's construction. According to Sacred Feathers, the completion of the schooner showed the "progress of civilization" among the Mississaugas who resided at the Credit River."

The Mississaugas were not unfamiliar with schooners when they began construction of the Credit Chief in December of 1846. A few years earlier, in 1844, using £120 from the proceeds of timber sales and a £50 loan obtained from the Bank of Montreal, the Mississaugas of the Credit had purchased a half share in the vessel Britannia. One of the voyages undertaken by the Britannia involved the transportation of salt and fish barrels to the Anishinaabe at Saugeen. Presumably, the schooner made other voyages as well, but according to River Credit Chiefs, John Jones and Joseph Sawyer, little profit was gained by owning a share in the schooner as the vessel was *"fitted out for sailing rather late in the year"* and that it was *"a rather dull business for schooners the whole year."* Sailing the Britannia for a season had netted the Mississaugas the meager sum of £15.

Undiscouraged by their experience with the Britannia, the Mississaugas constructed the Credit Chief with something more than generating a profit in mind. For several years the Mississaugas had been discussing moving themselves away from the Credit River to a more congenial location- one of the locations under consideration was the Saugeen area around Owen Sound and off Georgian Bay. In a December 1846 letter to Visiting Superintendent of Indian Affairs, T.G. Anderson, Chiefs Joseph Sawyer and John Jones hoped that the construction of the schooner would "enable our people early next spring to remove themselves and furniture to Owen Sound. The schooner will also be required at the Sound in bringing timber and provisions to our people." A scouting party sent to the Saugeen area early in 1847 determined that the location was unfit for agriculture and consequently, the idea of moving to Saugeen area was dropped.

Interestingly, the Credit Chief was launched on May 1, 1847, a matter of days before the Mississaugas of the Credit moved to their present location near Hagersville. Their new home presented a problem for the Mississaugas of the Credit and their schooner. From time immemorial the Mississaugas had lived on significant bodies of water and now, at their new home, they found themselves virtually landlocked with only two small streams flowing through their reserve. Neither Spring Creek nor Boston Creek could float a schooner. It was eventually decided by the Council at New Credit to sell the Credit Chief, but in the meantime, the vessel would operate on Lake Ontario until it could be profitably sold.

Remaining behind at the Credit River, while the rest of her people made the move to New Credit, was Pitiwasinoqua, the Mississauga wife of the captain of the Credit Chief, Thomas Wood. She had married the Captain in 1841 and together the couple had three children by the time the band departed the

Credit River Mission Village in 1847. For the better part of four years the Wood family lived at the "old" Credit as its father sailed the schooner until it was sold. Captain Wood later made mention that it took 3 or 4 years to sell the schooner but provided no details as to the identity of the buyer or the price for which the schooner was sold. Fortunately for the Wood family, the sale of the Credit Chief meant they could now become part of the settlement at New Credit. Census records report that the Wood family was reunited and living with fellow band members in 1851. The arrival of the family at New Credit signified that the Mississaugas' "age of sailing" had drawn to a close.

A Disappointing Discovery

On March 5, 1847, the Mississaugas at the River Credit addressed a letter to Lord Elgin, the Governor General of British North America. The letter explained their reasons for not accepting an offer to move to the Owen Sound area. Despite initial reports that the land was excellent for agricultural pursuits, further exploration by the Mississaugas found the area disappointing. The lack of good soil for crops, inadequate grazing land, the unsuitability of the land for the digging of wells and the construction of roads made the move impractical. Within the year the Mississaugas would find a new home at their present location.

THE MOVE TO NEW CREDIT

An Invitation Accepted

On April 7, 1847, Mississaugas of the Credit Chiefs, Joseph Sawyer and the Rev. Peter Jones, met with Six Nations Chiefs at their council house in Onondaga Township. Minutes of the Six Nations Council meeting would record the discussion that occurred which would set the stage for the relocation of the Mississaugas to a new home one month later.

Frustrated in their attempts to relocate their village near Owen Sound and knowing that the lands of their agricultural settlement at the Credit River were slated for sale, the Mississaugas found themselves on the verge of homelessness. As they considered their plight, rumours reached the Credit River Mission Village that the Six Nations of the Grand River had heard of the Mississaugas' predicament and intended to invite them to come and live amongst them. Sawyer and Jones soon paid a visit the Six Nations to ascertain whether there was any truth to the rumours they had heard.

Discussion with the assembled Six Nations Chiefs confirmed for Sawyer and Jones that they had not heard idle gossip- the rumours were indeed true. The visitors from the Credit River listened attentively as Chief Henry Brant, of the Six Nations' Council, recalled how his own people had lost their lands at the end of the American Revolutionary War and then needed to find a new home. He also recalled, with gratitude, how the Mississaugas of the Credit, having heard of the condition of the Six Nations, made available to them a portion of their territory that they might have a new home. Chief Brant noted that the lands now *"possessed and occupied"* by the Six Nations had once been that of the Mississaugas. *"Rumours,"* said Chief Brant, *"had recently reached the ears of the Six Nations that their tribe [the Mississaugas] … were moving about without a Home, they [the Six Nations] therefore intended to send word that if these rumours were true to invite them to come again to these lands first occupied by them, and there to take a part of that Reserve for their Residence."*

In his reply to Henry Brant, Joseph Sawyer reflected upon the treaty reached at Niagara between the Mississaugas of the Credit and the British that allowed Governor Frederick Haldimand to settle the Six Nations on a swath of land six miles deep on both sides of the Grand River. He outlined for the assembled chiefs the former extent of the Mississaugas' territory and how their lands had now been so reduced that his people had *"scarcely enough to stand upon."* He spoke about his band's disappointment at finding the lands at Owen Sound unfit for agriculture and the subsequent decision of the Mississaugas not to relocate to the area. Noting the good feelings of the Six Nations towards his people, Sawyer, a devout Methodist, considered the offer of land by the Six Nations as nothing short of providential. Expecting little more than 200 souls to relocate from the Credit, Sawyer readily accepted the gift of a new home from the Six Nations chiefs.

Before the relocation of the Credit people could commence, it was thought best by all concerned that the advice of the government be sought on the agreement reached between the First Nations. In the meantime, while waiting upon the government, Chief Jones asked if a group of young men from the Credit might look at unoccupied lands on the Six Nations Reserve that might serve to settle his people. Jones made clear that if squatters had made improvements on any of the lots they chose to occupy, the Mississaugas would pay the value of such improvements. Furthermore, to prevent any misunderstandings in the future, Jones stated the desire of the Mississaugas to pay something, however small, that the land given would not be altogether regarded as a free gift. If perchance, at some point in the future, problems arose as to the Mississaugas' land tenure at their new home, a record of some payment for the lands occupied by the Mississaugas would help to dispel any such concerns.

