BITS AND PIECES OF BRANTFORD'S HISTORY
THE BEGINNINGS – JOSEPH BRANT

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JOSEPH BRANT - THE MAN

Biographers of Joseph Brant generally agree that he was born in 1742, but are very divided in their opinions as to his parentage. Most agree that his mother was of humble origins, but with regard to his father, speculation ranges all the way from a full - blooded Mohawk, to a white trader, to Sir William Johnson (Superintendent of the Six Nations). As well, the origins of his English name are also clouded. The one significant factor about his birth is his mother's lack of status, for in the Iroquois nation status was inherited through the maternal side. This meant then, that any titles Brant was to possess would have to be earned, not inherited.

As a young boy he was raised among his people, and doubtless learned the basic skills that were taught to his race. He also received some very basic instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The marriage of his half-sister Molly to Sir William Johnson, the British representative for Indian Affairs in the colony of New York, brought him into direct contact with, and active participation in, the world of the white man. This was to have far-reaching consequences for Brant, it allowed him to see just how the white man operated, and because he was aware of how the minds of the whites worked, he was better able to deal with them when contentious issues arose between himself and them. It also began a personal dilemma for Brant which was to last for the rest of his life, - that of belonging to the white man's world, or the Indians. This dilemma was expressed in most things he did, from the clothing he wore, to his choice of home.

At the age of 19 he was chosen from his village to attend Eleazar Wheelock's school in Lebanon Connecticut. This was a school run by Wheelock for the education of promising Indians. Brant did well at the school. Wheelock found him a "considerate, modest, and manly spirited youth," and also commented:

"Joseph is indeed an excellent youth; he has endeared himself to me, as well as to his master, and everybody also by his good behaviour."

After he had been at the school less than two years, one of the masters, Charles Jeffrey Smith, requested that Brant be allowed to accompany him as an interpreter, on a mission trip. In giving his reason for choosing Brant, Smith stated:

"As he is a promising youth, of a sprightly genius, singular modesty, and a serious turn, I know of none so well calculated to answer my end as he is."

Brant was given permission to go, but the venture was short-lived as the Pontiac uprising began, and Smith had to return to the school, and Brant returned to his tribe.

Brant's stay at the Wheelock School allowed him an education that was denied to all but a few of his race, and gave him a great advantage in future dealings with both the white man and the Indian. Brant later sent his own sons to a school run by Wheelock's sons, and in a letter to John Wheelock he pointed out:

"...For my part, nothing can ever efface from my memory the persevering attention your reverend father paid to my education, when I was in the place my sons now are. Though I was an unprofitable pupil in some respects, yet my world affairs have been much benefitted by the instruction I there received. I hope my children may reap greater advantages under your care both with respect to their future as well as their worldly welfare."

His own fortunate experience also gave him an insight into the value of education, and speaking in later life of the necessity for the education of the Indian, he commented:

"We cannot succeed unless we obtain education."

Brant was married three times. His first wife, Margaret, was the daughter of an Oneida chieftain. She bore him two children, Isaac and Christina. During this marriage, Brant bought some acerage, constructed a frame home, and farmed the land. He appears to have been a caring father, but was never able to win the affection of Isaac. When Margaret died of tuberculosis in 1772, Brant married her half-sister Susanna, but she died within a year of this marriage, and bore no children. His third marriage was to Catherine, whose father was a leading sachem (hereditary chief) of the Tortoise Clan. She bore Brant seven children, three sons and four daughters, and she outlived him.

As a "family man", Brant seems to have been a success, in spite of his always being on the move. Comments on his hospitality by visitors who frequented his home along the Grand River attest to the fact that, generally speaking, his was a happy household. The one blotch on this record is his dealings with his eldest son Isaac. For some reason (some have suggested that Isaac resented Brant's other children), he and Isaac never got along, and as time passed Isaac grew to hate his father. Isaac had become a ne'er do well, having taken to drinking heavily, and was in fact wanted for the murder of a harness-maker along the Grand River settlement. In 1795, during the doling out of treaty money at Brant's home at Burlington Heights, Isaac attacked his father with a knife. Brant defended himself, and Isaac was pulled away. However, he again lunged at Brant, and the latter was forced to defend himself with a dirk that he usually carried with him. He inflicted a slight head wound on Isaac, but Isaac would not allow the wound to be treated, and subsequently died from the infection. In spite of the poor relations that had existed between himself and his son, Brant was distraught, and insisted on being tried by an Indian Council for the murder of his son. The Council found him not guilty, and issued the following declaration:

"Brother - We have heard and considered your case; we sympathize with you. We are bereaved of a beloved son. But that son raised his parricidal hand against the kindest of fathers. His death was occasioned by his own crime. With one voice we acquit you of all blame. We tender you our hearty condolence, and may the Great Spirit above bestow upon you consolation and comfort under your affliction."

Some mention should be made concerning Brant's religious outlook and practices. His early contact with the British through Sir William Johnson naturally brought him into contact with the Christian religion. His student days as Wheelock's school exposed him to even more of this religion. He did not immediately become a communicant in the Anglican church, but did aid the missionaries in any way he could, and his home was once described as "an asylum for the missionaries in that wilderness. He also helped the missionaries by translating various portions of the Bible and the Church of England catechism into the Mohawk language. Brant did later become a member of the Church of England, and was very involved in the construction and running of the church provided for by the Haldimand deed on the Indian territory along the Grand. At first he preferred only quarterly visits by a minister (some suggest that this was because he feared a rival if a permanent minister was appointed) but later he asked for a permanent appointee. When the man that Brant wanted, Davenport Phelps, was not appointed, Brant was not beyond using pressure to get his way. He threatened to get a "Romish priest" if the government would not send him a satisfactory minister, but he never acted on this. Although there is some skepticism as to Brant's conversion to the Anglican religion, some seeing it merely as an expedient in his relations with the whites, Brant did seem to have a genuine concern that his people be "Christianized."

In almost every walk of life, Brant was continually faced with the dilemma of being a white man or an Indian. This problem was there from his early childhood, and is perhaps one problem that he never really came to terms with in a satisfactory manner. To accept the ways of the whites meant that he could more effectively help his people to a better life. Yet in doing this, he had to reject part of his own culture and heritage, and this must have been a very difficult choice to make.

JOSEPH BRANT - WHO WAS JOSEPH BRANT?

"I dined with the famous Indian Chief, Captain Brant, at the General's (Haldimand). His manners are polished. In his dress he showed off to advantage the half military and half savage costume. His countenance was manly and intelligent, and his disposition very mild." (Baroness Riedesel)

"...by his ability in war and political conduct in peace, has raised himself to the highest dignity of his nation, and his alliance and friendship is now courted by sovereign and foreign states." (Patrick Campbell, journalist)

His house is an asylum for the missionaries in that wilderness." (An Indian missionary writing in the 1760's)

"I have called Joseph Brant a remarkable man. He was in my opinion truly so. My personal intercourse with him was not considerable; but it was quite sufficient to impress me with most respectful sentiments of his intellectual character, his personal dignity, and his capacity to appear well in any society. I met with him repeatedly; - and was with him at a dining party - and listened to his conversation in various situations - some of them rather trying; and was surprised at the simple, easy, polished, and even court-like manners which he was capable of assuming; though at the same time I was assured that he was capable of being as great a savage as any individual of his nation. I remember on one occasion, that when some very impertinent and unreasonable questions were addressed to him by a gentleman who ought to have known better, he evaded them with perfect civility and at the same time with an adroitness and address which showed that he was fitted to be no mean diplomatist...." (Rev. Mr. Miller)

"His manners, which were greatly improved, if not formed, by a constant intercourse, not only with the best society in the province but also in England...were remarkably easy and dignified. When among strangers, or in mixed company, he was reserved and taciturn; but extremely affable and communicative when with friends in whom he could confide. Although not particularly distinguished as a public speaker, he was a man of strong mind, possessed a voice of surprising softness and melody, a fascinating address, and great colloquial powers which rendered him a most interesting companion. He lived in the style of a gentleman and was punctilious in the observance of the rules of honour and etiquette practised among individuals of that caste in their social relations." (Gen. P.D. Porter)

"He was in good health and spirits, rather inclined to be corpulent -of the middling stature, his dress that of a private citizen." (a description of Brant in 1797)

"His eye was like the eagle's - his motions like arrows from the bow - his enemies fell before him as the trees before the blast of the Great Spirit." (Rev. Peter Jones at Brant's reinternment)

"According to one account, the Mohawk chief, (Brant), generally considered as a complete rogue...frightened poor Russel into compliance by threats of attacking York." (Lord Selkirk)

"...a considerate, modest, and manly spirited youth." (Rev. Wheelcock)

"...in their own affairs (the Indians) are...often duped by their chiefs. In the affair of the Grand (River) lands, Brant has continued to get a good deal of Cash into his own hands and perhaps has divided a share of the plunder with a few leading men who have...carried through his measures in the Councils." (Lord Selkirk)

"...that his Advantage of Education consistent (sic) decent Deportment of Behaviour, together with his singular power and Command to resist the Excess of Liquor and whenever a little intoxicated his governing himself from the usual savage Madness and frenzy (sic) of the Generality of other Ind. wch. commands their superior Confidence, Esteem and Regards towards (him). (William Claus, Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs)

"Distinguished alike for his address, his activity and his courage -possessing in point of stature and symmetry of person the advantage of most men even among his own well formed race, tall, erect and majestic, with the air and mien of one born to command - having as it were, been a man of war since his boyhood - his name was a tower of strength among the warriors of the wilderness." (Rev. John Stuart)

"This chief had not the ferocious dignity of a savage leader; nor does he discover any extraordinary force either of mind or body.... A print of him in the dress of his nation, which gives him a more striking appearance; for when he wore the ordinary European habit, there did not seem to be anything about him that marked pre-eminence.... His manners are gentle and quiet and to those who study human nature he affords a very convincing proof of the tameness which education can produce upon the wildest race." (James Boswell)

"I had very little previous knowledge of the character of Captain Brant, but he struck me as being so able and artful that I conceived it might be for the essential interest of the King's service that I should not appear to reject the part he wished me to play."

