

Many Lindsay, Port Perry and Curve Lake residents remember the late Johnston Paudash, an Indian Chief who resided in Lindsay for many years.

The writer has been requested to reprint the fascinating story of the life of this interesting gentleman. It follows:

Johnston Paudash was an honored member of the Six Nation Indians. In fact he was Chief in the Missausauga band which lived and roamed along the banks of Rice Lake and as a boy he early learned the knack of not only paddling his own canoe but actually making his own canoe. Chief Paudash was not merely a casual member of the tribe for in his century of living he not only mastered the English language but was able to speak the language fluently and being of a studious nature he familiarized himself with the history of his people and Indians in general. In fact he established himself as a one man exponent of the cause of the Indians and he looked after a one man trek to Ottawa where he met the administrator of Indian Affairs and by persuasive eloquence managed to present the cause of his fellow Indians in the preservation of certain rights and the honoring of ancient treaties with the white man and their leaders.

Johnston was a colorful person, especially when he donned the headgear of a Chieftan and when he gathered the family flock around to tell stories of the Indians dating back many moons.

"Did you ever hear of Treaty Rock?" said Chief Paudash to a group of boys and girls several years before he passed on. "Next time you go with your parents to Thurstonia Park, on Sturgeon Lake, you will find a boulder, six feet high, on the shore of the lake and there you will see an engraving carved on the boulder which testifies to the time when Champlain passed through the Trent waters and to the time when the Hurons and Iroquois smoked the pipe of peace and signed the treaty, thus ending a time of bloody fighting."

“The Indians fought many a battle on Sturgeon and Cameron Lakes,” continued the Chief. “To this day many farmers around Long Beach, Sturgeon Point, Cameron and Cambray plow up Indian arrow heads, flints, spear heads, tomahawk blades and sometimes trinkets, and over at Indian Point on Balsam Lake, Indian burial grounds have been rudely disturbed and robbed of Indian bones and symbols.”

Chief Paudash loved his home and he liked to tell his children and his grandchildren of the days when the Indians lived a carefree life and roamed the vast lands which were their own until the white man gradually encroached and usurped their woods and their lakes.

"Tell us a story, Grandpa—about the beautiful Indian Princess and her brave lover who belonged to another band," said three youngsters in the same breath.

Grandpa Paudash told of the days when the Iroquois fought the Hurons in Sturgeon Lake.

"The brave Iroquois outnumbered their foes and bit by bit, cut them down until only a small band remained. The captured Indians and their families were kept prisoners for a long time before they were allowed to push away from shore for distant fields.

"Omegah, a tall, swarthy, Iroquois young brave, the son of the Chief, looked sadly as the Hurons departed in their canoes for he had feasted his eyes on the fair young daughter of the Huron Chief. Manita, for that was her name, loved the tall Indian brave but both knew they would never have the consent of their parents to wed. That was unthinkable."

Chief Paudash paused as he turned back the pages of memory. He continued: "The Hurons set up their tents at Sturgeon Point, across the lake and Omegah used to wait until the moon shone high in the sky and when all was quiet, except for the sound of a hooting owl in the distance. Then he placed his canoe quietly in the water and without his paddles making the least sound in the water he soon was across the lake where he knew Manita would be waiting for his call, the sound of a lonely Loon.

"Manita stood shielded behind a tall pine until her lover neared the clump of bushes which hid them from view of any Hurons who might be returning to camp.

"The Iroquois brave and the Huron maiden drew near to each other and hardly breathed, so quiet they had to be. Their eyes spoke more than words could tell of their love for each other.

"You must go, dear Omegah," said the maiden — "I fear for you and for me. My father will be angry if he finds out. And I fear the evil Kenebeek."

"Kenebeek was the name of a bad Indian, a Huron, who sought Manita for his bride. He was crafty and wicked."

"Kenebeek will never find out our love until I have taken you away," said Omegah. "I am sure I can find favor for you and me in my Father's wigwam," said Omegah.

“The two lovers stared into the darkness, but Manita had a feeling that someone had seen them together and she was shaking and trembling when she returned to her father’s hut.”

“Kenebeek had spied on the two lovers and vowed he would shatter the Iroquois ‘dog’ before the moon shone again.”

“Kenebeek was watchful and every night he stole through the bushes to the sec-

ret place where the lovers would meet. He saw the bushes part not ten feet away and there in the moonlight stood Manita, her eyes peering into the dark waters a few feet away and her ears listening for the sound of the Loon."

"Kenebeek heard, too. He saw Omegah noiselessly pull his canoe on shore, a scowl stole across his face as he jealously saw the maiden and her lover embrace. 'I am afraid,' sighed Manita, 'I fear someone is watching. I fear something dreadful is going to happen.'"

"At that instant there was a twang of an arrow leaving the bow and Manita swayed away from her lover as she saw the brutal arrow piercing the naked breast of her lover. She sank beside his lifeless form and wept bitterly as she smoothed back her lover's hair and kissed his brow. How long she remained in a swoon she did not realize, but hastily she gathered leaves from the ground and a few branches of cedar, which she laid reverently and lovingly over the body of her dead hero."

Chief Paudash again paused. "Go on Grandpa, what happened? Did Manita marry Kenebeek?"

"No, poor Manita grieved so much that she became sick in heart and mind. The Hurons gave Omegah a burial but Manita visited the grave every night. She could see no one but her lover. Late one night when she failed to return to her father's hut, the old Chief found his daughter lying on the grave of her departed lover. She, too, had departed to the "happy hunting ground" to be forever with her Indian lover."

"I hope you will never forget the Indians once owned much of this great country but the contribution they made is often forgotten."