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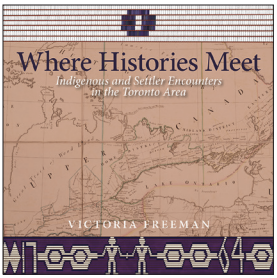

WHERE HISTORIES MEET: INDIGENOUS AND SETTLER ENCOUNTERS IN THE TORONTO AREA

Victoria Freeman

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From Civilization to Assimilation

Peter Jones had developed a close relationship with Methodist missionary Egerton Ryerson when they worked together to establish the church and bilingual school at the Credit Mission in 1826. The question of how best to educate Indigenous children to adapt to rapid change was a subject of ongoing mutual interest.

By 1841, Jones had identified irregular attendance as a problem, as parents took their children out of the day schools to travel with them to harvest food in various areas. After visiting the manual training schools for the Choctaw and Cherokee Nations in the United States, he became convinced that "the children must be taken for a season from their parents, and put to well-regulated Manual Labour Schools."[1] Other missionaries and colonial officials had come to the same conclusion. In an 1844 fundraising speech in London, England, Jones outlined his vision:

> Our contemplated plans are to establish two Schools; one for one hundred boys, the other for one hundred girls. The boys to be taught in connection with a common English education, the art of Farming and useful trades. The girls to be instructed in Reading and Writing, Domestic Economy, Sewing, Knitting, Spinning; so as to qualify them to become good wives and mothers. It is also our intention to select from each School the most promising boys and girls, with a view of giving them superior advantages; so as to qualify them for Missionaries and School teachers among their brethren.[2]

Initially, many Indigenous parents supported his proposals because they believed the schools would equip their children to navigate economic and social challenges and that Indigenous people would play a major role in their operation.[3]

Proposals for manual-labour schools were a major feature of the colonial government's 1844 Bagot Commission report—but for different reasons. The Bagot Commission, one of six commissions appointed to assess the government's handling of "Indian" affairs between 1828 and 1858, was convened by Governor General Charles Bagot and tasked with investigating the Indian Department and the purportedly slow progress of "Indian advancement." Its chief aim was reducing the department's

expenditures "with a view to its diminishment and eventual extinction." But the commission affirmed the Crown's duty and responsibility to protect Indigenous peoples from insensitive local authorities and refuted Bond Head's removal policy.[4] According to the commissioners, there were no racial barriers to Indian advancement: the department needed to be reorganized, Indigenous people's lands and resources needed to be protected, and their children needed better education.

The 1844 final report documented conditions on reserves in Canada East and Canada West and advocated coercive strategies to speed up assimilation and end "dependence on the government." Indigenous children should be separated from their parents to expedite their assimilation by weaning them "from the habits and feelings of their ancestors."[5] Boarding schools with attached farms—now called Industrial Schools—were to be established to teach farming, trades, and domestic economy. The schools' farm crops would also reduce operating costs. The commissioners recommended the establishment of four Industrial Schools in partnership with the churches. Two existing schools (the Mohawk Institute at Brantford and the Methodist school at Rice Lake) would serve as models.[6]

Peter Jones was among those who made submissions to the Bagot Commission supporting the schools.[7] Although the proposed schools marked the beginning of the Indian Residential School system in Canada, Jones' vision differed from what the schools would become: he envisaged a system under Indigenous control that would help Indigenous people navigate the developing settler-colonial state.

The Bagot report's recommendation for schools was one of several recommendations promoting the assimilation of Indigenous peoples. It recommended reducing the annual presents promised in the 1764 Treaty of Niagara to affirm and maintain the Covenant Chain, the historic alliance of Indigenous peoples and the Crown. The report also recommended the preparation of band lists controlled by the government. People of mixed heritage ("half-breeds") would be deemed ineligible unless they were adopted by an Indigenous community. No Indigenous woman living with or married to a white man would receive presents nor would any child educated in an Industrial School.[8] Because of Indigenous opposition and the potential need for military allies during the Oregon border dispute, the government didn't end annual presents until 1858.