"...a likely fellow of a fierce aspect, tall and rather spare; well spoken and apparently about thirty years of age. He wore mocassins elegantly trimmed with beads, legging and breech-cloth of superfine blue; a short green coat with silver epaulets and a small laced round hat. By his side hung an elegant silver-mounted cutlass, and his blanket of blue dropped in the chair on which he sat, was gorgeously decorated with a border of red." (one of Brant's prisoner's)

"This being the first action at which he was present, he was seized with such a tremor when firing began that he was obliged to take hold of a small sapling to steady himself: but that after the discharge of a few volleys, he recovered the use of his limbs

and the composures of his mind, so as to support the character of a brave man of which he was exceedingly ambitious." (eyewitness account of Brant at his first battle)

"His stature is 5'11" of finest form, possessing great muscular power. His countenance is open, placid and inviting. His eyes are brilliant and expressive. Everything relating to his person is engaging and prepossessing." (a description of Brant in 1794)

"...He is a man of education, speaks and writes the English perfectly and has seen much of Europe and America. Receive him with respect and hospitality. He is not one of those Indians who drink rum, but is quite a gentleman; not one who will make fine bows, but one who understands and practises what belongs to propriety and good breeding." (Aaron Burr writing to his daughter)

"He is a promising Youth, of a sprightly Genius, singular Modesty, and a Serious Turn....I know of none so well calculated to answer my End as he is - in which design he would very willingly and cheerfully engage should Your Honour consent to and approve of it. He has so much endeared Himself to me by his Amiable Deportment his Laudable Thirst after and Progress in Learning, that did I not apprehend this would be as beneficial to him, as advantageous to me, I should neither desire his Assistance nor solicit your Approbation...." (Charles Jeffrey Smith in a letter to Sir William Johnson, 1763)

"Such was the commanding presence of the great Indian...and such a degree of confidence he inspired that his undisciplined warriors stood their ground....Above the roar of the artillery and the rattle of small arms could be heard the voice of Brant, encouraging his men for the Conflict and over the heads of all his crested plume could be seen waving where the contest was likely to be most sharp." (eyewitness account to Brant's as a leader in battle)

"I cannot say too much in his (Brant's) favour; his conduct is surprising, he rules the Indians as he pleases, and they are all rejoiced at this place (Oswego) occupied. I can assure your Excellency that we are much indebted to the Indians for assisting us to work a Circumstance which I believe never before happened- Joseph showed them the Example." (Major Ross - commander of Ft. Oswego - to General Haldimand).

"(Brant) is much better informed and instructed than any other Indians; he is strongly attached to the Interest of his Country men for which I do honour him, but he would be so much more sensible of the Miserable situation in which we have left this unfortunate People, that I do believe he would do great deal of Mischief here at this Time." (General MacLean - commander at Ft. Niagara - to General Haldimand).

"Capt. Brant (Thayendanegea), Chief of the Six Nations Indians dined here. He has a countenance expressive of art or cunning. He wore an English coat with a handsome crimson silk blanket lined with black and trimmed with gold fringe and wore a

fur cap: round his neck he had a string of plaited sweet hay. It is a kind of grass which never loses its pleasant scent. The Indians are very fond of it." (Lady Simcoe)

"The mammoth comes - the foe ~ the monster Brant, With all his howling, desolating band;" (from the poem "Gertrude of Wyoming")

The varying attitudes and opinions expressed in the preceding comments illustrate just how difficult it is to really answer the question - who was Joseph Brant? One time he is the bloody savage who led his Mohawks on innumerable raids against the Americans during the Revolutionary War. Then, just as easily, he is the educated "King of the Indians", fit company for princes and kings. Equally confusing are the motives behind his actions. Some viewed him as an opportunist who took advantage of circumstances to enhance his own position and power, while others praised him for the unselfish efforts he made on behalf of his people. In all of his actions, with both redman and white, he showed a tenacity and determination that allowed him to acquire a position of prominence among both races seldom achieved by an Indian in his day. In achieving this recognition, he had to have a foot in both worlds, and this has greatly complicated the answer to the question who was Joseph Brant?

JOSEPH BRANT AND THE INDIANS - MOSES OR UNCLE TOM?

Joseph Brant's relationships with his fellow Indians were just as shrouded in controversy as were his dealings with the white man. To some Indians of his time, he was seen as a true leader of his people, fighting the white man with his own weapons for what he believed were the rights of the Indian. To others of his race, he was thought to be no more than a selfish, power-hungry schemer, who was using his British contacts to further his own interests, and who would not hesitate to sell out his race if it meant more power for himself.

Brant's reputation as a warrior rests on his exploits during the American Revolution when he fought for the British against the colonists, but long before that he had established his mark among the Indians as a fighter and a diplomat. His first battle was at the Battle of Lake St. George in 1755, when he was only 13 years old. A friend has left a description of Brant in his first battle:

"This being the first action at which he was present he was seized with such a tremor when firing began that he was obliged to take hold of a small sapling to steady himself: but that after the discharge of a few volleys he recovered the use of his limbs and the composure of his mind, so as to support the character of a brave man of which he was exceedingly ambitious."

As well as tasting his first battle, Brant witnessed an event, the effects of which were to remain with him for the rest of his life. After the battle, Sir William Johnson, the British commander, refused to hand over the French commander, who had been captured, to the Indians for torture and death. Brant's native instinct told him that prisoners were to be tortured and usually killed. However, this example of mercy made such an impression on Brant that he too adopted the practice of sparing most prisoners. A good example of this attitude occurred during the American Revolution. Two of Brant's friends had been captured. Brant threatened retaliation if they were harmed, and hoped nothing would happen to them –

"... for it would be disagreeable to me to hurt any Prisoner: therefore, I hope they will not force me."

Brant's next military action was a minor role in the Pontiac rising in 1763. Pontiac, chief of the Ottawas, had united several Indian tribes in an effort to drive out the "pale-faces." Realizing that such a rebellion against British might would be futile, Brant set out to keep as many of the Six Nations tribes as possible out of the fight. Although lacking any real title or status at this time, he was able to persuade the Oneidas and the Mohawks to remain neutral. He went further than this in that he was involved in attacks on some of the villages of the Iroquois who were supporting Pontiac. The British were grateful for his services, but many Indians resented his interference, and they later held these actions against him when he was preaching unity among the Six Nations, prior to and after the American Revolution.

Brant's status as chief has been disputed by some historians. He certainly was not a sachem - a hereditary chief. However, it appears that he did become a war chief (achieved through circumstances), and was also elected a pine-tree chief, a title given to a leader who showed concern for the Indian people, and who enjoyed high standing among his people. Brant's abilities as a fighter, orator, and diplomat, doubtless were responsible for his achieving these positions, but there were other warriors whose deeds in battle exceeded Brant's, and who resented his rapid climb up the Iroquois power structure. His status among his own people was also enhanced by his association with Sir William Johnson, the British representative for Indian affairs in the colony of New York; and Johnson's dying words - "Joseph control your people" - illustrate that the whites realized Brant's position among the Indians.

Brant's decision to join the British against the colonists was not made hastily. However, disrespectful treatment by the Americans, his personal respect for Sir William Johnson, and a trip to England which left him convinced that Britain could not lose, determined Brant to aid the British. He sincerely felt that the Indians would receive fairer treatment from the British than from the colonists, as he felt that the latter were bent on continental expansion with no regard for the Indian.

As late as May 1776, the Iroquois had voted to remain neutral in any war between the British and the Americans, yet Brant set out to reverse this decision, and to enlist their help for the British. He was successful with all of the tribes except the Oneidas who, persuaded by the American missionary, Samuel Kirkland, had decided to remain neutral and the Tuscaroras. The tradition among the Iroquois nations had been that they would only fight as a complete unit. With the Oneidas and Tuscaroras deciding to remain neutral, this tradition was broken, and this also shattered Brant's dreams of a united Six Nations Confederacy fighting for the British Crown.

It was during the Revolutionary War that Brant earned his reputation as a leader and a warrior, but controversy swirled about him in regard to his methods of fighting. There is no doubt that he was involved in some of the bloodiest skirmishes of the war in the Mohawk Valley, and that on occasions, such as the siege of Ft. Stanwix and the attack on Cherry Valley, he was unable to control his warriors. However, at the latter engagement, he personally saved some of the settlers from certain death, and after the battle was able to arrange for some of the weaker prisoners to be released. The greatest controversy over his savagery concerned the massacre of settlers in the Wyoming Valley - an engagement at which Brant was not even present. His supposed role here was immortalized by the British poet Thomas Campbell, whose poem "Gertrude of Wyoming" begins:

"The mammoth comes - the foe - the monster Brant, With all his howling, desolating band; These eyes have seen their blade, and burning pine Awake at once, and silence half your land.