The Council meeting adjourned until later that month when it was presumed the thoughts of the government would be made known regarding the arrangements made between the Six Nations and the Mississaugas of the Credit.

In 1784, when the Mississaugas of the Credit negotiated the Between the Lakes Treaty that enabled the British Crown to grant the Haldimand Tract to the Six Nations, little did they know the situation would be reversed almost sixty-three years later. One good turn deserved another and the goodwill expressed by the Six Nations of the Grand in returning the earlier favour of the Mississaugas had enabled the birth of a new community in 1847. The community would be christened "New Credit" and May 2019 marks the 172nd anniversary of its establishment.

For more information about the Between the Lakes Treaty visit MCFN.ca/between-the-lakes-treaty-no-3-1792/

The Deal is Made

It seemed as if God himself had intervened to find a new home for the Mississaugas of the Credit in 1847. The government had decided to place the Credit River Mission lands up for sale, and it appeared that the Mississaugas were on the brink of homelessness. On April 7 and 8, Mississauga leaders, Chief Joseph Sawyer and Rev. Peter Jones, met with Six Nations Chiefs and accepted an offer of land to relocate the Mississaugas on a tract at the Grand River Reserve. Before the deal was finalized, however, it was decided by the Six Nations and the Mississaugas to seek the approval of the Governor General for the plan.

While awaiting the Governor General's approval of the relocation, Chief Joseph Sawyer and two young men of the Mississaugas examined land at the Six Nations Reserve suitable for the relocation of their people. The lands they selected consisted of 4800 acres in the southwest corner of Tuscarora Township that, according to Peter Jones, were *"sufficiently far away from the main settlement of the Six Nations and from the white villages and towns along the Grand River"* to insulate themselves from worldviews and lifestyles that clashed with their own. The land selected was fertile, largely in a state of nature, and contained few improvements as only four houses and a smattering of small clearings were found in the entire parcel. Chief Sawyer made the selection of land known to the Chiefs of the Six Nations assembled in Council on the 26th of April; they in turn *"cordially approved of the selection of the Credit people."* Happily too, word came that the Governor General had approved of the plan enabling the Mississaugas to relocate to the Grand River.

On May 7, 1847, Chief Sawyer, on behalf of the Mississaugas, met with Six Nations' Chiefs to finalize the agreement that would open a new chapter in their history. Sawyer listened with rapt attention as a series of questions were asked and answered before the Six Nations' Chiefs. Each answer to a question raised laid the framework for the occupation and stewardship of the lands the Credit River people would soon occupy. In answer to the first question, *"Shall the Mississauga tribe have permission to make their future home on said Reserve lands?"*, the Speaker of the Council, Chief Henry Brant replied, *"Yes"*. Upon the second question *"Where should they be located?"*, the Speaker replied, *"On a block on the southwest corner of Tuscarora, in the 1st and 2nd Concessions, to begin on each Concession from lots 1 and 2, and continue to* *lot no. 12."* The Speaker further explained that just as the Department of Indian Affairs had limited the amount of land a Six Nations member could hold to no more than 100 acres, so too would the Mississaugas be limited.

Further questions and answers continued to set the parameters of the deal between the Six Nations and the Mississaugas. The Mississaugas were not to sell any of the lands, which they would shortly possess, to any other tribe, member of a tribe, or individuals except to members of the Six Nations, without the consent of the Six Nations Council and the Governor General. Blocks of land not assigned to any Mississauga family, or individual, were to be held in common with any band member able to take wood or make map syrup from those lots as needed- members of the Six Nations could likewise make use of the same lots. As some of the lots had been improved with small clearings and, in at least four cases, the erection of homes, the Credit River people were expected to pay the Six Nations the value of such improvements.

Finally, the last question was posed, *"When shall the Mississauga tribe take possession?"* The answer was clear and concise, *"Tomorrow if they wish."*

No document has been uncovered specifying the exact date our ancestors departed from the Credit River Mission Village for their new home in Tuscarora Township, yet there would have been little delay as the farmers among them were anxious to put the year's crop into the ground. When the Mississaugas first moved into the Credit River Mission Village in 1826 they could carry all their possessions on their backs, but in the move of 1847, many of the band members had to travel back and forth twice to bring their possessions to the new settlement. The twenty-one years that the Mississaugas had lived at the Mission Village had been a time of challenge and change for the people. Many of our ancestors must have wondered what the future held as they would attempt to replicate the success they had experienced at the Credit River.

January 1848:
Eight Months after the Move from the River Credit

May 2017 marks the 170th anniversary of our ancestors' move from the River Credit to New Credit. Rev. Peter Jones, in an article in the January 12, 1848, edition of the Christian Guardian provided an account of our ancestors' progress at their new home.

According to Jones, scarcely eight months after their move:

> *"They are now settling, some on 100, and others on 50 acre lots, with every prospect of doing well. During the past summer they have worked nobly; some families have cleared from two to six acres, which they have sown to wheat; they have also erected a neat and comfortable place of worship, which will serve also for a school-house; and best of all, several of the young people have become steady and joined the Church."*

Jones also took time to recall how they had flourished at the River Credit. When the mission village had been established in 1826, the people had no domestic animals, scarcely any household furniture, and could carry most of their possessions on their backs. Leaving the Credit River, some twenty years later, our ancestors left prosperous farms, and a village with homes furnished better than many of their settler neighbors, a hospital, mechanic's shops, a sawmill , and even a schooner. Upon the move to New Credit, some of our ancestors had to make two trips back to their old village to walk all their possessions to the new location. In short, our ancestors had prospered.

As Jones pointed out, the move to New Credit was made with mixed feelings. There was a sense of optimism among our people, but also a sense of sorrow at leaving family members behind in the village graveyard. Many of our ancestors also felt sorrow recognizing they were leaving the place where they had embraced the Christian religion and with it a new lifestyle.