The Bagot Commission also proposed granting title deeds to Indigenous individuals for reserve land. Officials and missionaries believed title would encourage individual initiative, provide some legal standing for reserve lands and resources, and end Indigenous dependency on the government. But Indigenous leaders resisted the idea because it ran counter to the traditional practice of communal land ownership.[9] Temporarily shelved, the proposal would reappear in later legislation, such as the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857.

Although not all recommendations were implemented immediately, the Bagot Commission confirmed the overall direction of government

policy. As historian John F. Leslie writes: "The Commissioners' report, intended originally as a blueprint to reduce operational costs and make Indian people less reliant on government, became, in practice, just another milestone in the evolution and development of a more costly, permanent, and expanded Indian department which would increasingly regulate and control the daily lives of Indian people in the Canadas."[10]

Peter Jones' 1842 testimony to the Bagot Commission affirmed Mississauga self-government and self-determination. He spoke of the 1830 Constitution of the Mississaugas of the Credit and emphasized the need to recognize their full civil and political rights, grant land title in perpetuity, and provide full financial transparency for annuities and land sales. However, only his views on education were taken up as both church and government officials now supported assimilation.[11]

The consequences of the Bagot Commission were profound. The position of chief superintendent was abolished in 1845 on account of financial mismanagement and the civil secretary ran the department until 1860. In 1851, the Imperial Parliament announced that diplomatic presents would cease in 1858, unilaterally ending the alliance relationship. In 1856, it ceased annual payments to support Indian Affairs. An annual transition grant of $3,000 was given until 1860, when responsibility for Indian Affairs was transferred fully to the colonial government of the Canadas.[12] These new arrangements accelerated the appropriation of Indigenous land and resources for government ends and the coercive push to assimilate Indigenous peoples.

The General Council of 1846

Although the Bagot Commission recommended manual-labour schools, it suggested no measures to fund them. Bagot's successor as governor general, Sir Charles Metcalfe, discontinued the supply of ammunition to several communities in a bid to find the money, but it wasn't enough.[13] Funding for the first two schools, at Alderville and Mount Elgin (Muncey), was then tied to a larger scheme to relocate First Nations in southern Ontario and get them to contribute a share of their annuities to the schools. For a time, this push coincided with First Nations' desire to relocate to one shared territory.

In 1845, while Peter Jones was in Britain to raise money for the schools, a General Council was held among the Anishinaabek. The Anishinaabek of Saugeen and Owen Sound invited the other communities to join them in creating a new homeland on what remained of the Saugeen Tract on the Bruce Peninsula, one of the last remaining unsurrendered territories in southern Ontario.

In 1846, the proposal was considered at a General Council at the Narrows, the developing settler town of Orillia. Called by Thomas Gummersall Anderson, former Indian agent of Coldwater and the Narrows and head of the Indian Department, the Council's purpose was to convince the Anishinaabek to abandon their small reserves and gather in three larger communities at Munceytown (near London), Alderville (near Belleville), and Owen Sound on Georgian Bay. Manual-labour schools would be built in each community, and those who relocated would

receive deeds to the land.[14] Conveniently, the move freed up yet more arable land for settlers.

> *Where the two lakes meet, where we were, that was a place of gathering and meeting. It was a place of healing and government meetings that took place there . . . The big meeting took place there . . . about the residential school system, whether our kids should be sent there, and runners were sent out from our community to all the other Native communities around to have their Chiefs come to that meeting.*
>
> —Sherry Lawson, Chippewas of Rama[15]

In return for deeds, the bands would commit one-quarter of their annuities for the next twenty to twenty-five years to support the schools. By then, Anderson claimed, "Some of your youth will be sufficiently enlightened to carry on a system of instruction among yourselves, and this proportion of your funds will no longer be required."[16]

Present at the Council were Anishinaabe Chiefs from the Credit, Scugog, Snake Island (Georgina), Rama, and Beausoleil and Mohawks from Tyendinaga but not Six Nations (presumably because they already had the Mohawk Institute).[17] The Methodist missionaries included Peter Jones and John Sunday. Anderson opened the Council:

> Brethren—For more than twenty years past, large sums of money have been spent by the Government, and your Missionaries have used their endeavours to divest you of Indian customs, and instruct you in the arts of civilized life, but it has not proved effectual. Though favourable alterations have taken place, and your condition has greatly improved, yet much remains to be done. And that you are not a better and happier people, and your civilization more advanced, is not the fault of the Government; neither can it be attributed to neglect on the part of your Missionaries; but it is because you do not feel, or know the value of education; you would not give up your idle roving habits, to enable your children to receive instruction. Therefore you remain poor, ignorant and miserable. It is found that you cannot govern yourselves. And if left to be guided by your own judgment, you will never be better off than you are at present; and your children will ever remain in ignorance. It has therefore been determined, that your children shall be sent to Schools, where they will forget their Indian habits, and be instructed in all the necessary arts of civilized life, and become one with your white brethren. In these Schools they will be well taken care of, be comfortably dressed, kept clean, and get plenty to eat. The adults will not be forced from their present locations.

> They may remove, or remain, as they please; but their children must go.
>
> Brethren—I wish seriously to impress upon your minds, that if you do not avail yourselves of this favourable opportunity of bringing you from darkness to light, it may be the last time you will have so good an offer. Remember that disgrace will attach to your character; and how justly future generations may reflect upon your names, if you at present neglect their best interest.
>
> Brethren—For some years past, you have had the management of your own funds. Your money is gone; and you have nothing to shew for it. This is not satisfactory. Your money must in future be applied to purposes that will be of permanent benefit to your Tribes respectively.[18]

Anderson concluded: "The Government want to see Indian Doctors, they want to see Indian Lawyers, and Justices of the Peace; Indians of all Professions and Trades; and that you should be like the white people. This is what the Government wish to see among the Indians."[19]

Anderson and the missionaries—including Peter Jones—persuaded First Nations to commit one-quarter of their annuities to the schools, but Chief Musquakie objected to the removal plan:

> My mind has been engaged in considering the subject brought before me; and the events that have occurred before, especially in respect to the removal of my own people from this village before me [Orillia] where we were once before advised to remain settled as a religious people, and from which we were afterwards asked to remove to another place, where we now reside. And now I do not see what my young men are to subsist upon, not continuing to work the land; striving to settle here, in Orillia, and to be religious, and then required to remove; and now, when we are settled at Rama, before my young men have had time to make a fair trial there, being again required to remove to another place . . . I am not willing to leave my village, the place where my Forefathers lived, and where they made a great encampment; where they lived many generations; where they wished their children to live while the world should stand, and which the white man pointed out to me, and gave me for my settlement.[20]

Similarly, Chief Assance stated:

> You see this road here, my Chiefs, the Portage Road; the land on half of that road was given to me and my Tribe to live upon. We remained there scarcely seven years when our white Father asked us to give it back. Yet a little more I tell you, my Chiefs; you advised me to put up a Grist Mill. You told me that it would be a good thing for my Tribe. And you said to me, "you will derive a blessing from it." We are no longer owners of the Mill. You,

> the white people, have it in use. But we do not know what use is made of it.[21]

Anderson challenged Assance's claims and suggested he had been reimbursed for the mill. Assance continued: "I do not wish to remove. I have already removed four times, and I am too old to remove again . . . The Scripture says, we are told it says, we must love one another; but now, if we give up our money for the benefit of the young, who will take care of the old people?"[22]

Chief Snake also shared Musquakie's concerns: "I consider it a very good thing; but so many different Agents and Members of the Indian Department have thought differently, and when they have proposed one plan it has not continued long. This is another reason why I cannot consent."[23]

The stark choice that Indigenous Nations faced was expressed by Tyendinaga Mohawk Chief Paulus Claus: "As there was a time when the Indians owned the whole of this continent, from the salt waters; but no sooner did the white men come, than the Indians were driven from their former homes, like the wild animals. We are now driven far from our former homes, into the woods. I cannot see the end of this, removing from one place to another, going still farther into the woods, unless we exert ourselves to conform to the ways of the white man."[24] Mississauga Chief Joseph Sawyer stated, "Suppose I have four dollars in my hand, I willingly give one dollar for the good of my children."[25]

Anderson drafted a formal memorandum and requested a vote. All Chiefs but Musquakie, Assance, and Thomas Assance (sub-Chief of Beausoleil) voted yes.