Red is the cup they drink, but not with wine;
'Gainst Brant himself I went to battle forth: Accursed Brant! he left of all my tribe

Nor man, nor child, nor thing of living birth No! not the dog that watched my household hearth Escaped that night of blood upon our plains.

Campbell's explanation for his account, when later confronted by Brant's son John, was:

"I took the character of Brant in the poem of Gertrude of Wyoming from the common histories of England, all of which represented him as a bloody and bad man even among savages, and chief agent in the horrible desolation of Wyoming."

Campbell acknowledged his error in a letter to John Brant, which said in part:

"...But when they (Canadian writers), regret my departure from historical truth, I join in their regret only in as far as I have unconsciously misunderstood the character of Brant, and the share of the Indians in the transaction, which I have now reason to suspect was much less than that of the white men."

Brant made no apologies for his methods of fighting.

"I have no regrets for the kind of warfare I have had to engage in. War of any kind means killing."

He defended the Indian method of fighting, pointing out that their aim was the destruction of as many of the enemy as possible, and the saving of as many Indians as possible. As to their tactics, he argued that the Indians were fighting to protect their families and their land, and lacking in artillery, forts and depots, and numbers, they were forced into using the methods that they did.

During the war Brant found himself continually under attack for his so-called savagery. He defended himself both by word and deed. In reply to authorities in Pennsylvania, who had sent out warnings of what might happen if one became Brant's prisoner, Brant sent a letter which stated in part:

"That you Bostonians may be certified of my conduct towards all those whom I have captured in these parts - know that I have taken off with me but a small number and many have I released - neither were the weak and helpless subjected to death. It is a shame to destroy those who are defenceless - this has been uniformly my conduct during the war. I have always been for saving and releasing. These being my sentiments, you have exceedingly angered me by your threatening and distressing those who may be considered as prisoners. Let there be no more of this conduct. Ye are or once were brave men - I shall certainly destroy without distinction does the like conduct take place in the future."

In another incident, Brant sent one of his Indians, with a captured white baby, to the headquarters of an American General with the following note:
"I send you by one of my runners the child which he will deliver that you may know that whatsoever others may do I do not make war on women and children. I am sorry to say

that I have those engaged with me in the service who are more savage than the savages themselves."

The evident reference here is to those white men who fought alongside Brant.

As a leader in battle, Brant did command the respect of his followers. One description of him in the Battle of Newton states:

"Such was the commanding presence of the great Indian..., and such the degree of confidence he inspired that his undisciplined warriors stood their ground. Above the roar of the artillery and the rattle of small arms could be heard the voice of Brant, encouraging his men for the conflict, and over the heads of all his crested plume could be seen waving where the contest was likely to be most sharp."

As well, he also had the respect of his Indians off the field of battle. During the American war, Major Ross, commander of Ft. Oswego, wrote to Haldimand:

"I cannot say too much in his (Brant's) favour; his conduct is surprising he rules the Indians as he pleases, and they are all rejoiced at this place (Oswego) occupied. I can assure your Excellency that we are much indebted to the Indians for assisting us to work, a Circumstance which I believe never before happened. Joseph showed them the Example."

The end of the Revolutionary War left Brant a two-time loser. The unity of the Six Nations Confederacy had been shattered because of the disagreement over whether they should fight, and on whose side. Secondly, since the British had lost the war, there was no guarantee of Indian lands, and in fact, there was no mention at all of the Indians in the treaty that was signed. However, whereas neutrality would have netted them nothing, participation at least gave Brant and the Indians a lever with which to pressure the British for some kind of compensation. This took the form of a grant of land along the Grand River in Upper Canada.

Even with the "gift" of the Grand River lands - which came only after much pressuring - Brant did not have the faith and trust in the British that he had once had. Although assured that the British were retaining the western posts to help the Indians, Brant could get no assurance from the British that they would assist the Indians in case of an American-Indian war.

Although he still dreamed of a united Indian Confederacy after the war, he began to despair of the reality of such an undertaking.
By 1788 he himself had begun to distrust many of the Indian tribes,
and he stated:
"As for the Five Nations, most of them have sold themselves to the Devil - I mean to the Yankees. Whatever they do after this it must be for the Yankees - not for the Indians or the English.

Later in the same year, in a letter to Sir John Johnson, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Brant pointed out the difficulty of keeping the Indians together.

"However, I have some reason to think that if we can get them at this appointed place of rendezvous, we will be able to point out to them their error and get them again to adopt measures that the whole of us agreed upon, cause that unanimity to subsist among us, which is so requisite in our situation and without which we cannot expect the business will terminate so much to our satisfaction as it otherwise would."

In 1789, after the American General St. Clair had concluded two peace treaties with the Indians, from which the Mohawks had been excluded, Brant confessed in another letter:

"...and I am persuaded their general confederacy is entirely broken. Indeed, it would not be very difficult, if circumstances required it, to set them at deadly variance."

Over the question of the Grand River lands, Brant himself had been involved in a dispute which had led to a fragmenting of the Indians. Several of the sachems, led by John Deseronto, had decided to accept the British government's first offer of land located near the Bay of Quinte. With them went their followers, and half of the Queen Anne's communion plate that had been presented to the Iroquois by the Queen in 1710, and which the Iroquois were carrying north with them. Brant was still upset by the split over ten years later, as witnessed by a letter written by the Reverend John Stuart in 1797. The letter explained:

"...several families of consequence (recently) removed to the Grand River ...principally induced by the share they expect of the annual income arising from the sale of Lands (there) to the Mohawks....That cunning (Brant) proposes to divide the interest annually among his people, which will naturally operate to the advantage of his Settlement, and depopulate that of the Bay of Quinte."

Brant's handling of the Grand River lands led to a revolt among some of the Iroquois. In 1788 at Montreal, in his absence, an Indian Council poured out complaints against him and his policy of introducing whites into the area. The revolt was led by two Mohawk sachems, Captains Aaron and Isaac Hill. Describing the seriousness of the contemplated revolt in a speech at an Indian Council in 1800, John Deseronto stated:

"...Some few days after Lord Dorchester went away (Sept., 1788) Capt: Isaac & Capt. Aaron (Hill) arrived here with their parties, from the Grand River - on the evening of the same day I held a Council with them and they informed me there had been a great dispute among them at the Grand River and that they Capt. Isaac and Capt. Aaron with their parties intended to kill Capt. Brant, and took arms for that purpose and that they left the Grand River in consequence of that dispute.
...Capt. Isaac & Capt. Aaron, then told his Lordship that the dispute at the Grand River was in consequence of Capt. Brant bringing white People to settle on their lands...."

Brant's motives for selling the land along the Grand have been questioned. Some feel that he did it for profit and power. For example, Sir John Johnson, writing to Lord Dorchester in 1790, noted:

"...The dissensions among the Mohawks Originated, I am fearfull in the Ambitious views of Captain Brant, who, having the principal lead Among the Upper Mohawks or Conajoharie Indians and having been instrumental in procuring them the lands they possess, as well as other benefits, of the whole Settlement which the Chiefs of the lower Mohawks oppose with a View to keep up their former consequence, having always been considered as the heads of the Six Nations Confederacy ...."

However, others argue that he did have the best interests of the Indians in mind. They point out Brant was a realist who recognized that the Indian way of surviving - by hunting - was fast passing away, and that as a consequence the Indians would have to adapt to the white man's form of economy, namely agriculture. His motives in bringing in the whites then were two-fold, and both were directed toward the welfare of the Indians. The whites who took up the land along the Grand would presumably be able to teach farming methods to the Indians in the area, and also set an example for the latter to follow. Secondly, Brant realized that there would be a transitional period as the Indian changed from a nomadic to a more settled way of life, and learned the skills of farming. The money from the land sales, he hoped, would help bridge this time of transition, and what money was left over could be put into annuities for the Indian to draw on in the future.

At the same time as he was trying to establish a settlement along the Grand, the American government was seeking his services in regard to the pacification of the western Indians. Because of Brant's prestige among others of his race, the government felt that he might possibly be able to persuade those tribes which had not done so, to accept the terms of a treaty as set out by President Washington. Brant went to Philadelphia in 1792, conferred with Washington, and agreed to try to get the western tribes to accept the peace proposals. He was successful with some of the chiefs, but some - notably the Miamis -refused, and a war resulted. This failure was more than just a blow to Brant's pride. It meant an end to his dream of a united Indian Confederacy, with himself as a possible leader.

The shattering of this dream of unity left him more time to concentrate his energies on the Grand River settlement. Here his efforts were now directed toward having the grant by Sir Frederick Haldimand accepted as a legal deed, so that he could sell off sections of the land granted to the Indians. He finally succeeded in getting this recognition in 1795, although the British government later disallowed the action.

His success against the British, and his continued prestige and power among the whites and most Indians, created jealousies among some of the chiefs. Some felt that he was using the money gained from the land sales for his own advantage. Lord Selkirk, the colonizer, writing in his diary noted:

"...their own affairs (the Indians) are ... often duped by their chiefs. In the affair of the Grand R(iver) lands, Brant has continued to get a good deal of Cash into his own hands and perhaps has divided a share of the plunder with a few leading men, who have ... carried thro' his measures in the Councils."