Jones closed his article by asking his readers to take *"an interest in the prayers of all who love the Credit Indians, for their spiritual and temporal prosperity in their new settlement."*

Loss for Gain

The month of May has long been a time of reflection and celebration for the people of New Credit. It was in this month, in 1847, that our people left the River Credit village for their new home in the Townships of Tuscarora and Oneida. Band members lost much as cleared fields, comfortable homes, and a village with mills, a hospital, a church and school were left behind. Their schooner, the Credit Chief, was also left behind as were also the wharf and storehouses. The people began anew by clearing fields and constructing log cabins or shanties to shelter their families.

Times were difficult but the people prospered. With a current population of over 2300, New Credit's people have expanded far beyond the boundaries of the land they moved to in 1847. The people now possess a multi-million dollar trust fund, own an energy company, are heard in the halls of municipal, provincial, and federal governments. The people have taken the opportunity to showcase themselves and their culture before the world at events such as the recent Pan-Am games. The Mississaugas of the Credit have prospered. May the people of New Credit take some time this month to reflect upon their achievements, celebrate their accomplishments, and work towards still greater success.

Ensuring our Place

On August 22, 1865, Mississaugas of the Credit Chief David Sawyer, and several principal men of the band, found themselves at the Six Nations' Council House in order to secure the lands they occupied in Oneida Township. Shortly after arriving on the lands in Tuscarora Township that they had obtained as a gift from the Six Nations on May 7, 1847, the Mississaugas found themselves in need of additional land. Although no council minutes from either the Six Nations or Mississaugas of the Credit councils have been found documenting the deal, an additional gift of 1200 acres was at some point provided by the Six Nations to meet the requirements of the Mississaugas. It did not take long for the Mississaugas to occupy the southern portion of Oneida Township, Concession 1, Lots 1-6, and to establish farms that were quite prosperous. The Census of 1861 recorded that one of the most prosperous farms was that of James McLean and his Mississauga wife, Notinoqua, who occupied the southern half of lot 3 and built up a farm valued at $3000; Charles Herkimer, whose lot no. 6 would soon border the village of Hagersville, had transformed his parcel into a farm producing a mixed crop of wheat, oats, barley, peas, and potatoes valued at $2000. John McCollum's farm on lot no. 1, valued at $4,000, was the concession's most prosperous, with sixty-six acres under cultivation.

The Mississaugas had worked diligently to improve their farms in Oneida, but felt uneasy as to their land tenure. The agreement made with the Six Nations that enabled them live in Oneida was only verbal in nature and no written confirmation of the gift of land existed. Without any documentation, the Mississaugas worried that the farms they had labored so mightily to improve might somehow be taken from them. In approaching the Six Nations Council, it was hoped that they might receive some assurance that they lands they occupied were truly their own.

The council meeting regarding the matter opened with the usual pleasantries. Chief Sawyer reminded the Chiefs of the Six Nations that the Mississaugas had provided a home for the Six Nations when they had become homeless at the close of the American Revolution, and that later, the Six Nations returned the favour to the Credit River people when they, themselves, had faced homelessness in 1847. After reciting his understanding of the agreement by which the Mississaugas held their lands in Tuscarora Township, Sawyer asked the assembled chiefs for clarity regarding their land holdings in Oneida. Responding to Chief Sawyer, the Speaker of the Six Nations' council admitted that a proper understanding regarding the tenure of the Mississaugas should be arrived at, and to that end, he wanted to review the agreement by which the Mississaugas held their lands in Tuscarora Township. The council minutes of 1847, detailing the agreement between the Mississaugas and Six Nations, were read before the assembly. David Sawyer, and the band members accompanying him, hoped that the lands granted to his people in Oneida, would be held in the same manner as that in Tuscarora. The minutes having been read, council was adjourned until the next day.

Sawyer addressed the council when it resumed sitting the next day, and after reiterating his peoples' thankfulness for the gift of land granted by the Six Nations, he presented a thinly veiled threat to the assembled chiefs. If his people could not hold the lands in Oneida in the same manner as they did the lands in Tuscarora, then his people would remove themselves to another location and the Six Nations could pay for the improvements the Mississaugas had made to the lands in both townships. Considering that the improvements had been substantial, the Six Nations would have owed a hefty sum to the Mississaugas if they removed themselves elsewhere.

Late in the afternoon, Speaker of the Council, Chief John Smoke Johnson, provided an overview of the relationship between the Six Nations and the Mississaugas, and he acknowledged the fact that the 1200 acres of land in Oneida Township were not memorialized in any document. He confirmed that the Mississaugas *"might feel secure in their possession, and that they would not be interfered with or disturbed; that, they, the Mississaugas, held their lands, both in Tuscarora and Oneida, assured to them just as the Six Nations held their lands."* The next day, the Speaker rose to give the authoritative decision of the assembled chiefs: the Mississaugas would hold their lands in Oneida Township just as they held their lands in Tuscarora. Council unanimously agreed to confirm the gift of the 1200 acres to the Mississaugas with the same understandings as that found in the agreement of 1847.

Chief Sawyer expressed his heartfelt thanks to the council and stated that the friendship between the Six Nations and the Mississaugas of the Credit, *"as of old, should never be severed, and that, in accordance with the practice of his ancestors, he would, with the sign of shaking hands, with the Speaker of the Council of the Six Nations, seal their friendship."*

BUILDING NEW CREDIT

Insights from the New Credit Mission Book

Within a few years of the founding of New Credit in 1847, our ancestors, devout Methodists at the time, erected a church near the centre of the community. Dedicated on June 27, 1852, the New Credit Mission Church (becoming the New Credit United Church in 1925) would play a central role in the life of the community for many years to come. Rev. David Wright, the New Credit community's first missionary, began a book that would chronicle the activities of the Church from 1852 to 1896. An interesting read, the New Credit Mission Book provides the modern reader with insights into the religious life of the community during the latter part of the 19th century.

Few people today can appreciate the large role the Church played in the lives of the people. For most of the 19th century, almost everyone in the community was a Methodist, even if only in a nominal sense. Besides the usual services that took place on Sundays, children were expected to attend Sunday school classes as were all the adults in the community. In the 1850s, five or six adult classes were held on Sunday afternoons at various locations within the community such as the church, the school house, or at a class leader's home. Class leaders were devout men from the community who were to instruct class members on the basics of Christianity and to encourage them to lead devout Christian lives. Each class leader would meet with the missionary and the other class leaders every three months to discuss the progress of the class members. For people that regularly attended the classes and lived what appeared to be holy lives there was commendation, but for those who lived seemingly less than godly lives condemnation was in order. "Sister" Sawyer in 1858, for example, was paid a visit by Rev. Wright and Hiram Tobicoe to furnish an explanation of why she was not a member of the Church. In 1857, Stephen LaForme was admonished to quit drinking, and as a result, he promised to reform his ways. One suspects his attempts at reform failed as he was "disowned" by the Church two years later. Joseph Claus was censored by the Church for attending dances and even dancing himself. It is interesting to note that the "sins" of yesteryear hardly draw notice today.