> *And Yellowhead and Assance I think were the only two Chiefs who said no to the government. Because they said, basically, "We don't trust you. We don't want our children to go to these schools because you've done us wrong before, and we think you'll do it again." And they also refused to move to Manitoulin.*
>
> —Ben Cousineau, Chippewas of Rama[26]

Anderson reiterated:

> The project of removal did not originate with the Government. The idea was first suggested by some of the wisest and most intelligent of the Indian Chiefs. It must be clearly understood, that the Government will not force any Band or Tribe to remove; but those who do not must not complain, when hereafter they find that they are not as well off as those who have gone hand in hand with the Government, and who, I am convinced, will shortly be a subject of envy to those who shall not avail themselves of this plan, but prefer following the advice of interested individuals instead of that of the Government.[27]

The following day, Musquakie and Assance changed their vote to yes, stating that their position had been based on a "misapprehension."[28] Although the Chiefs had the best intentions, the communities they represented would come to regret their decision.

> *In day two of the minutes from this meeting, Yellowhead is not there. And the government was really, basically, pissed off that Yellowhead had disrespected them and that he flat out said, "You guys are liars. I don't trust you" . . . The next day, Yellowhead isn't there, and someone speaking on his behalf says, "He's changed his mind. He's good now. He now approves of everything, except for the move. He's okay with manual labour schools, and it's all good" . . . But it [the minutes] just kind of assumes that it's legit and he's okay with it even though he's not there. And then a Nanigishkung who's there says, "I'll speak on behalf of my community. And I think it's okay" . . . The Yellowhead reign, I guess, if you will, of Chieftanship ends a few years after that. And from then on, it's Nanigishkung.*
>
> —Ben Cousineau, Chippewas of Rama[29]

Egerton Ryerson and Industrial Schools

In 1847, Egerton Ryerson, now superintendent for schools in Upper Canada, founded the Toronto Normal School, an institution for teacher training that attracted a number of Indigenous students—some of whom taught in on-reserve day schools.[30] That same year, following decisions made at the 1846 Orillia Council, the assistant superintendent of Indian affairs asked Ryerson to prepare a report on "the best method of establishing and conducting Industrial Schools for the benefit of the aboriginal Indian Tribes."

Referring now to the proposed boarding schools as "industrial schools," Ryerson described them as more than schools of manual labour, since they were also schools of learning and religion, where "industry" would be applied to mental and physical labour. Religious education would be "the animating and controlling spirit of each industrial school establishment." The students would learn "the English language, arithmetic, elementary geometry, or knowledge of forms, geography and the elements of general history, natural history and agricultural chemistry, writing, drawing and vocal music, book-keeping (especially in reference to farmers' accounts) religion and morals."

Boys would be trained to be farmers, with classroom lessons supporting that goal. The schools would operate year-round. Students would work eight to twelve hours a day and study for two to four hours in the summer. During planting and harvesting, classes might be cancelled for two or three weeks. During winter,

classroom study time would increase while work would decrease. Religious organizations would run the schools, but the government would be responsible for hiring the superintendent, erecting the buildings, determining attendance, providing ongoing funding, and carrying out inspections.[31]