In 1803, Brant again found himself under attack from his own people over the handling of the Grand River lands. At Buffalo Creek, a group of chiefs led by Red Jacket, an old enemy of Brant's, and abetted by William Claus the Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, an effort was made to depose Brant. It was temporarily successful. However, Brant soon moved to the offensive. He called a Council of those who were opposing him and upbraided them for their actions against him.

"It astonished me, therefore, after all that I have done for you to hear almost all of you young and old, joining with Colonel Claus, and saying of me that I have embezzled your property, and such like hard speeches, which you know are false, - while you never so much as think of mentioning the many important services I have rendered you, and the many privations I have suffered on your account, and the journies I Have undertaken for your benefit - for the time and expense of which you have never paid one penny.... ...My only crime is, that I want to make you a happy people, and for you to be enabled to call your land your own forever; and not leaving it doubtful whether it is yours or not. I say you would be well pleased if every thing could be done for the general good of the Six Nations, without parting with a foot of land to pay for any contingencies...."

Soon after, there was a meeting of several chiefs who supported Brant and his actions. One of the speakers noted:

"There have been rumours concerning our money and the application made of it. We, that have been engaged in public affairs, know where it is gone. He has not been always travelling, and employed on his own concerns. He has been to the other side of the water, and several times to Quebec; and always in these journies expended his own property, we never making any collection for him whatever. And. now what he may have made use of is only the interest. Nothing has been taken from the principal.... We are perfectly satisfied with all his transactions."

Later, at a General Council, a declaration was issued which completely exonerated Brant of any misdeeds, and requested:

"...And farther hearing that there are many obstacles yet preventing the equitable conclusion of our land business, we now unanimously renew and strengthen him in quality of agent, which from the confidence we have in his integrity from what has already passed, we assure ourselves he will exert himself in that office as far as

lies in his power, to promote the general welfare...."

A final exoneration was given Brant after his death by a commission investigating the legality of the land sales. The report stated:

"Whether Capt. Joseph Brant did or not on all occasions execute the trust repose in him faithfully towards the Indians, the trustees are unable to judge, no evidence having been laid before them on that subject; and it is only right to observe that no improper conduct whatever has been imputed to him before the trustees; and they are therefore bound to assume that he discharged his duty with due fidelity."

Brant's relationship with his own people then was a stormy one right from the beginning of his career as a leader. Doubtless, he had a penchant for power and success, and doubtless also, the power and prestige he did achieve created jealousies in others of his race that led directly to conflicts. But whatever his motives, there is ample proof that. Brant did have a genuine concern for his people. Even his archenemy Lord Simcoe said of him in a letter:

"...The independence of the Indian is his primary object....But I conceive his attachment next to the Indians is to the British...."

A later comment by an acquaintance, also expressed this opinion.

"And I do further certify, that during the whole of my acquaintance with Captain Brant, he has conducted himself with honour and integrity. That, so far as from conducting himself in secrecy, or in any way inclining to alienate himself from the British government, or in doing anything that might be prejudicial to the Indians: on the other hand he has frankly avowed that he would strenuously adhere to the Gov't. and interest of the people to which he belonged: that his honour and friendship for the Indian nation were so near his heart, that nothing should occasion him to do anything incompatible with his duty; and that his own time and trouble have been expended and greatly prolonged in doing everything in his power to promote the interest of his nation and those allied to him."

On several occasions, Brant expressed his hopes and concerns regarding the Indian. In a letter to the missionary Samuel Kirkland, Brant stated:

"It has been my constant study...(to) unite the Indians together and make such a peace between them and the states as would remove all prejudices and enable us to set down on our seats free from apprehension and Jealousies, and if not more respectable, at Least not more comtemptible."

And finally, Brant's dying words point up the genuine concern that he had about his race, and his fears for their future.

"Have pity upon the poor Indians: if you can get any influence with the great, endeavour to do them all the good you can."

JOSEPH BRANT AND THE WHITE MAN - LOYALIST OR OPPORTUNIST

Joseph Brant's contact with the white man in his early years, through his association with Sir William Johnson, the British Indian Administrator in the colony of New York, and his education at the school of Eleazar Wheelcock, gave him an insight into the workings of the white man's mind that few others of his race achieved except through unhappy experience. His education further served him by giving him a degree of literacy which allowed him to press his claims and apply pressures that other Indian leaders could think about, but never put into practice. As well, the whites with whom he had contact respected him because he was like them in the many ways that he had adopted the habits of the white man. Brant realized that he possessed these advantages, and used them to further the cause of his people when dealing with the British and the Americans.

From his early contacts with Sir William Johnson, Brant was bound to be pro-British in his outlook. The historical connection of the Iroquois with the British also influenced his attitude. Brant's first battle was fought for the British against the French at Lake George, during the conflict over North America between those two powers. As well, Johnson was largely responsible for what formal education Brant received. As a young warrior, Brant served the British cause by helping them in their troubles with the Indian chief Pontiac. In this affair, Brant, seeing the futility of an uprising such as Pontiac was leading, persuaded the Oneidas and Mohawks to remain neutral, and he even fought against the Iroquois who were supporting Pontiac.

As the likelihood of war between Britain and the colonies increased, both governments tried to woo Brant to their side. Some historians argue that, in spite of his British connections, had the Americans in their dealings with Brant prior to the war treated him with respect, he might easily have been their ally, or at the very least have kept his people neutral. However, in dealing with Brant, the Americans sent men who did not have the power to make binding decisions, and Brant, failing to get what he wanted from the Americans, turned to the British for some type of guarantee of Indian land. There can be little doubt that Brant knew that his position was an enviable one, with both sides wanting his services, and that ha deliberately played one side off against the other to get what he wanted. However, the British pressed him more strongly than the Americans, and treated him with consideration and dignity, and thus it was to the British that he turned. The British were no more altruistic than Brant in their motives, as it was the Indians military strength that they were concerned with, not the welfare of the redman. Brant for his part, claimed that his motive for joining the British was a sincere one.

"When I joined the English forces at the beginning of the war, it was purely on account of my forefather's engagements with the King. I always looked upon these engagements or covenants between the King and the Indian people as a sacred thing: therefore, I was not to be frightened by the threats of the rebels at the time."

In 1774, the Iroquois had met in Council to discuss the American encroachment on their lands in violation of the Ft. Stanwix treaty of 1768 which had guaranteed Indian lands. That particular Council decided not to take any military action against the Americans, preferring to find a peaceful solution if possible. Shortly after that meeting, the Indians continued their "non-violent" stand by pledging, at another Council, neutrality in any action between the British and the colonists. However, Brant was not convinced that this was the best route to follow. He felt that the American aim was to eventually dominate the continent, and if they won a conflict with the British they would immediately pursue this aim with little regard for the Indian. The British on the other hand, had always protected Indian interests, and aiding the British would gain for the Indian some form of protection. Brant's argument was given credence at a Council meeting in Montreal in 1775, attended by the Canadian Governor Sir Guy Carleton, and Sir Frederick Haldimand, the future Governor who was to play such a vital role in aiding the Indians and their land problem. At that meeting, Haldimand made the following guarantee; as recorded by Brant.

"On this occasion, General Haldimand told us what had befallen the King's subjects, and said now is the time for you to help the King. The war has commenced. Assist the King now, and you will find it to your advantage. Go now and fight for your possessions, and whatever you lose of your property during the war, the King will make up to you when peace returns."

Carleton also made a promise. He noted that should the British by some quirk of fate lose the war, they would guarantee to find for the Iroquois in Canada, lands comparable to those in the Mohawk Valley, if the Indians so desired to move. For Brant, this was the guarantee that he was seeking. One further occurrence strengthened his attachment to the British, and that was his first trip to England in 1775.

The exact reason for Brant's trip is unclear, but many historians feel that he possibly made the trip in order to assess for himself the strength of Britain before finally committing himself to their cause. Brant was favourably impressed, and in turn, British society was favourably impressed by Brant. While there he was referred to as "King of the North American Indians", entertained by people of high rank, interviewed by James Boswell for the London Magazine, painted by the noted artist George Romney, and given an audience with the King. It was during this audience that Brant refused to kiss the King's hand as was expected by protocol. Brant felt that among his own people he was equal to the King in stature, and therefore should not have to bow to one who was his equal. He did however, gallantly kiss the hand of the Queen. The King assured Brant that the Iroquois lands would be guaranteed, and Brant in turn pledged the loyalty of his Indians. The might of Britain had left its mark on Brant, and he could not comprehend how the British could lose a war against the colonists.

On his return to North America, Brant set about convincing his people that they should actively support the British, and he was successful in persuading all but the Oneidas and Tuscaroras to take up arms for the British. During the hostilities, Brant upheld his part of the bargain that he had made with England. He allowed himself to be commanded by others, and fought where and whenever he was ordered to. So effective were his campaigns that his name became a scourge to the Americans. He expected like treatment from the British in regard to their side of the bargain, and was amazed at the trouble he had in getting them to live up to their part of the agreement.