It was interesting to note in the Mission Book that the adult classes were held in "Indian" and English. It is not apparent for how many years some of the classes were held in Ojibway, but one suspects that some were held until 1874 when Ojibway was no longer used during Sunday services. Prior to 1874, the sermon was preached in English by the missionary and then simultaneously translated into Ojibway by one of the more devout (and presumably articulate) band members. George King, a pious band member and Chief of the MCFN, had acted as a translator/interpreter for a number of years when he suddenly died in 1874. Upon his death, the Church board resolved to do away with the services of an interpreter and services would thus be conducted in English only. The Mission Book records no community dissatisfaction with the Church board's decision, although fourteen years later, in 1888, it was decided that *"each alternate Sabbath evening service shall be conducted in the 'Indian' language."*

The New Credit Mission Church received its first organ largely through the efforts of Charles Herkimer. Charles Herkimer, besides functioning as one of the Chiefs of the MCFN from time to time, was also an accomplished musician, a singer, and music teacher. According to the Mission Book, Herkimer, as leader of a troupe of singers, proposed that if the Church Board would lend its support, he and his troupe would donate a quarter of the funds they raised from holding concerts towards the purchase of an organ for the congregation. In 1881, after three years of hard work, the Church Board thanked Herkimer for his untiring and successful efforts to secure an organ for the church. Herkimer would go on to lead the music in the Mission Church for many years to come and would eventually lead the choir at the United Church in Hagersville.

While perusing the Mission Book, one is able to read of some of the earliest births, marriages, and deaths occurring at New Credit. The earliest baptism recorded in the book is that of *"Mary Catharine daughter of Charles & Christianna Herkimer...born Tuscarora Sep- 4- 1852 & bap[tised] Nov.14-1852."* The earliest marriage of two band members recorded reads: *"Edwy Spencer and Louisia Finger were married by Banns Dec 14 1852 at the Mission house in presence of Hiram Tobicoe & John Chechalk- by D. Wright Missionary"*.

The earliest burial of a band member is recorded in the Mission Book as: *"Mrs Sophia Wasson Died in great Peace July 4- 1857."* The New Credit Mission Church in the latter part of the 19th century figured largely in the lives of the people of New Credit as it literally recorded, in many cases, life's major events from cradle to grave.

Dedication of the Mission Church at New Credit

The Mission Church at New Credit opened on June 27, 1852. The Rev. Peter Jones preached the sermon of dedication that day, and later, 500 people enjoyed a celebratory feast to mark the occasion. Part of the Methodist branch of Christianity, the church not only served the people of the First Nation, but also served the religious needs of non-reserve individuals seeking services of a Methodist persuasion. The mission church became part of the United Church of Canada in 1925 and remains part of that denomination today.

The Chippewa Union School

The Chippewa Union School located on the S ½ of Lot 2 Con 1 of Oneida Township on MCFN territory serviced the children of New Credit and the nearby families of Walpole Township. Superintendent of Indian Affairs Gilkison reported, in a letter of 12 March, 1873, to Ottawa, on the attendance at the school between July and December of 1872. 55 students were to attend the school for the 104 instructional days contained within the time period. Gilkison reported that the average rate of attendance at the school was about 26%. Some students attended as few as 5 days during the period while others had perfect attendance. Perfect attendance was achieved by two New Credit students—9 year olds Lochlan Herkimer and Annie McDougall. The school was eventually closed and the building relocated. Many community members will remember the old school as the old white clapboard structure that functioned as the concession stand near the present ball diamond.

Pay and Pensions in 1875

A summary prepared for the Indian Department regarding the amount of pay and pensions due to New Credit members provides insight into the incomes of various band officials in 1875. Dr. P.E. Jones received $200 for his services as head chief, and he also received an additional $200 as band physician. Josh Elliot, 2nd chief and interpreter, received $150 while 3rd chief, Charles Herkimer, made $50 annually. Teachers, Alfred A. Jones and John Elliot, earned $200 for their efforts to educate the youth of the reserve. The aged and infirm, such as Lawrence Herkimer and Susan Tahwah, received a yearly pension of $25.

Elections Were Simple in 1877

It seems that elections were simpler back in our past. The election of April 20, 1877, is an excellent example, with nominations and the vote held all in one day. The people of New Credit assembled that Friday morning to elect up to three chiefs as elections at the time allowed for multiple chiefs rather than a single leader.

Nominations were called for the positions, and the nominees for head chief included the incumbent, Dr. P.E. Jones, and David Sawyer. The vote was held publicly, with the men voicing support for the candidate of their choice. Sawyer became head chief by a vote of 20 to 17. The same process of election occurred for the second chief, with Charles Herkimer defeating George Henry by a vote of 22 to 14. As the band did not desire a third chief, no nominees were put forward and no election was held for that position.

Additional band positions, such as messenger and band interpreter, were also filled on election day. Nominations and elections were conducted without a secret ballot, all within the same day.

Apparently, Superintendent Gilkison did not approve of the discontent exhibited by some of those assembled who did not obtain the election results for which they had hoped. He urged those individuals to bow to the will of the majority and expressed his hope that a good spirit would prevail, noting that harmony should exist in a community as small as New Credit.

A Crime Wave

A visit to New Credit on October 19, 1877, by J.T. Gilkison, District Superintendent of the Indian Department, provided him the opportunity to urge the band to deal with a wave of crime occurring in the community. The disorderly and mischievous conduct included the cutting of the lines and harnesses of the horses of “white” worshippers at the New Credit Mission Church, the robbing of orchards, the milking of cows, and the disappearance of poultry. Such shameful acts disgraced the community, according to Gilkison, and he urged the band to make an example or two of the miscreants in order to deter such shameful acts.

Grand Opening of the Council House

September 15, 1882, marked the grand opening of the New Credit Council House. Between 2000-3000 people attended the opening and partook of festivities that included the participation of four brass bands, a feast catered by the women of New Credit, a speech by Chief Dr. P.E. Jones, and an impressive fireworks display to close the day. It was an auspicious opening for a building that would serve New Credit for many years.