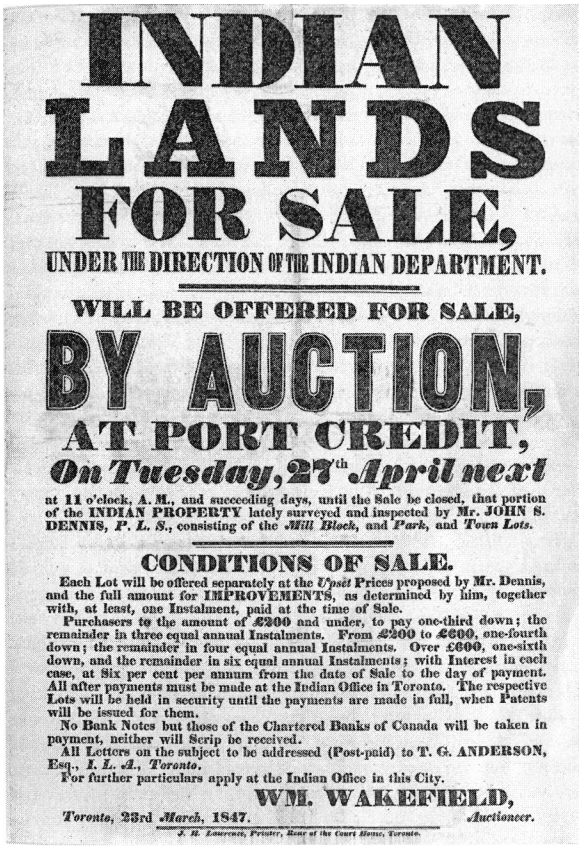
The Indian Department approved the construction of the schools at Alderville and Munceytown but abandoned the proposed school at Owen Sound. The Alnwick school expanded the Methodist school in Alderville and admitted students from central Ontario, including from Lake Huron, Lake Simcoe, Saugeen, Owen Sound, and Alnwick and Rice, Mud, and Scugog Lakes.[32] Mount Elgin, the school at Munceytown, near London, was completed in 1851 and drew students from southwestern Ontario, including New Credit.

Peter Jones was supposed to become the superintendent of Mount Elgin Industrial School. He moved to Munceytown in 1847 as the school was being constructed, but by the time it opened in 1851, he was too ill to accept the position. Both schools ended up being run by white missionaries with increasingly restricted input from Indigenous communities.

A system of resident agents supervised the schools and their model farms. They were to ensure that students learned either French or English as "nothing will so pave the way for the amalgamation of the Indian and white races, as the disuse among the former of their peculiar dialects."[33]

The schools were not a success. Communities objected to the way their children were treated and withdrew them, resulting in low enrolment. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission noted:

> Residential schooling in the pre-Confederation era exhibited many of the problems that would characterize the system's entire history. Parents preferred to see



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their children at home and were reluctant to send them to school. At the schools, children were lonely and frequently ran away. School life was hard and often unhealthy, and education focused largely on work and religion. Those children who completed their schooling often found that their ties to their home communities and cultures had been severed, but they had not been given the skills needed to succeed in the broader society. First Nations communities had agreed initially to provide funding to the schools, but they later withdrew their support, based on their experience with a system that was unresponsive to their wishes, disparaged their culture, and failed to deliver the promised economic benefits.[34]