Brant and the rest of the Iroquois were shocked at the terms of the treaty which ended the War of Independence. Nowhere in the treaty was any provision made for the guarantee of Indian lands, or promise of any compensation - in fact, the Indians were not even mentioned in the treaty. This was in spite of the fact that as late as 1882 the British had made the following statement:

"... rest assured that they will never be forgotten. The King will always consider and reward them as his faithful Children who have Manfully supported His and their own rights."

Almost as a further insult, the American Indian Commissioners signed a treaty which gave extensive land concessions, much of it Indian land, to American settlers. Brant was outraged at this treatment, and accused the British of "selling her allies to Congress", to which the British replied that they were not abandoning their allies, but merely "remitting them to the care of neighbours." Too late he realized that he and the Iroquois were merely pawns in a much larger political arena.

One factor basic to the mistreatment of the Indians in the treaty negotiations, was the fact that the ministry in England that was making the peace was not the one that had begun the war, nor made the promises to the Indians. In fact, the new ministry, led by Lord Shelbourne, had little or no sympathy for the Indians. In protest against the terms of the treaty, Brant and most tribes refused to sign the treaty, and demanded from the British the land that they had been promised. Brant, delegated by the Indians, went north to Quebec to confront Haldimand, who was then Governor, with the question. In an impassioned address, Brant reminded Haldimand of the British promise, and of the past loyalties of the Six Nations. He concluded:

"Wherefore Brother, I am now Sent in behalf of all the King's Indian Allies to receive a decisive answer from you, and to know whether they are included in the Treaty with the Americans, as faithful Allies should be or not, and whether those Lands which the Great Being above has pointed out for Our Ancestors, and their descendants, and Placed them there from the beginning and where the Bones of our forefathers are laid, is secure to them, or whether the Blood of their Grand Children is to be mingled with their Bones, thro' the Means of Our Allies for whom we have often so freely Bled."

Haldimand, realizing the value of maintaining the friendship of the Six Nations, of his own accord offered Brant land along the shore of the Bay of Quinte on Lake

Ontario. Upon his return to Niagara, where the Six Nations were camped, the Senecas objected to the land that was offered, and countered that perhaps the Mississauga tribes would sell part of their land near the Grand River. This was arranged (although some of the chiefs, led by John Deseronto, did in fact settle in the Bay of Quinte area), and on October 25, 1784, Sir Frederick Haldimand issued the proclamation which gave the Mohawk Nation,

"...and such other of the Six Nations which as wish to settle in that Quarter to take Possession of, and Settle upon the Banks of the River, commonly called Ours (Ouse) or Grand River, running into Lake Erie, allotting to them for that Purpose Six Miles deep from each Side of the River beginning at Lake Erie, & extending in that Proportion to the Head of the said River, which them and their Prosperity are to enjoy for ever."

The Proclamation stated that the land was being given in return for the Indians, "early Attachment to His (the King's) Cause," and "of the Loss of their Settlement they thereby sustained...."

Brant immediately interpreted this proclamation as a full recognition by the British of the Mohawks as a sovereign nation, and that as such, the Six Nations were to have full control over what they did with the land. It was this interpretation that was to lead to future misunderstandings and mistrust between Brant and the British.

Carrying the Bible and communion silver given to the Mohawks by Queen Anne in 1710 (and which had been hidden during the American war), those who chose to follow Brant migrated to the Grand River area in 1784. Although aided by the British who gave assistance in the construction of a mill, a church, and a school, and by farm implements sent from Britain, the Indians found themselves in difficulties. They lacked knowledge in regard to farming, and lacked funds to establish a successful settlement. As a cure to both these problems, Brant decided to invite whites to settle in the area; He provided land to them, free in many cases, and in return expected them to teach the Indians the art of farming both by direct contact, and through example. The arrangement seemed to solve the problem until the British government claimed that the land titles issued by Brant were invalid. Brant was deeply upset by this action. He outlined the Indian position at a meeting of chiefs and warriors, attended by officials of the British government.

"In the year 1775, Lord Dorchester, then Sir Guy Carleton, at a numerous council gave us every encouragement and requested us to assist in defending their country, and to take an active part in defending His Majesty's possessions, stating that when the happy day of peace should arrive and should we not prove successful in the contest, that he would put us on the same footing on which we stood previous to joining him. This flattering promise was pleasing to us and gave us spirit to embark heartily in His Majesty's cause. We took it for granted that the word of so great a man, or any promise of a public nature, would ever be held sacred. We were promised our lands for our services, and these lands we were to hold on the same footing with those we fled from at the commencement of the American War, when we joined fought and bled in your cause. Now is published a

proclamation forbidding us leasing those very lands that were positively given us in lieu of those of which we were the sovereigns of the soil, of those lands we have forsaken, we sold, we leased, and we gave away, when as often as we saw fit, without hindrance on the part of your Gov't. for your Government well knew we were the lawful sovereigns of the soil, and they had no right to interfere with us as independent nations."

In order to get some satisfaction from the British government on the land question, and to gain some monetary compensation for Indian losses during the war, Brant decided on a second trip to England in 1785. His arrival in England was heralded by the following announcement:

"Monday last, Colonel Joseph Brant, the celebrated King of the Mohawks, arrived in this city from America, and after dining with Colonel De Peister at the head-quarters here, proceeded immediately on his journey to London. This extraordinary personage is said to have presided at the late Congress of confederate chiefs of the Indian nations in America, and to be by them appointed to the conduct and chief command in the war which they now meditate against the United States of America. He took his departure for England immediately as that assembly broke up; and it is conjectured that his embassy to the British Court is of great importance. This country owes much to the services of Colonel Brant during the late war in America. He was educated in Philadelphia, is a very shrewd, intelligent person, possesses great courage, and abilities as a warrior, and is inviolably attached to the British nation."

In his dealings with Lord Sydney, the British Secretary for War, Brant pointed out that the Indians needed what was due to them as soon as possible, if they were to succeed in the transition to an agricultural way of life. He also argued that three years had lapsed since the signing of the treaty that ended the war, and yet no answer in regard to Indian demands for compensation had been forthcoming. He further asked:

"...we desire to know whether we are to be considered as His Majesty's faithful allies, and have that support and countenance such as old and true friends expect?"

Brant was kept waiting several weeks for the official government response. During the wait he found himself a very popular visitor. He was continually in demand by society, and even kept company with the Prince of Wales, going to "Places very queer for a prince to go," as Brant put it. During this time, the well-known incident where he brandished his hatchet at a Turkish diplomat occurred. The diplomat had tweaked Brant's nose at a masquerade ball, convinced that Brant's costume was not authentic. As a reaction, Brant drew out his tomahawk and let out a piercing war-whoop, causing much consternation among the guests.

When the government's reply finally came, it pointed out that in the case of individuals the King could not possibly pay compensation for losses, but –

"His Majesty in consideration of the zealous and hearty exertions of his Indian allies in support of his cause, and as proof of his most friendly disposition towards them, has been

graciously pleased to consent that the losses already certified by his Superintendent-General shall be made good; that a favourable attention shall be shown to the claims of others who have pursued the same line of conduct."

Brant had received his request for monetary assistance, but the government reply gave no written guarantee that the land question - namely the deed to the Grand River lands - would be cleared up. However, Brant read into Sydney's reply that something positive would be done about the Indian claim; once again he was to discover that his British "allies" would let him down.

If the British recognized Brant's ability to control the Indians, so did the Americans. Both were willing to use him in the capacity of mediator when necessary. Brant was aware of the role he could play, and he was quite willing to play that role, providing he could elicit from the whites certain concessions for the Indians. Thus, after the American war, he tried to get what he wanted from the British, and at the same time get some guarantees from the Americans regarding Indian lands. The Americans in particular wanted to secure Brant's services to help solve some of their pressing Indian problems. Shortly after the war, the American Secretary of War wrote to Governor

"Aware of your Excellency's influence over Captain Joseph Brant, I have conceived the idea that you might induce him by proper arrangements to undertake to conciliate the Western Indians to pacific measures, and bring them to hold a general treaty."

Early in 1792, Brant was invited to confer with President Washington at Philadelphia on the Indian question. Brant agreed to help, as he had hopes of uniting all Indian tribes into one large Confederacy in order to deal more effectively with the whites. As well, he was unhappy with the British for their failure to ratify his deed to the Grand River area, and he saw this as a way of getting their attention. In Philadelphia, Brant was well received and well treated, the Americans obviously having learned their lesson from their slight treatment of Brant prior to the war. The Americans held out more than just dignified treatment to Brant. In a letter to a friend Brant noted:

"Had I not been actuated by motives of honour, and preferred the interests of His Majesty, and the credit of my nation to my own private welfare, there were several allurements of gain offered me by the Government of the United States when I was at Philadelphia, during the time the Shawanese and other tribes maintained war against them. I was offered a thousand guineas down, and to have the half-pay and pension I receive from Great Britain doubled, merely on condition that I would use my endeavors to bring about a peace. But this I rejected... Afterward I was offered the pre-emption right to land to the amount of twenty thousand pounds currency of the United States, and fifteen hundred dollars per annum."

Brant could see the logic in Washington's peace proposals, and was willing to try to persuade the other tribes to accept them - but would not take anything for his troubles. He did manage to convince some of the tribes, but with some, notably the Miamis, he failed. With this failure went Brant's dream of a united Indian Confederacy. However,

the British were now aware of Brant's value to the Americans, and Brant was quite willing to use this advantage when struggling with the British over the Grand River land question.