Educational Awards: 1884

The 1884 Rules and Regulations of the Mississaugas of the Credit was a set of bylaws designed to promote good government among the people of the community. Interestingly, By-law #12 was the longest by-law in the regulations and focused attention on education at New Credit. Besides dealing with the usual rules for operating a school such as the responsibilities of teachers, the role of trustees, and the conduct of students, the by-law also provided rewards for parents and guardians that encouraged the diligent attendance of their children at school. For each child that attended school for 200 days of the school year the parent would receive $4.00, for each child attending 150 to 200 days-$2.00, and for each child attending 100 to 150 days-$1.00. Not to be left out, students were also awarded prizes for their attendance with the student having the highest attendance during the year receiving $5.00, the student with the second highest attendance- $4.00, and so on with the student holding the fifth highest attendance receiving $1.00.

Not only was good attendance rewarded, but so was academic ability. Prizes were awarded in the following subject areas: reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic and geography. Based on exam results the 1st highest scoring person in each subject area would be awarded $1.00, the 2nd highest would receive $0.50, and the 3rd highest would earn $0.25.

Good conduct by the students was also rewarded as prizes ranging from $1.25 to $0.25 were awarded to the top five students with the best deportment.

1888: An Excellent Year

1888 had been an excellent year for the Mississaugas of the Credit according to the Annual Report for the Department of Indian Affairs. The picture of the First Nation, as painted in the report, predicted a bright and rosy future.

One of the reasons for the optimism was that the First Nation was no longer included in the same superintendency as the neighbouring Six Nations. For the first time since their arrival at New Credit, the Mississaugas would have their own exclusive agent. The agent would be no stranger to the Mississaugas and was intimately familiar with the needs and aspirations of the people on the reserve. The new agent was none other than fellow band member, physician and former chief, Dr. P.E. Jones. The departing superintendent, J.T. Gilkison, who would now solely focus his attention on the Six Nations, wrote favourably of the Mississaugas: *"...by their aptitude and desire for progress they set a good example to other Indian bands."*

Dr. Jones, in his portion of the 1888 Annual Report, noted the population growth of the Mississaugas over the course of the previous eight years. In 1880, the population of the band consisted of 208 individuals; in 1888, the population had risen to 245, and according to Jones, was the largest the band membership had been in over fifty years. Jones attributed the rapid growth in population due to the improved financial condition of families, homes that were comfortably furnished and cleanly kept, preventative measures that had been implemented to curb disease, and a willingness of band members to seek early medical treatment when sick.

Financially speaking, the Mississaugas were also doing quite well. 3079 acres of land, or about a half, of all reserve land was under cultivation in wheat, oats, barley and other grains. 145 cows, 6 oxen, 259 young cattle, 147 horses, 75 sheep, and 165 pigs all contributed to the financial well-being of the reserve. Monies earned from investments of the band with the government earned a semi-annual distribution of $15 per capita. The monies of the distribution were not needed for the support of families, according to Jones, who reported that many of the men gave that income to their wives as "pin-money" (money to be spent on non-essentials). Also noted in the report was that the Mississaugas had *"a very keen eye to avail themselves of making money"*. Some of the band members had noticed a demand for rustic furniture and had started a profitable business manufacturing and selling such goods. The proud agent could inform his superiors in Ottawa that very few of the Mississaugas availed themselves of charity.

Optimism also prevailed at the school house. Miss Mary Moody, the school teacher, had noticed a rise in attendance during the course of the year. In the early part of the year an average attendance of 12 students per day was noted, yet as the year progressed, the average daily attendance rose to 22 pupils. Plans would soon be undertaken to commence construction of a new school house that would replace the old and unsuitable building in which students were learning.

Jones ended his portion of the annual report brimming with confidence and bursting with pride: *"I trust that this band, which for so many years has been looked at by other tribes as a pattern to follow, will continue happy, contented, prosperous and wealthy."*

Comparing Census Records: 1850 and 1889

An abstract of census records for New Credit compiled in September 1889 by Dr. P.E. Jones-band member, former chief, and Indian agent, makes some interesting comparisons between the years 1850 and 1889. In 1850 the largest families at New Credit were the Jacksons-16 members; the Tobicoes with 12 members, and the Herkimers with 10 members. In 1889, the largest families were the Laformes with 37 members; the Herkimers with 25, and the McDougalls with 24. Families appearing in the 1889 census but not of that in 1850 included the Henrys, Chubbs, Spencers, and Saults. The total band membership in 1850 was 144 individuals while that of 1889 was 253.

1891: An Impressive Year for Public Works

On December 19, 1891, the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Lawrence Vankoughnet, conveyed his congratulations to Chief Daniel McDougall and the Council of New Credit for the impressive completion of several public works during the year. The band had managed to brick the New Credit Mission Church, erect a new brick schoolhouse, construct a bridge over Spring

Creek, and gravel and grade reserve roads. Vankoughnet expressed regret, however, that he would not be able to attend the concert at New Credit held on December 30 to celebrate the accomplishments.

Roadmasters

Found scattered throughout the MCFN Council minutes of the late 19th and early 20th century are references to a number of individuals knowns as Roadmasters. New Credit in earlier days was divided into eight districts each with its appointed Roadmaster. Appointed from the able-bodied men of New Credit, the Roadmaster was to ensure that roads, bridges, culverts, fences, and ditches in his district were kept in a good, clean sufficient state of repair.

To aid the Roadmaster in his work, council required that every male band member, not owning land, between the ages of 21 and 60 to work two days annually without pay to make necessary repairs; if a man owned 50 acres of land he was required to work for three days. A man failing to complete his free labour for the band was fined $1 for every day missed. The Roadmaster was himself free from doing any roadwork for the band, but he did have to supervise the work carried out in his district and collect the fines of those individuals unwilling to complete their statutory labour. All fines collected from those failing to do their duty would be turned over to the Chief who would apply the monies to road maintenance. Not being content to have the Roadmasters look after roads, bridges, and so on, the council also made it his responsibility to inspect his district for noxious weeds.

Improvements to the New Credit Church

At a public meeting held at the New Credit Council House on October 26, 1911, unanimous approval was given to grant the Ladies Aid of the New Credit Church funds for improvements they had made to the church. For the sum of $89.94, the ladies were able to repaint, paper, and decorate the building's interior as well as make considerable improvements to the seating. Indian Agent Van Loon reported to Ottawa that the church building was a credit to the reserve.