Further Removals and Indigenous Mutual Aid

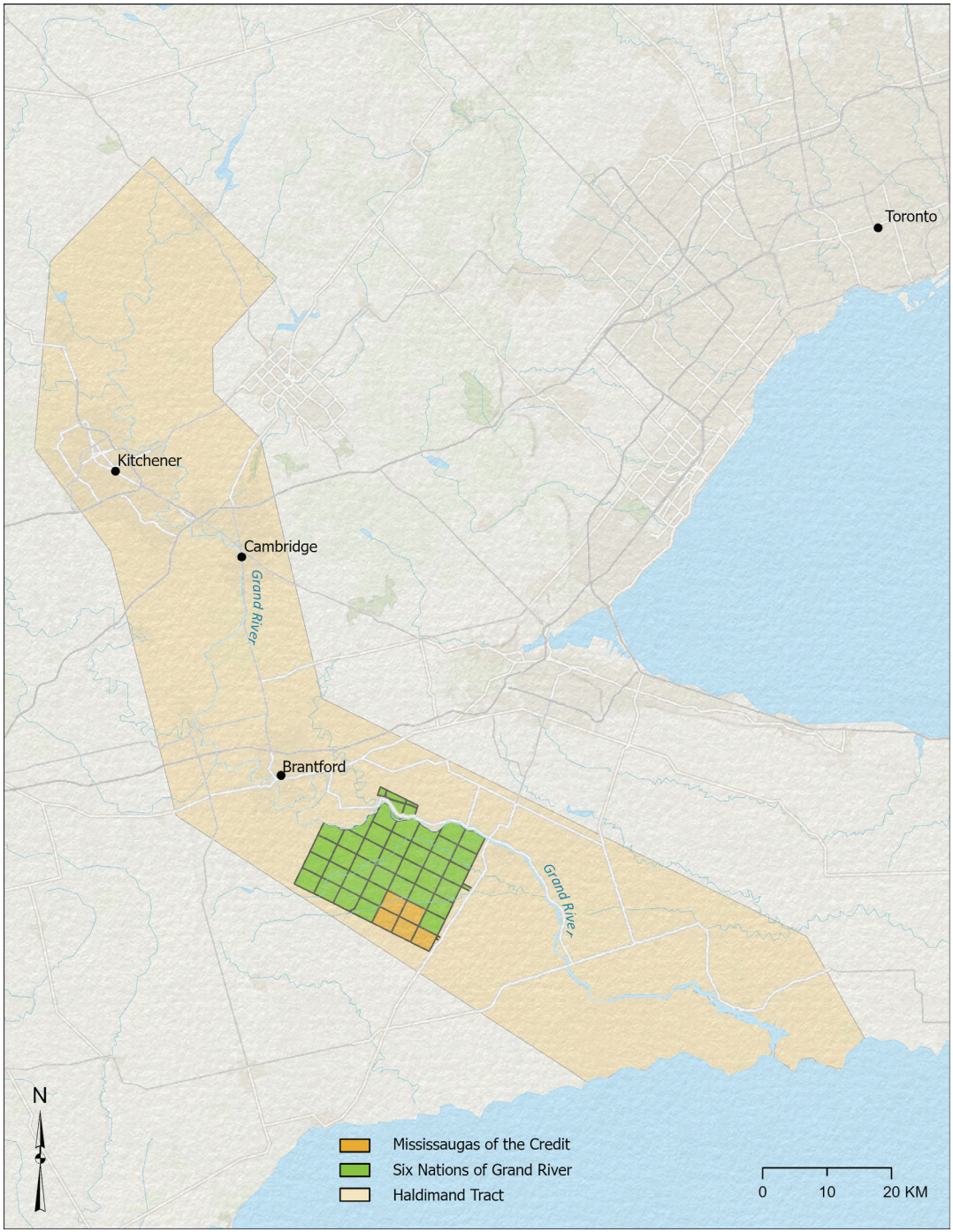
Despite support at the 1846 Council for the consolidation of Indigenous Nations in one location, it did not take place. The Credit Mississaugas supported the proposed move to Owen Sound as their best chance for a new homeland on good agricultural land. But several men visited the remaining Saugeen Tract and were deeply disappointed. Peter Jones reported: "There is quite a dissention amongst our people with regard to their removal to Owen Sound. Our young men who assisted in surveying the boundary line of our intended tract there have brought an evil report as to the quality of the soil. They say that the land is very rocky and that there is not more than one third of the whole tract fit for cultivation. In consequence of these tidings a large majority of our Tribe are reluctant to remove to that land."[35]

The move was called off.

> *Here we'd taken all this time to learn how to become farmers—and good farmers—and we're going to go to this tract of land in Saugeen that our people found was not conducive to agriculture. And so we went back and told Anderson, "We can't move there." But the word was "Sorry. Your lands are up for sale now. We thought you were going to move, so we've put the lands up for sale. You're going, whether you like it or not." We didn't know where we were going. We just knew we were going.*
>
> —Darin Wybenga, Mississaugas of the Credit[36]

When the Credit Mississaugas pulled out of the plan, the other communities followed, and the dream of an "Indian territory" was not realized.