As mentioned, the British had failed to recognize the Haldimand deed in spite of Brant's hopes to the contrary. Brant continued to press to have the deed legalized, and this brought him into direct conflict with British officialdom - namely the persons of John Graves Simcoe, and Peter Russell. With the former, he manoeuvred to a stand-off, while with the latter he was able to use his power to his advantage, and wring some significant concessions.

One of Simcoe's subordinates once commented about Simcoe:

"It has always appeared to me as if that Gentleman thought the Government had been established as a thing whereon he might exercise the sportiveness of his fancy."

Given Brant's solid determination to have his own way in regard to the land question, a clash was inevitable. In 1793, Simcoe issued a patent for the Haldimand grant which did not make reference to any provisions for the Indians to sell their holdings. This naturally upset Brant who all along had expected that the deed would be ratified, and that, as a sovereign nation, the Six Nations would be able to dispose of the land as they saw fit. Simcoe had several reasons for refusing to ratify the deed. Along with many British officials he feared that the Indians would waste the money gained from the sale of lands; also he wanted a well organized and arranged settlement, but Brant had given out the land in a rather irregular manner with little regard for order. Most important in Simcoe's mind was his fear that if the Indians were allowed to manage their own lands, they would lease land to white "land-jobbers" who would rush in to make a profit through speculation. Therefore, he contended that all land surrenders to be legal, had to be made to the Crown alone; for him the Indians had the right of occupancy, not sovereignty. Brant of course countered by claiming that Haldimand's proclamation had recognized the Confederacy as a sovereign state. Brant was given support by Lord Dorchester, who in a letter to a friend commented:

"...but there can be no doubt, but that all the lands and Advantages given to the Indians by Gen. Haldimand, tho' without the formalitys which the Law requires ought in equity to be made good; they may be enlarged, but not contracted, unless by mutual Consent and to this effect Ld. Dorchester had written Lt. Governor Simcoe."

Simcoe ignored the advice of his superior, and even threatened to curtail the Six Nations lands to one-half of the river unless Brant came into line.

As a parting gesture, in March of 1796 Simcoe offered Brant a "deed" which was actually a 999 year lease on the Grand River tract. Brant again refused to accept the offer, realizing that it would still not give the Indians the right to sell the land outright, as the lease would have recognized British ownership of the land.

By the time Peter Russell succeeded Simcoe in 1796, Brant was getting desperate. Several of the Indians along the Grand were in financial distress, and Brant realized that if he was unable to sell some of the land to acquire funds, these Indians would probably move back to the United States. For this reason he decided to exert a maximum of pressure on Russell. He was aided here by two factors. One was that Russell was a much less aggressive personality than Simcoe; and the other was that Russell was only Acting Administrator, and thus his position was much less secure than Simcoe's. Brant was quick to see these disadvantages on Russell's part, and moved to turn them to his own advantage. In this regard he was aided by circumstances. Upper Canada was very much undermanned with troops at this time, and officials such as Russell feared the possibility of an Indian uprising because of that fact. In writing to Simcoe in 1796, Russel expressed this fear, and also his own confusion over the land question.

"...I have ... only to mention that I am much distressed how to act with respect to the Land on the Grand River claimed by the Six Nations, especially as I am unacquainted with the Promises made to Capt. Brandt or Your Excellency's final Determination on that Subject. ... I have no assurance that the granting away this Land to them upon Captain Brandts Recommendations would discharge the Engagements by which Sir Frederick Haldimand has bound Government to the Six Nations respecting it; nor am I clear that I shall not in doing so act a Part most inimical to the Kings Interests and the Safety of this Province by thus permitting considerable Bodies of Aliens (of whose fidelity I have every reason to be suspicious) to obtain so large a Property in the very Heart of it, by which they may throw open a Wide Door by the Mouth of that River for the Introduction of their Countrymen whenever they shall form the Design of wrestling the Country from us.... But I have now only to lament my total want of Instructions & to endeavor with the advice of the Executive Council to evade signing the deeds required until I may receive an answer from the Secretary of State to my Letter on this very delicate Business. Should Captain Brandt however in the mean time determine to convey this land in his own way to these People and settle them upon it; I am sorry to say I have not the means of preventing him without risking the Chance of involving this Province in an Indian and perhaps an American War to which your Excellency too well knows our present strength & Resources are very inadequate...."

Brant was aware of the weakened state of Upper Canada's defenses, and was not beyond threatening violence if he felt it would help him achieve his ultimate goal. Lord Selkirk, the colonizer, reported in his diary:

"According to one account, the Mohawk chief, generally considered a complete rogue... frightened poor Russell into compliance by threats of attacking York."

Also aiding Brant, and posing a threat to Russell, was the rumour that Spanish and French forces were considering a joint attack on Britain's western outposts; Brant let it be known that he could possibly aid these two powers. Russell in a letter mentioned this problem:

"... for it appears clear to me from the Offenses Joseph Brant has taken without Cause that he means to pick a German Quarrel with us and only seeks a feasible excuse for joining the French should they invade this Province."

Brant maintained the pressure. He continually threatened to sell the lands to Americans, and even made a trip to Philadelphia on purpose of which was to keep the British guessing as to his next move. Faced by this continual pressure, and not really knowing to what extent Brant was bluffing, Russell and the Executive Council finally gave in and recognized all the land sales and grants that Brant had made. The formal transfer of the land to those who had purchased them, took place on February 5, 1798. The report of the committee stated in part:

" - Constituted Capt. Joseph Brant an Agent & Attorney of the Five Nations for the Express purpose of Surrendering & quitting Claim to His Majesty a certain portion of the lands they held on the Grand River for certain reasons & purposes which are therein fully set forth -The Board came to a Resolution that the Surrender should be accepted - Upon which Captain Joseph Brant advanced to the President and in the presence of the Board in the Name of the five Nations Surrendered to hint for His Majesty their claim to a Certain Portion of their lands on the Grand River amounting to Three Hundred and fifty two Thousand seven Hundred and Seven Acres...."

However, Brant's victory was a hollow one as Russell had acted on his own without the sanction of the British government, and they refused to ratify Russell's actions. By the time news of their refusal reached Upper Canada, Brant had already sold over 381,000 acres. By 1801, the government had still made no move to legalize the sales, and probably out of frustration Brant wrote to a friend that he was seriously considering a move to the United States. He asked the friend to sound out some members of Congress to see if it might be possible for him to purchase some land from the Western Indians. No action was taken on this, and as the threat of a French - Spanish invasion decreased, the chances of Brant's getting a satisfactory answer to his land problems became less probable. In fact, suddenly in 1804, Brant found himself on the defensive over the land sale question. The Indian Department, realizing that Brant's position was now somewhat tenuous, moved to discredit him. Led by Col. Wm. Claus, the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, the Department accused Brant of mismanagement of funds, and moved to undermine his influence. They were partially successful as Brant was temporarily deposed as a chief; later he was exonerated by an Indian Council and returned to his position.

Brant never gave up in his attempts to get the land sales ratified. He even planned a third trip to England to try to solve the problem, but a heart attack forced him to postpone that consideration. The continual frustrations he had encountered in his dealings with the whites led Brant to distrust them and take a pessimistic outlook on the future of Indian -white relations.

Commenting on Brant's character, the Report of the Executive Council On Indian Land Sales in 1830 noted:

"It is but just to remark that Capt. Brant though himself an individual of the 5 Nations and a principal Chief and warrior among them, was also a person possessed of a good English Education and of superior intelligence, the intimate friend and associate of many of the most respectable white inhabitants of the Province familiar with their transactions and mode of dealing and fully as capable of managing business by writing or verbally, as most of those with whom-he might come in contact."

It was these characteristics, as wall as a dogged determination to achieve what he felt right for his people, that allowed Brant to meet the British and Americans on their own terms, and force them to grant to him and his people many concessions that were denied to other Indians.

THE SIX NATIONS AFTER BRANT

After Brant's death in 1807, his people had to face the problems of the future without the guidance and steadying influence of the man who had led them and arranged for their migration to the Grand River area, and who, better than most people of his race, knew how to play the white man's game when it came to power politics. The question naturally arose as to who would succeed Brant as leader in the Grand River area. The Indians were somewhat divided on the issue. John Norton, a close friend of Brant's and an implacable foe of the Indian Department, was the choice of many. His knowledge of the affairs of the Six Nations, and his own dynamic personality, convinced many of the Indians that he was the man to direct them. Not everyone thought highly of him. Writing to his employer, the colonizer Lord Selkirk, Alexander McDonnell made the following comments about Norton:

"... At present nothing can be done, the Indians being much divided in opinion as the choice of a leader, and from the intrigues of a white man of the name of (John) Norton, (who resides among them and has assumed their manners), who is using the most insidious arts to succeed to Brant, a Spirit of discontent prevails among them, ... I have endeavoured, & I hope with success to impress on the Lieut. Governor the necessity of punishing Norton for thus misleading the Indians (over land deals). Probably your Lordship has seen him. He was in London 18 months ago, and was much carressed by several of the Nobility & Gentlemen of distinction who made him valuable presents. His conduct on this occasion, in misrepresenting a transaction the equity & correctness of which was within his own knowledge (for til within a few months of Brants death, he was his confidant & adviser) can only expose him to the contempt of the People whom he wishes to lead, and direct, & put them on their guard against his future machinations...."

