

Chief Powles Claus: A Bio Prepared BY MBQ Research

Chief Powles Claus died on Thursday the 26th of July 1866. He had been in poor health. The Missionary of the time, the Reverend G. A. Anderson wrote:

"After the boils healed a gathering came on his ear[?] and discharged up to the day of his death. On Tuesday last he was so much better that he walked all over his farm and as if he had a presentiment of his approaching, and told his younger son what he wanted done. On Tuesday night he became very ill & Wednesday delirious until his death..."

"The tribe has lost a valuable man – no one can be found to replace him... We will miss poor Powles in every way – his memory was so good that he knew all the business of his people for upwards of fifty years." [Source: LAC RG10 Vol. 414 pp. 761-2 Reel C-9618]

Mr. Bartlett, Visiting Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Toronto wrote to his superior, William Spragge, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Ottawa:

"I have the honor to enclose herewith a letter from the Rev. G. A. Anderson reporting the decease of Powles Claus the leading Councillor of the Mohawk Indians, Bay of Quinte. He was a most useful man to his tribe, and recollected the business transactions for the last 50 years." [LAC RG 10 Volume 549 p. 368 Reel C-13,359]

Powles Claus was born about 1799. He first married Margaret Socco or Karadodon (whose parents were likely from Akwesasne) in St. George's Church in Kingston on the 10th of January 1818. [Source: St. George's Church Records in Kingston]

They had a large family: Mary, Lawrence, Deborah (probably died young), Sarah, Betsy (probably died young), Michael, John, Amelia, James (who died young), twins John & James (who died young), William & Thomas (who probably died young).

Margaret died about 1852 and about 3 years later he married the Widow Rachel (nee Maracle) Green. At the time of this second marriage he held 55 acres in Lot 34, Concession A, 35 acres in Lot 34, Concession 2 and 50 acres in the West half of Lot 33, Concession 1.

He seems to have done some travelling as a young man as documents indicate that in 1820 he was staying at Caughnawaga (Kahnawake) [Source: LAC RG 0 Volume 122 pp. 5950 -5962 Reel C-11,481]

His name starts appearing on important documents in the 1820s. It appears on the Warham Noble lease of 1824. His name can be found regularly in documents from the 1830s & 1840s where he signed as a Chief.

Missionary Saltern Givins in 1843 described his as *"a trusty man"* [Source: LAC RG10 Vol. 131 pp. 74278-9 Reel C-11485]

In 1858 Reverend G.A. Anderson wrote:

"Powles Claus one of the Chiefs of the Mohawk Tribe and now a steady and respectable man... My father [Superintendent T.G. Anderson] thought very highly of Claus and frequently said that he was the best man the Mohawks could have to manage their affairs..." [Source: LAC RG10 Vol. 414 pp.191-2 Reel C-9618]

Powles Claus did have difficulties. Anderson relates that Powles Claus once had *"intemperate habits"* but that recently *"has been very steady"*. [LAC RG10 Vol. 414 pp.191-2 Reel C-9618]

He also received a medal presented to him by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. [source: LAC RG10 Volume 362 p.549 Reel C-9596]

Powles Claus signed Surrenders No. 41, No. 51 & No. 81. He remained on Council in the community through the 1850s and until his death.

In September 1866, Reverend Anderson wrote to Mr. Bartlett (Visiting Superintendent of Indian Affairs) to say that:

"Since the death of Powles Claus there has been a good deal of anxiety expressed by different members of the Tribe as to who his successor would be... There is not a man in the Tribe capable of supplying Powles' place." [Source: LAC RG10 Vol. 414 pp.765-7 Reel C-9618]

Neither Superintendent Bartlett nor the community replaced Powles Claus in the Council that managed the affairs of The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. In 1869 a new system of electing councils was legislated by the Government of Canada and the first election under that system was held here in October 1870.

Descendants:

- His daughter Mary married Joseph P. Brant.
- His son Lawrence moved away from the Bay of Quinte.
- His daughter Sarah married Jacob Moses.
- His son Michael married Mary Smith.
- His son John married Catherine Loft.
- His daughter Amelia may have married William Green.
- His son William married Margaret Hill.

Could you be descendant? Check it out at the library.

Upcoming Info Session on August 14, 2013.....

The Draper Manuscripts

Join us as we learn about 19th century life through the words of members of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

Around 1879 a man called Lyman C. Draper was researching a book on Joseph Brant. He collected testimony from and corresponded with several members of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

Unfortunately Mr. Draper died before he wrote his book but his collection was preserved and we can explore the stories and information that he gathered.

These are some of the people he corresponded with:

- Mrs. Lydia (nee Loft) Martin, aged 77 years.
Grand-daughter of Captain Isaac Hill, mother of Dr. Oronhyatekha
- George Rokwaho Loft, born at Bay Quinte, Sept. 4 1815.
- Mrs. Margaret Moses, daughter of Old John Green
- Thomas Green – Mohawk Chief – son of Old John Green
- Mrs. Elizabeth Powless, granddaughter of Captain Isaac Hill; married Seth Powles
- Mrs. Ann Penn – born in 1800 – daughter of Peter Brant (a Delaware)
Wife of Chief Joseph Penn
- Joseph Hill, 86 years old – pensioner for services in war 1812.
Born in 1793, son of Joe Hill Sr.
- Archibald Culbertson -great grandson of Capt. John Deserontyon
- Joseph W. Hill (son of William Isaac Hill & grandson of Capt. Isaac Hill
- Seth W. Hill (brother of Joseph W. Hill above)
- Mrs. Ellen Maricle, oldest surviving grandchild of Capt. Isaac Hill
- Catharine Hill – granddaughter of Captain Joseph Brant & of Captain John Deserontyon
- Kenwendeshon M.D. (aka John Maracle)
- Dr. Oronhyatekha (Peter Martin)