The "Cow By-Law"

In February of 1919, the band council of amended By-law # 5. Under the by-law, prior to the amendment, band members could *"allow their milch cows in flow of milk"* to roam and pasture on roads and highways of the reserve and the animals were only considered in trespass if they broke into land enclosed by lawful fences. Due to the damages caused by the roaming bovines, the by-law was amended to disallow such practices and owners found in violation were subject to having their animal(s) impounded and levied a fifty cent fine to get their animal(s) back. Part of the fine went to the pound keeper for his work and the other part was paid to the Indian Agent for the general use of New Credit.

HEALTH, WAR & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Health Measures at the "Old" and "New" Credit

Social distancing, quarantine, and all manner of other precautions are the order of the day as the Covid-19 pandemic assails Canada and the world. Action by the leadership of the First Nation and the cooperation of its people have so far helped to keep the virus at bay, and hopefully, such will be the case until the end of the pestilence.

The Mississaugas at the Credit River Mission Village soon after its founding in 1826, were also determined to ward off disease and preserve the health of the community. Found within the 1830 Constitution of the Mississaugas of the Credit River is a brief regulation related to community health:

> *No one shall be allowed to leave wood or timber in the streets of the village; nor to suffer any filth or dead carcasses to remain within the bounds of the village. But it shall be the duty of all householders to see that the village is perfectly free from all filth and dirt, which is necessary in order to preserve health in the place.*

The diseases that afflicted the Mississaugas at the Mission Village—smallpox, whooping cough, and tuberculosis—were deadly threats to the community. Chief and missionary Peter Jones, having officiated at the burials of many band members who had succumbed to disease, was wise to include a provision for public health when he framed the Constitution of 1830. The regulation recognized that maintaining the health of the community was a shared responsibility, with every household expected to help keep the community clean and healthy.

In 1884, Chief Peter E. Jones, like his father the Rev. Peter Jones, framed a set of rules and regulations for the governance of the Reserve. Considering that P.E. Jones was the first Status Indian to obtain a medical degree from a Canadian university and that he was the band's medical attendant, it was not surprising that a considerable portion of the Rules and Regulations of 1884 was devoted to public health. By-law No. 2 "As to Care of Public Health" contained 8 sections pertaining to the physical well-being of the Mississaugas and others residing on the reserve.

Sections 1 to 5 of the By-law stated that the medical attendant would be elected by a majority vote of the duly qualified members of the band. It was the duty of the medical attendant, a qualified medical doctor, to treat the members when called upon in times of sickness. Annually, the doctor was to vaccinate members of the band at the Council House on the first Monday of September. The doctor was also to deliver an annual public lecture to band members of any matter that seemed best with a *"view to the preservation and restoration of health".* The doctor's duties included furnishing medical reports to the Indian Department. Just as the medical attendant was elected to office by a majority vote of the band membership, the attendant's services could also be dismissed by vote.

Under By-law No. 2, each July, a General Council of the band was to meet with the purpose of selecting a Health Committee of at least three members. The committee, cooperating with the medical attendant was empowered to *"remove, or cause to be removed, and destroyed all putrid or other matters which shall tend to injure the public health."* Owners or occupants of land that failed to remove any "putrid" or dangerous material in a forthright manner were subject to a fine of between five and thirty dollars. The Committee, upon the recommendation of the medical attendant was to *"provide aid to the sick, aged, disabled, and destitute members of the Band, who are not able to provide for themselves; and such aid shall be paid out of the funds of the Band."* The Committee was also tasked with the establishment of a hospital during an epidemic:

In case an epidemic, malignant, or contagious disease she'll arise and likely to spread among the set band, the said committee, upon the advice of the Medical Attendant, shall erected, or cause to be erected, and maintained in some unfrequented place a temporary hospital, where all persons so afflicted shall be placed, cared and provided for, until such time or times as the Medical Attendant shall permit of their removal; the said hospital to be erected and maintained out of the funds of the Band.

Fortunately, the First Nation was never assailed by any disease in such a way as to require the building of a hospital, although from time to time strong measures were taken to protect the community. In 1914, Small Pox broke out on the Six Nations and New Credit Reserves. Dr. Macdonald, New Credit's medical attendant, urged people to refrain from congregating in large groups and to avoid travel to the neighbouring Six Nations Reserve. A number of band members were placed in quarantine, with one non-band member removed from the reserve for disobeying quarantine orders.

To read the 1830 Constitution of the Mississaugas of the Credit River read Elizabeth Graham's book, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, Peter Martin and Associates, Toronto, 1975.

Small Pox Epidemic 1914

The month of December is usually a month most people enjoy because of the joyous Christmas celebrations and the imminent arrival of a new year, but for New Credit in 1914, it was a time of great anxiety. December of that year saw the people of New Credit in the midst of a Small Pox epidemic. Dr. Macdonald, the band medical officer from Hagersville, warned the people of New Credit to avoid holding public meetings and to stay away from the Six Nations where the epidemic was also raging. Chief George King was in charge of ensuring that the afflicted people were quarantined and that during the time of their confinement they had enough supplies in their households to keep body and soul together. A grateful Council voted King a payment of $42 for his untiring work to help the sick and stop the spread of the disease. Members of New Credit blamed a non-band member living on the reserve, Andrew Schuler, for starting the outbreak in their community. Schuler, in the midst of the epidemic, was later arrested by Samuel Laforme for ignoring the quarantine orders that placed him in confinement. For his disregard of the quarantine orders, and for possibly starting the epidemic, Schuler was branded an undesirable person living at New Credit and was removed from the reserve at the order of Chief and Council.

The Mississaugas of the Credit Participation in World War One

November 11, 2018, marks the 100th anniversary of the armistice that ended the fighting of the First World War. For the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the end of the war meant an end to the sacrifices the First Nation had been making in order to help secure an allied victory.

When the conflict began in 1914, the band membership of the First Nation consisted of 286 individuals. During the course of the war, 32 members enlisted for service or, approximately, 11% of the population. By way of comparison, the Canadian rate of enlistment was only 8% of the population. The rate of enlistment is surprising insofar as First Nations' men were not compelled by the government to take part in the conflict. Whatever their reason for enlisting, men with the easily recognizable Mississaugas of the Credit surnames of Sault, LaForme, and Tobicoe, amongst others, joined the fight. It might be rightfully said that there is no MCFN family today that does not have a First World War veteran attached to its family tree.