It does appear that Norton, alternatively referred to as a white and a half breed by writers of the time, was influential in directing the affairs of the Six Nations on the Grand until 1822, when he suddenly disappeared from the area after killing his wife's cousin in a duel. Norton was succeeded by Brant's son, John, who was the accepted leader until his death in 1832 from cholera.

Apart from the problem over the land sales, the first crisis that the Six Nations Indians had to face after the death of Brant was the War of 1812. For several reasons the Indians were not overly anxious to fight for the British against the Americans. They were not really very happy with the treatment they had received at the hands of the British, particularly over the land question. They were also reluctant to fight against their kinsmen as some of these people were fighting for the Americans. One might also assume that by 1812 the Indians were becoming more settled into the agricultural way of life, and that they viewed the war as an interference with their development in this area. Continued pleas from the British, and the fact that the British did win some battles early in the war, convinced the Indians along the Grand to aid the British. Once committed they fought bravely in several engagements, especially at the Battle of Beaver Dam.

Throughout the early years of the 19th century, several developments occurred which kept the relationship tense between the whites and the Indians. Foremost among these issues was the settlement of the land question. Still unsettled at Brant's death, the controversy dragged on until 1835 when the land sales were finally made legal. This recognition came only after a long and continuous struggle on the part of the Indians. Their growing frustration over the problem is well illustrated in an address to the Superintendent-General, made in 1811.

"Brother - In this we have been most egregiously deceived and to our great surprise and grief we find ourselves by the contrivance of artful, faithless and wicked men, stript of our property. What little is yet left us we are denied the lawful right of controlling or disposing of without our Master's leave."

The frustrations continued. In 1819 the Indians found themselves having to defend the boundaries of the original land grant as there was a dispute as to the extent of the grant. In 1821 John Brant journeyed to England in an attempt to seek out a satisfactory solution to the question, and although he received a favourable reply from that quarter, the provincial government in Upper Canada refused to comply with the Crown's wishes.. The matter remained unsettled until 1835 when the leases were legalized.

Another problem in regard to the Grand River lands was the continual encroachment of white settlers on to that land. At a Council meeting in 1819, one Mohawk chief stated:

"... When I look around me, above and below, I see nothing but Whites around me, and we have nothing left but a Spot to Stand upon, and what is to be the next event. Are we to be Shoved off altogether? I am Surprised to See so many Settlers on different parts of the River. We deny having sold any Land to them ...."

During the next few years white settlers continued to move into the Indian land. In his Report On the Affairs of British North America, Lord Durham was highly critical of the province's handling of the alienation of the Indian lands. He reported in part:

"... Of the manner in which the large portion they have alienated was acquired by the individuals into whose hands ... it passed with the sanction of the government of the colony, and nearly the whole of whom were connected with that government, I could not obtain any testimony upon which I could feel myself justified in relying. It is, however, certain that the consideration paid for it was for the most part of merely temporary benefit to them. The government, under whose guardianship the Indians were settled, and whose duty it should have been to provide efficient securities against any improvident grants, by which a provision, intended to be permanent, might be disposed of for inadequate or temporary returns, would seem, in these instances to have neglected or violated its implied trust. To the extent of this alienation the objects of the original grant, so far as the advantage of the Indian was concerned, would have appeared to have been frustrated, by the same authority, and almost by the same individuals that made the grant. I have noticed this subject here for the purpose of showing that the government of

the colony was not more careful in its capacity of trustee of these lands, than it was in its general administration of the lands of the Province...."

Finally, in 1840, the Crown took over the control of Indian funds, and a year later had convinced the Indians that the only way to stop the continuing invasions of whites was to give the Crown wardship over the Indian lands. In recommending a Crown takeover, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Upper Canada, Samuel Jarvis, argued:

"The Lieutenant Governor is of the opinion that very great difficulties will be found in any medium course between the expulsion of all intruders or non-interference, as experience has shewn that with all the anxiety to do justice and with all the care exercised to prevent injury to Indian interests, the interference of the Indians themselves, continually, has created new difficulties to which there seems to be no end, and yet the Government is expected to compromise its own character by adjudging what is right and wisely recommended by the Indians, or what, on the other hand may be capriciously or corruptly counselled by them.

The Lieutenant Governor is of opinion that there can be no remedy found for the continuance of this unsatisfactory and embarrassing state of affairs while the lands remain general property under circumstances which it is no reproach to the Indians to say that they cannot manage the estate for the general interests of the tribes.
The Lieutenant Governor, therefore considers that it would be very much for the benefit of the interests of the Indians if they surrendered into the hands of Government the whole tract, with the exception of such part of it as they may choose to occupy as, a concentrated body, so that the same may be disposed of by Government....

The Lieutenant Governor is also of the opinion that when the Indians are thus settled together, there will be no difficulty in keeping away intruders, or summarily punishing them should they persevere in committing trespasses on their tract of land."

In another letter to the Chiefs, Jarvis pointed out that many of the whites who were then residing on Indian land had in fact been invited there by various individual Indians who had received money for the land that the whites were living on.

"From a careful enquiry into the nature of the claims of the white men to the lands in their occupation, it is but too plainly apparent that they have been invited by the great majority of the Indians, and that the latter have received large sums of money which they are wholly incapable of ever refunding. So far, indeed, from the Government receiving any co-operation from the Indians, ... they find every measure proposed thwarted by the conduct of the Indians themselves, by the repeated pretended sales of their public property,..."

Under such circumstances it cannot be expected, nor would it in any manner tend to the interests of the Indians, that upwards of 2,000 white persons nearly equal in number to the Indians upon the Grand River, should be utterly removed from their homes, for which in some instances they have paid so dearly to individual Indians; neither justice or policy, or a due regard to the Indian interests, requires or will permit of such a measure nor can any such be expected to be approved of by me or recommended to the Government."

It is interesting to note, that by 1853, most of the white settlers had been removed from the Indian lands, and that they had been compensated - from the Indian Fund.

The alienation of land ceded to the Six Nations took place in a more subtle manner during the 1830's as well. Canal fever had hit Upper Canada in the 1820's, and after his success with the Welland Canal, William Hamilton Merritt looked for fresh fields to conquer. The idea of making the Grand River navigable by boats had been under consideration by several people - Merritt among them - for some time. As early as 1827, a meeting had been held in Brantford to discuss making the Grand navigable down to Lake Erie. After several petitions, and in spite of Indian objections, the charter for the Grand River Navigation Company was finally issued in 1832. Along with its charter went permission to take whatever land was necessary, in spite of the fact that much of the land that the Navigation wanted was Indian land.

The Navigation was aided in its desire to involve Indian lands and money by the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, Lord Colborne. Colborne liked to feel that his policy in regard to the Indians was a progressive one, and this, coupled with his desire to follow a policy of improving public works, led him to promise the Navigation 200 acres of land at each dam and lock, much of which was Indian land, and a guarantee that the Indians would purchase one-quarter of the stock in the Company - both done without the approval of the Six Nations. In the early stages of the Navigation's transactions, John Brant had proved to be an effective leader in blocking some of the plans of the Company. However, with his death in 1832, the Indians were lacking in effective leadership, and the Company was able to bully its way into getting most of the concessions that it wanted. An Indian protest did effectively prevent Colborne from giving the Company the Indian land at the locks and dams, but by 1835, largely through Colborne's efforts, the Indians found themselves holding three-quarters of the stock in the Company, bought with money taken from their trust fund. As well as the land and the money, the Indians complained that materials for construction were being taken from their land, and were not being paid for. In 1839, the Executive Council of Upper Canada reported:

"... They are of the opinion that the Investment of Indian monies in a speculation of this nature was most unadvised and imprudent."

A later investigation into the whole scheme noted:

"There appears to have been a system of squeezing in detail, money from the Six Nations funds, and although sometimes temporarily obtained from other sources, ultimately the Indian funds suffered from depletion."

In fact, by 1839 the Indian trust fund was close to non-existent.

The monetary aspect was not the only aspect that was having a negative effect on the Indians. Writing to the Colonial Office in 1839, Jacob H. Busk, Treasurer of the New England Company, commented:

"... The Number of Indian Inhabitants on the lower Part of the Grand River has lately considerably decreased, owing to the Dams across the Grand River for the Purpose of improving the Navigation, having flooded to a considerable Extent the bordering Lands, and introduced Agues and Fevers into Situations formerly healthy.

... For a still more important Kindness will the Indians be indebted to Sir G. Arthur, if his Authority can effect the rigid Execution of the Laws against selling of spiritous Liquors to the Indians, and check the Practice of Intoxication, that constantly harassing Source of Vexation, Mischief, and Wickedness...."

Regarding the Indian investment, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs stated in 1852:

"The history and magnitude of this investment which was made without the consent or even priority of the Indians, and against which they have repeatedly protested gives the work rather the character of a Government than a private speculation."

When the Navigation eventually went bankrupt, and was sold in 1875 for $1.00, the Six Nations found themselves holding by far the largest portion of the stocks in the Company, bought with their money but without their permission, or knowledge, and for which they have never been compensated.