Although not part of the Owen Sound relocation scheme, the Six Nations of the Grand River were also struggling with dispossession. In 1847, an Order-in-Council confirmed that George Martin's settlement near Brantford was outside of the land remaining to the Haudenosaunee, and the families living there would have to move. They refused. A mob from Brantford forcefully removed families from their homes, loaded them into carriages, and burned their homes and barns to the ground. George Martin's



Reduction of Six Nations lands and Mississauga relocation to New Credit. This map is for general information only. The size and exact boundaries of the original lands granted to the Six Nations through the 1784 Haldimand Proclamation vary in existing maps and are currently under litigation

grandson Oronhyatekha (Dr. Peter Martin) was six years old at the time. Although the settlers' actions were reported, no action was taken to punish them or compensate the Haudenosaunee. After George Martin died in 1853, the lands were divided and leased to settlers. Even after the Haudenosaunee were confined to their much-reduced territory, squatters remained a problem.[37]

Given this much smaller territory, it is remarkable that the Haudenosaunee—not the government—came to the rescue of the Credit Mississaugas, especially given the sometimes difficult relationship between the two peoples. As Peter Jones related:

> Spring was advancing when preparations ought to have been made for planting, and we knew not whither to head our steps, or find a resting place . . . It is a remarkable fact, that about this time the Chiefs of the Six Nations, on the Grand River were holding a Council, who having heard of our situation took our case into consideration and unanimously agreed to offer us a portion of their tract; this was done without our knowledge or solicitation . . . It gave [the Six Nations] great pleasure to return us a similar kindness by giving us back a small portion from the large reserve they had received. Another reason was, that ever since they came to this country, they had lived in friendship with us.[38]

In 1847, the Haudenosaunee offered the Mississaugas land in the southernmost portion of their Reserve on the Haldimand Tract. In doing so, they were returning the gift of refuge originally extended by the Mississaugas in 1784, when the Mississaugas ceded the lands that became the Haldimand Tract to the Six Nations after the latter had been displaced from their homelands south of Lake Ontario by the American Revolution. This assistance was in keeping with the ethic of reciprocity ("gift for gift") and the responsibilities of allies under the Dish with One Spoon. Sadly, the Mississaugas of the Credit, a fishing people, would no longer have access to water, but they packed up their belongings to re-establish themselves on this land, which they called New Credit and where they live today.

> *We're the Mississaugas, water people. Moved here. No water. They lost their fisheries and everything. I would say that was a culture shock. For them to come here and have no water."*
>
> —Carolyn King, Mississaugas of the Credit[39]

A Mississaugas of the Credit publication also describes the move:

> 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 even had to make two trips back to their old village to walk all their domestic animals

to the new location. In short, our ancestors had prospered . . . There was a sense of optimism among our people, but also a sense of sorrow at leaving family members behind in the village graveyard.[40]

Every time I go across the Credit [River, on the QEW], I give a greeting to my ancestors.

—Garry Sault, Mississaugas of the Credit[41]

Peter Jones wrote in the *Christian Guardian* about their sorrow in leaving behind their Methodist co-religionists in the Toronto area, with whom they had formed relationships over two decades.[42] In part because of the increased social distance, the Methodist Church's advocacy for Indigenous legal issues declined over the next decade, as did the Methodists' support for the training of Indigenous teachers and the use of Indigenous languages in worship and education. As historian Neil Semple writes: "Notions of racial inferiority and the assumption that natives should not minister to their own emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century. Methodism thereby lost much of its original advantage over other churches."[43]

In 1903, after a dispute with the Haudenosaunee over their tenure, the Mississaugas purchased the land they had been offered in 1847 as well as an additional 1,200 acres from the Haudenosaunee. This land was set aside as a separate reserve (Indian Reserve 40A) by a federal Order-in-Council. However, the nature of the Mississaugas' title remains a matter of contention between the Six Nations and Mississaugas of the Credit.

The fundamental issue of Indigenous people's lack of legal ownership of their reserve lands has never been resolved. In Canadian law, reserve lands are Crown lands set aside for the use of Indigenous people.

We never achieved title to our lands at the [Credit] . . . It's much the same as today. We just get to live here [at New Credit] because the government says we get to live here.

—Darin Wybenga, Mississaugas of the Credit[44]