Of the 32 members that enlisted, only four failed to return from the service. Lt. Cameron Brant and Maxwell Tobicoe were both killed in the fighting overseas; Joseph Chubb and John Alexander LaForme both died of pneumonia, in Canada, before they were able to reach the battlefields of Europe. Others, such as Albert Crain, Wallace Sterling, and Thomas Secord, were physically wounded during the conflict but were eventually able to return home. Undoubtedly some of our soldiers returned home suffering from "shell shock". Identified today as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, "shell shocked" was the term used to describe the suffering of those soldiers who were wounded mentally and emotionally under the stresses of war.

The people of New Credit not only gave up their fathers and sons for the war effort, they also gave of their time and financial resources as well. The women of New Credit assisted the Hagersville branch of the Red Cross by knitting and making articles for use of the soldiers at the front. At a public meeting held at the Council House on May 16, 1916, those in attendance unanimously consented to give $300 for the benefit of the 114th Battalion (Brock's Rangers) – the unit in which 20 New Credit band members had enlisted. A further $300 was given to the Canadian Patriotic Fund which sought to financially support women and children whose husbands and fathers had went off to fight. Oral history also relates that the people of New Credit gave up a tangible tie to their past at the Credit River Mission village. When making the move from the Credit River to their present location, the mission bell from the church went along with the people. For a number of years the bell was hung on a large pine tree near the 1st line cemetery from where it would call the people of New Credit to Sunday worship. Construction of the New Credit Mission Church saw the bell relocated to the church steeple in 1852. It is thought that at some point during the course of World War One the bell was contributed to a scrap metal drive that took place to gather materials for the war effort. With the contribution of the church bell, a concrete link to the past had been lost to the Mississaugas of the Credit.

The contributions of the people of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation illustrated how much the First Nation got behind the war effort. In retrospect, the fact that New Credit got behind the war effort is somewhat ironic in that they contributed to uphold the freedoms that Canadian citizens enjoyed, while being denied many of those same freedoms while living under the shadow of the Indian Act.

World War II: Our Fallen

This past September 10th was the eightieth anniversary of Canada's entry into World War Two. Over a million Canadians served in the armed forces during the course of the conflict and approximately 43,000 of them lost their lives. The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation did its part in the fight against totalitarianism and its assault on democracy by contributing thirty-two band members to the conflict with five paying the ultimate price.

The Mississaugas of the Credit have never shied away from warfare and its warriors were engaged during the War of 1812, the American Civil War, the Second Boer War, both World Wars and the Korean Conflict. While our warriors were active participants in the aforementioned conflicts, one is often left wondering what motivated each individual to go off to war. It has often been speculated that First Nations' members went off to fight compelled by a warrior spirit that lingered within them. Some posit that our warriors fought out of loyalty to the British Crown; still others believe that warriors enlisted with political motivations in the hope of proving the worth of First Nations' people and strengthening their claims for enhanced rights. Fortunately, Mississaugas of the Credit band member, Maxwell J. King, in an article he wrote while overseas for the January 2, 1942 issue of "The Pine Tree Chief", provided some clue as to his motivation for enlisting during World War Two.

"Eight months ago today, about 10 a.m., a train loaded with Canadian soldiers pulled into Aldershot [England] and unloaded a battalion of wide-eyed cheering men. We had answered the call of adventure in our hearts and here we were with the first contingent of the second division. Up until

this time war had meant glory to us. It was a grand feeling to walk down the streets in our nice new uniform. It gave us an aggressiveness which we had not known before. We had heard lots of stories of the good times of those other soldiers (God bless them) who were youngsters like us twenty-five years ago. England was far away and we thought the war would be over before we got here anyway. While at Camp Borden we heard rumors that we were to guard Canadian shores. On out last leave we laughed and said good-by to our families. We were sure we would be home again in three or four months. We were overjoyed when they told us we were coming to England. We would see many sights we had heard about so many times before."

A little over seven months after his article appeared in the *"Pine Tree Chief"*, Maxwell King was killed on the ill-fated raid on Dieppe, France. An entry on the Canadian Virtual War Memorial for Pte. Maxwell Jacob King reads:

"Pte. Maxwell Jacob King, of the Mississaugas of the Credit Reserve, was the son of the late Mr. Frank L. King, Chief Councillor of the Mississaugas for a number of years. Pte. King was lost in the Dieppe raid on August 19, 1942, one of the many brave men of this district [Brant County] who were sacrificed in that ill-fated battle. Well known and highly respected in his community. Pte. King is mourned by his mother, and his widow and young son, Maxwell. Pte. King was married in England and his wife and son are now residing on their farm on the Reserve."

Perishing at that same time and place was King's fellow band member, Pte. Norman Wilfred Henry. His entry on the Canadian Virtual War Memorial reads:

"Pte. Norman Wilfred Henry, son of Mrs. Christine Henry, of the Mississaugas of the Credit Reserve, lost his life in the Battle of Dieppe on August 19, 1942. Fighting with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, Pte. Henry had been with his unit a long time and his gallant record added lustre to the contribution made by the members of his Reservation in the Second Great War. His brother, Pvt. Joseph Henry was with the United States Army Air Force and he too lost his life while on air operations over Germany on the eve of V.E. Day in May 1945. Thus their mother, Mrs. Christine Henry had a double burden of sorrow to bear, made all the more difficult because her husband, a veteran of the First Great War, passed away in 1939."

By the time the Second World War came to a close in 1945, two other band members had lost their lives: Jacob S. Brant and Lawrence LaForme. As mentioned earlier, apart from the article written by Max King, it is difficult to ascertain the reasons our fellow band members went off to war, but it is supposed that their motivations really do not matter. What really matters is the perpetual gratitude of the First Nation to all those who gave of their lives to make the world a better place.

Mississaugas of the Credit Veterans Memorial

This year in November, as in years past, many people of New Credit will meet at the New Credit Veterans Monument to remember the military service of our warriors/veterans. The war memorial is unlike that of many communities throughout Canada as the MCFN monument attempts to list all of the warriors of the First Nation who went off to serve in conflict. While cenotaphs are memorials raised to help us commemorate those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during conflict, the New Credit memorial not only lists the names of the nine band members who died during war, but also proudly displays on its granite slabs the names of 86 others who have seen military service. New Credit is fortunate to recognize two veterans of the War of 1812, 2 veterans of the American Civil War, 1 veteran of the Boer War, 35 veterans of World War One, 31 veterans of World War Two, 3 veterans of the Korean War, and 21 members who have served in the military during peacetime. New Credit has a rich military history and it is quite certain that not a family at New Credit is without a veteran in their family tree. At New Credit, remembrance is not merely a time to express our gratitude to the fallen, but also a time to express our appreciation to all warriors past and present.