The 1830's saw a shift in British government policy toward its handling of the Indians in Canada. The "humanitarian" forces that were very much at work in England at this time in regard to the slavery question, decided to "save" the Indians and aboriginees as well. Their influence led the government to adopt a policy of assimilation and Christianization, and led indirectly to the "reserve policy." To help achieve this, Indian affairs were handed back to the civil authorities from the military. A Report On The Affairs of the Indians in Canada, in 1844, indicated how far the Christianizing elements had been successful among the Six Nations. The evidence dealing specifically with the Six Nations noted:

"... That the Christian Indians are sensible of their improvement is evinced by their expressed disgust at the barbarous practices of their pagan bretheren, and their anxiety for their conversion; as a proof of their desire for advancement it may be mentioned that they are anxious for the education of their Children, a few years since there was difficulty in getting fourteen Children to attend the Boarding School, of the New England institution at the Mohawk Village, there are now fifty applications in addition to the fifty already there. Their desire of advancement is further manifested by their discouragement of drunkenness -A large Majority of the Upper and lower Cayugas, Onondagas, Senecas, and some of the Delawares, are still Heathens."

The Report added ironically:

"... I believe the principal obstacle to the conversion of the Heathen Indians is their prejudice against the religion of the White Man, such is the prejudice of the Chiefs that

they have adopted the strongest resolutions amongst themselves never to be baptized and use all their influence with their Warriors to prevent their getting baptized. This prejudice has been much increased and strengthened, by the Inconsistency which they observe between the profession and practice of many professed white Christians...."

The main issues that have created problems between the Indians of the Six Nations and the whites, since the turn of the twentieth century, have been centred around the question of the sovereignty of the Six Nations. This was of course the basis of the quarrel between Brant and British officialdom over the land question. As a result of their stand that they are an independent nation, the question has always been, to what degree should they conform to the Acts passed by the British and Canadian governments. When the first Indian Act was passed in 1872, the Six Nations, although encompassed by it, refused to assent to the principle of the Act, claiming that as a sovereign state they could not be included in legislation enacted by "another" state. The Indians based their claim on historical precedents, noting that they had always fought as British allies, not subjects, as they had never been conquered. In papers prior to 1812, they are referred to interchangeably as "allies", and "subjects." They also claimed that the Haldimand Grant was a "treaty" made between two equal nations, and thus they felt that they had a right to dispose of their land as they saw fit. Petitions were made to the Canadian parliament in 1890 and 192 0 asking that they be allowed to be governed by their own laws and customs, but these were ignored, and a court case in 1920 to achieve the same request, failed.

When war broke out in 1914, the Six Nations Council took the attitude that it was not bound by the declaration of war unless it decided to be; but enlistment was voluntary, and many men from the reserve did serve with the Canadian forces. In spite of the official stand of the Council, the people of the Six Nations did get involved in the war effort in other ways than just through enlistment. For example, a branch of the Women's Patriotic League was set up, and the Council did contribute to its call for supplies for the troops.

When the Military Service Bill was passed, the Indians reacted strongly against the possibility of being conscripted. A deputation of chiefs journeyed to Ottawa to protest to the Governor-General against the possibility of Indians being conscripted. As one of them put it - "If the white men throughout Canada had enlisted in the same proportion as the Indians there would have been no need for the passing of the Military Service Act." Their protest was successful, and Indians were exempted from conscription. However, in the matter of registration, things worked out differently. Claiming that as wards of the Government, and allies of Great Britain, they were exempt from registration, the Council passed the following resolution on June 20, 1918, in regard to registration:

"That the Indians are wards of the Government, so declared by the Indian Act, and are not embraced in the Order-in-Council requiring enumeration, besides which, it is distinctly against the treaty of Paris, made by the crown

of Great Britain with the Indians, and consequently they have decided not to register under the said Order-in-Council of the Government of the Dominion of Canada."

The Indians based their claim for exemption on the treaty rights of the Indian, which they argued gave them status as a sovereign nation. It is interesting to note, that although those who wished to register were not to be prevented, one man, who reportedly had been urging people to register, was shot at. Again two chiefs went to Ottawa to protest the government's decision, and through an interpreter told the officials there - "We have kept our pledges, let the white chief keep his." The matter was settled in a Brantford police court in July 1918, when one of the young Indians who refused to register was fined $100 for not doing so, and the magistrate refused to allow arguments regarding the status of the Indians, pointing out that - " ... if they were Chinamen they have to register all the same."

When the issue of conscription arose again in World War II, the Indians again asked to be exempted. A letter to the editor of *The Brantford Expositor* explained their reasoning.

"To begin with, it is not a question of disloyalty to the Crown as the Six Nations have abundantly demonstrated in every conflict that the Empire has engaged in, both in Canada and abroad, as far back as the French wars on this continent.

Why then should we oppose an Act that is designed to assist in the war effort? The whole question is one of principle, a principle that has always been upheld by the British Crown, even though recourse to war was the inevitable solution, as witness the Boer War, when the battle cry was "taxation without representation." The Canadian Government designates us as wards and treats us as being incapable of exercising the franchise, having absolutely nothing to say as to who shall or who shall not represent us in Parliament, while at the same time paying the same as anyone else, taxes on all taxable goods, and allowing us only a very limited measure of self-government ."

However, in World War II, Indians were eligible for call up. The sovereignty question then has continued to appear throughout the twentieth century. In 1923, the Six Nations petitioned the League of Nations for membership, but were refused permission to appear before the plenary session of the League. In July of 1945, two chiefs representing the Six Nations Confederacy attended, the United Nations Conference at San Francisco, and making the request as a sovereign nation, asked the Conference to restore to them the lands which the terms of the Haldimand Treaty had guaranteed.

The twentieth century conflict between the hereditary and elected chiefs has indirectly been the result of the interference of white authorities. In the late nineteenth century, a group of chiefs, called the "de-horners" (they questioned the legitimacy of the deer antlers the chiefs had received from Dekanawidah, the mythical founder of the Six Nations Confederacy), challenged the rule of the hereditary chiefs. The hereditary chiefs had been moving slowly to adapt to the needs of the times, but the de-horners felt that they were moving too slowly. The latter began to push for an elected Council. In 1907

they formed the Indian Rights Association, and petitioned the Federal government to depose the hereditary Council and set up an elected Council. There were other petitions, one of them from Six Nations soldiers serving in Europe, but the government at first brushed these requests aside. In 1909, in reply to a letter from the Six Nations, the Honourable Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, had stated:

"It is the policy of the Canadian government as I understand, to recognize its relations with the Six Nations of the Grand River as being on a different footing from those of any of the other Indians of Canada. The Six Nations Indians of the Grand River came to Canada under special treaty as the allies of Great Britain. And the policy of the Canadian government is to deal with them having that fact always in view.
The system of tribal government which prevailed amongst the Six Nations on their coming to Canada was satisfactory to the Government at that time, and so long as it is satisfactory to the Six Nations themselves, it will remain satisfactory to the Government of Canada."

As late as 1921, Arthur Meighen, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, stated:

"... that is claimed on their behalf, that the power of Parliament to deal with the Six Nations is limited by the international obligations between them and the British crown, in other words by virtue of treaty rights extended as far back as 1664 specially recognized later at intervals."

However, because of the Six Nations continual claims to sovereignty made by the hereditary chiefs, and the consequent embarrassment that it was causing the federal government, they began to change their stance. A federal commissioner, Colonel Andrew Thompson, was appointed to investigate the political and social state of the reserve. In a memorandum prepared by the government, and issued on Dec. 27, 1923, the federal authorities stated:

"... that the Council ... is selected by a hereditary system. The method adopted for the selection of chiefs is a primitive matriarchal form of government whereby the voting power rests solely with the oldest women of the clans of which the Six Nations are composed. It is not necessary that the Indians should continue this antiquated form of government as the Indian Act ... provided machinery for a simple elective system on Indian Reserves."

In his report, Colonel Thompson suggested that because the right to a seat was limited to a few families, often uninformed councillors were appointed, and he concluded that the council members were chosen by "a small number of old women." He recommended the establishment of an elected Council, and the government accepted this. On September 17 1924, without any kind of referendum, an elected council was brought into effect by an order in Council.

The tribal chiefs did not disband, and there has been conflict since between the tribal leaders and those elected in municipal elections. The former continue to maintain

that they alone have the right to speak for the Six Nations, and continually confront the elected Council over decisions that they have made. On occasion this conflict has led to open confrontation, as in the "rebellion" in 1959, when the Confederacy supporters stormed the Council house and were only removed by the R.C.M.P. - ironically another institution imposed on the Indian by the white man; or in the "Padlock Revolt" in 1970, when the supporters of the Confederacy locked the doors of the council house, and refused to let the elected chiefs in. The latest problem to be raised is the question of whether or not the Six Nations reservation is legally that - a reservation. A decision by Judge John Ossler in 1973 claimed that it was not. He claimed that the reserve was not a reserve within the meaning of the Indian Act because the Crown never held title to the lands. As a result, the elected council had no legal basis for governing the affairs of its residents, and the hereditary council had a stronger claim to govern the reserve than the elected council. A provincial court ruling overruled this decision, and the question was then taken to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Far from ending with Brant's death then, the struggle between the Six Nations and government officials has carried on for over 170 years, and there appears little chance that anything like an absolute solution will be found in the near future.