

The Landing, 22nd May 1784

Background of the Landing:

In May, we celebrate the Landing of the Mohawks at the Bay of Quinte. During the American Revolution the Fort Hunter Mohawks had been forced to leave their home in Mohawk Valley. They found a place of refuge at Lachine, Quebec.

While many men of Fort Hunter were involved in the war, the women, children and old men suffered poor conditions at Lachine. In the Mohawk Valley they had prosperous farms and comfortable homes but had to leave them behind. These farms and houses were either destroyed by the Americans, or became occupied by the Americans. When the American Revolution was over, the treaty that ended the war made no provision for the people of Fort Hunter to return home.

During the hostilities, the British had promised that the Mohawk communities that had been “ruined” by the Rebels would “*be restored at the expense of Government to the state they were in before*” the war. [Haldimand's promise dated 7th April 1779 LAC Claus Papers MG19 F1 Vol. 2 pp. 89-90 Mfm. C-1478]

In the fall of 1783, Captain John and other Fort Hunter men visited the land at the bay and decided it would be their new home. In October 1783, the British “purchased” a huge tract of land from the Mississaugas – including land at the Bay of Quinte.

In April 1784 Captain John wrote to Daniel Claus saying:

“As regards now to where we should settle. Some are looking to Ohsweken, but for us, right from the first, we have decided to go near ‘Cataroqui’. To both moves, you have said, “Let it be done”. You have also stated that those who are at Lachine should move away this spring, and let no one be left behind.”

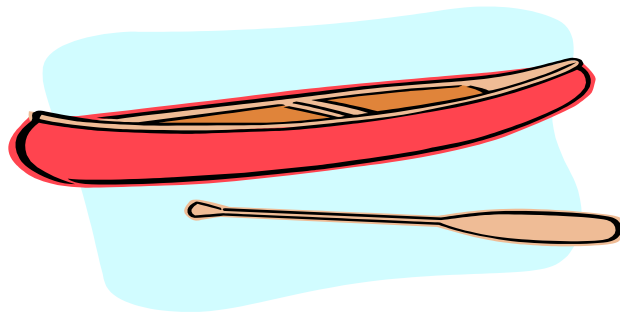
Captain John also told Daniel Claus:

“That is our intention, to move away as soon as the ice is gone. Not one shall be left here, even were you to ask us to stay on.”
[LAC Claus Papers MG19 F1 in Mohawk Vol.4 p.111-2 Mfm C-1478; translation Vol. 24 pp. 17-18 Mfm C-1485]

Reverend John Stuart wrote in May 1784:

"A part of the Mohawks having removed, last Summer, from LaChine to Niagara, the remainder of them set out, the beginning of May, for a place called the Bay of Kenty, 40 miles above Cataraqui, to take possession of lands assigned to them by Genl. Haldimand. .. those of the Mohawks, who are actually gone to the Bay of Kenty, are determined to remain there, that they may enjoy the advantages of having a Missionary, Schoolmaster, and Church..."

[LAC Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) Journals XXIII, 379-82]



Historical Descriptions of the Landing:

Captain John wrote a letter in June 1784 to Daniel Claus saying they had found a place to settle but he did not describe the actual landing until some years later in the Minutes of 1800:

"On the 10th of May, 1784, Sir John Johnson and Colonel Claus desired us all to come together, but Captain Isaac paid no attention to what they said and he separated from us and went to the Grand River. Sir John Johnson and Colonel Claus also told me to guide my people in proper manner and as we were going to a Country where there were other people (Messassagues) we ought to cultivate their friendship and live happy together. We arrived here on the 22nd of May and found a great number of the native Messassagues at this place who were very glad to see us and we were happy to be met in so friendly a manner. We then held a Council with the Messassagues and informed them our great Father had purchased these lands for us, and that we had come to sit down on them." [PROCEEDINGS OF AN INDIAN COUNCIL HELD AT THE MOHAWK VILLAGE IN THE BAY OF QUINTE FROM THE 2ND TO THE 10TH OF SEPTEMBER 1800 ON THE DIFFERENCES EXISTING AMONG THE INDIANS OF THAT VILLAGE. LAC RG10 Volume 26 pp.15307-354 Mfm. C-11007]

In the 1870's Lyman C. Draper took testimony from Chief Thomas Green and he described the Landing this way:

"When Capt. John's party moved to the Bay of Quinte, they landed just south-perhaps half a mile – of the present village of MillPoint, formerly Deserontyon in honor of the old Chief, & leader of the Settlement; & here they camped, & erected their cabins. For many years they had a wooden poster[?], & a flag, displayed in a tall pine at that locality, to commemorate the spot of their landing, & the event." [Draper Manuscripts Reel #17 Volume 13 p.73]

In the early part of the 20th century, Reverend Creeggan recounted the story of the landing as it had been told by Christeen Moore Smart (also known as Christian Smart (who died about 1872 and was widow of Chief Anthony Smart):

"Her story was that when the little band land on the shore of their new home, they upturned a canoe, covered it with the communion cloth, and placed all the pieces of the old Queen Anne communion set on it in plain view of all the people, that then the chief said prayers and they sang a hymn. Afterwards they planted a cross and flagstaff on the spot. Many of the older residents remember the flagstaff." [CAPTAIN JOHN DESERONTYOU AND THE MOHAWK SETTLEMENT AT DESERONTO. By M. Eleanor Herrington. Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. November 1921 p. 8]

And we also have the description of the Landing by Mrs. Susan Claus:

"On May 22nd, 1784 ...they landed with their families in fifteen canoes, on the shores of the Bay of Quinte, opposite the present rectory. Their first act after beaching their canoes was to have a service of thanksgiving. There was no clergyman, but the patriots overturned a canoe and on it placed a white cloth, then the communion vessels and had prayers and a Mohawk hymn[sic]."



**Contact the Research Department or
the library for more information on
any referenced material!**

The Landing Centennial & Bicentennial:

The centennial of the Landing in 1884 provided a good opportunity to celebrate. The Deseronto Tribune covered the event reporting that:

"Captain Brant went up the lakes to Grand River near Brantford, and Chief Deseronto came up the Bay of Quinte to Tyendinaga. They returned and reported, and it was decided that the nation should divide, and accordingly fifteen families came up the bay and landed at a spot near what is now known as McCullough's dock, in 1784." [THE MOHAWK CENTENNIAL at Tyendinaga, on the Bay of Quinte, Canada, September 4, 1884. Originally from the Deseronto Tribune. Appendix No.16 in Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society, Red Jacket, Volume III. Buffalo: Published by Order of the Society 1885]

Throughout the 20th century the Landing continued to be commemorated and celebrated. The story of the Landing is depicted in the mosaic in the Community Centre. The Bicentennial in 1984 is remembered by many and that celebration was recorded for future generations.

With the Landing in 1784 and the founding of the community, the Fort Hunter Mohawks became the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.



Check the research
webpage for a link to a
program from the 1960
Landing!
www.m bq-tmt.org



Information also available on
Kanhiote Library website.
www.kanhiote.ca

Minutes of 1800

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

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

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

Proceedings of a Council held at the Bay of Quinte beginning on the 2nd and ending on the 10th of September 1800, in the Mohawk Village

Present

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

P. Selby Asst. Secy. Indian Affairs

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

Captain Claus addressed the meeting as follows:

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

September 3rd

Present

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

Captain Isaac spoke as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Source: Library and Archives Canada RG10 Volume 26 pp.15307-15354
Microfilm Reel C-11,007*



**For a complete
copy visit the
Research
Webpage
www.m bq-tmt.org**