MCFN & THE WIDER COMMUNITY

What's in a Name?

The Township of Toronto was facing a problem, not a difficult problem, but a problem that would nevertheless occupy its citizens' time for several years until its resolution. In 1965, the Township made plans to incorporate as a town and, within a decade, as a city. One of the problems arising out of the plan was the determination of a name for the new town. The "Toronto" moniker, already having been taken by the neighbouring community to the east, the township council asked its residents, in January of 1965, to submit potential names for the town. 2793 individuals sent in their suggestions with 889 different names proposed. Some of the names proposed; such as "Winston", were meant to honour individuals such as Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister; other names commemorated villages within the township such as "Port Credit" or "Dixie". Even "Five and Ten" was proposed as a name, but one name was suggested far more often than any other — that of "Mississauga".

Hugely popular with the public, "Mississauga" made up nearly one-fifth of the suggestions submitted for the new name. No one is quite sure why the name resonated with the people of the township although it was generally agreed that the named harkened back to the times when the ancestors of the Mississaugas of the Credit inhabited the area. The Mississaugas left their homes at the Credit River in 1847 for their current location, yet despite their absence, their name was perpetuated in the area by the Mississauga Golf and Country Club; a militia unit known as the 9th Mississauga Horse Regiment; and businesses that incorporated "Mississauga" as part of their firm's name, for example, Mississauga Motors Limited. The name "Mississauga", like all the other names submitted, would be screened through a naming committee and the township council until the choice was narrowed down to two possibilities. Although popular with the township populace, "Mississauga" was not so popular with the township council. One councillor acidly remarked*: "the Indian tribe of that name which had lived in the area has contributed least to it."*

Sadly, even though "Mississauga" was a popular choice, it seemed as though people had forgotten, or perhaps never knew, that it was Mississaugas of the Credit ancestors that negotiated the treaty that allowed the township to be settled. On August 2, 1805, the British Crown negotiated with the Mississaugas to acquire 70,784 acres of land in a strip of land six miles deep from the Lake

Ontario shoreline and stretching between the western boundary of the Toronto Purchase lands and the western boundary of the Brant Tract lands. Chief Quinipeno, the spokesperson for the Mississaugas at the negotiations, spoke of the reluctance of the people to part with their lands, *"…It is hard for us to give away more land: The young men and women have found fault with so much having been sold before; it is true we are poor, the women say we will be worse, if we part with any more,…"* The Mississaugas received £1000 in trade goods and the sole right of fishing at 12 and 16 Mile Creeks and the Credit River with land on their flats. The agreement between the Mississaugas and Crown was ratified as the Head of the Lake Treaty, No. 14 in 1806. The Mississaugas had contributed much to the establishment of the future town and city.

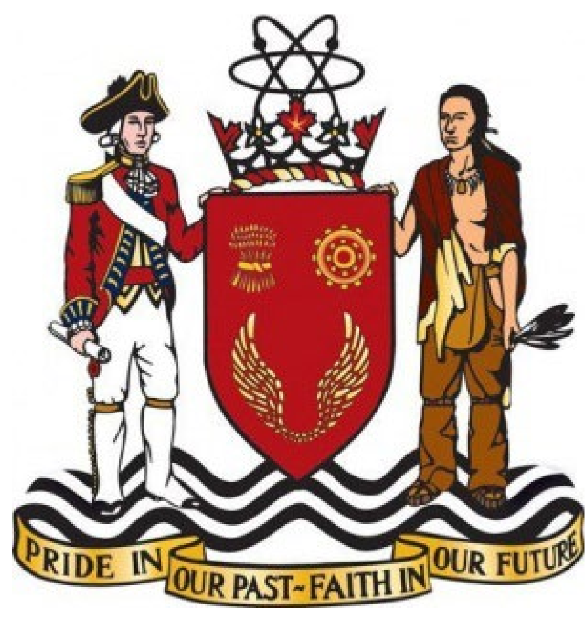
On December 9, 1967, the electorate of Toronto Township went to the polls to select a town council and name for the town that would be newly born on January 1, 1968. Voters could choose between "Mississauga" and "Sheridan" for the name of their community. As it turned out, "Mississauga" was the peoples' choice with 11, 796 votes to 4,311.

The birth of the new town was celebrated at a Midnight ceremony on January 1, 1868. Robert Speck, the first mayor of the Town of Mississauga, and a crowd of 500 citizens enjoyed fireworks and speeches to mark the occasion. Among the crowd that night was Chief Fred King of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Chief King took the opportunity to remind the good people that the Town of Mississauga was built on lands acquired from his people many years earlier. The Chief, on behalf of the First Nation, presented a medicine stick as a token of good luck to Mayor Speck; in return, Speck presented King with a scroll and a gold key to the Town. While the scroll and the gold key have long since disappeared, another symbol of friendship between the Town of Mississauga and the First Nation has been on display at the New Credit Public Library for years. On July 20, 1968, the Mayor and Council of the Town of Mississauga presented a scroll granting the "Honorary Freedom of the Town" to the Council and Members of the "Mississaugas of the New Credit Reserve" and was *"evidence of the desire by the town to develop a bond of affection and regard with the descendants of the Indian inhabitants of this area, from whence the name originated."*

In 1974, the Town of Mississauga was reincorporated as a city and adopted a coat of arms in which the MCFN's contribution to the history of the city is called to mind. On one side of the coat of arms is a British Officer holding the Head of the Lake Treaty, and on the opposite side, stands a dignified First Nation's man, presumably a Mississauga of the Credit member, holding four quill pens each representing one of the Mississauga Chiefs who signed the agreement.

It is hoped when citizens of the city of Mississauga look upon their community's coat of arms, or hear the name of their city spoken, they are drawn to think of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the treaty they signed that enabled the birth of a township, a town, and a city.

Thanks to Matthew Wilkinson of Heritage Mississauga and Erma Ferrell for providing the newspaper clippings and the article series, *"How Mississauga Got Its Name"* by Richard Collins.



The official coat of arms of Mississauga, Ontario, was adopted in 1974 following the transition of the area from a town into a city.