

Messages such as this certainly prepared the ground for later harvests. Two more Indians arrived on Sunday, having travelled some distance. One of these was John Sunday who was destined to become an important Christian leader of his people.

On February 21, 1826 the two Christian Chiefs left for their home on the Grand River. They took with them two Indian boys to attend school. Their stay had been short— less than two weeks— but apparently they decided “to leave the seed sown to vegetate, consigning it to Him who watches over the crop in the ground while the frosts of winter bind it, and the snows of winter cover it.”⁶



After assisting the Indians of the Grand River to move to the new settlement at the Credit, Peter Jones visited Belleville again. Arriving on May 26, he began holding meetings with the Mississaugas of the area. It was soon evident that his earlier efforts and the interim work of local people made the Indians ready to hear more of the Gospel message. The day after his arrival he, the Rev. J. Reynolds, and some 50 Indians travelled by canoes across the Bay to the Hallowell Circuit for a Quarterly meeting.

Several of the young Indians made their decision to become Christian at that meeting. Included in this group was John Sunday. Back in Belleville again, May 29 and 31 were a strange jumble for Peter Jones of instructing the Indians and searching for his lost horse! His “poor animal” was finally found several miles up the Moira River.

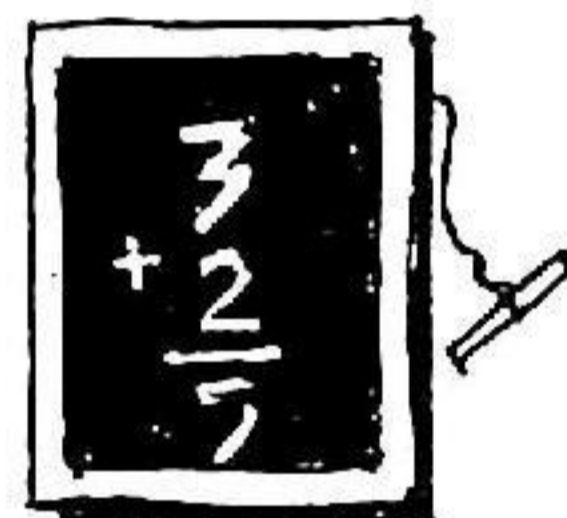
Wednesday, May 31, 1826 was a most significant day. At 2:00 p.m. the Mississaugas assembled in Belleville Methodist Church for the baptism of those who had been converted. Elder Case and Peter Jones both preached, explaining the meaning of baptism. Twenty-two adults received this sacrament. This solemn service was followed by a class meeting where 50 to 60 more Indians indicated their interest in becoming Christians. The message of the Gospel was indeed making rapid progress among the Bay of Quinte natives!

On June 1 they were up early for prayer and after breakfast 11 children of the Christian Indians were baptised by Elder Case. Peter started for the Credit that morning, but before going he left this little flock some sound advice— “not to neglect praying to the Good Spirit, to live in peace one with another, be industrious, and never

⁶ John Carroll, *Case and his Contemporaries*, Toronto, Wesleyan Conference Office, 1871, vol.3, p72.

more taste the fire waters.”⁷ William Beaver and John Sunday were left in charge as class leaders.

Camp meetings were an important part of early Methodist life. George F. Playter gives an interesting description of the site for the Adolphustown Meeting in mid-June, 1826.⁸ It was situated on Carnahan’s Bay, west of Adolphustown, with a sweeping view of the Bay of Quinte. There was a good landing place for boats. A high fence enclosed the grounds to keep out unwelcome intruders. Nearby was “an overflowing spring of water, which running from a sandy soil was sweet and good.” The whole area could be illuminated at night by burning pine on six-foot-high platforms. Those attending would pitch their tents in circles around the worshipping area. Such idyllic surroundings must surely have been conducive to truly meaningful religious experiences.



Filled with enthusiasm like all new converts, the Belleville Indians wanted to attend the Adolphustown Camp Meeting and they were encouraged to go by the ministers of the area. Most of the white people were already settled in when the Indian canoes approached the encampment, with the Mississauga Christians bringing their friends and relatives with them.

What a stirring sight it must have been as two ministers led a single file procession of 58 Indian men, women and children into the camp ground. As soon as they had laid down their provisions and camping equipment, “they all kneeled down and silently prayed for the blessing of the great Spirit, to the surprise and increased delight of the pious whites.”⁹

The Camp Meeting had a profound effect on the Mississaugas. Indians and whites met separately except for the preaching. William Beaver translated for the Indians. On the weekend, the meeting grew until there were three to four thousand people attending! On the Monday when the Sacraments were celebrated, another 21 Indian adults were baptized plus 10 children. In four short months this tribe had heard the Gospel for the first time, were stirred by its invitation and 43 adults and 21 children were baptized into the Christian faith.

The permanent settlement for the Grand River Indians at the Credit was proving such a success that Elder Case and other concerned Methodist leaders wished to provide similar advantages

⁷ Jones, *Journal*, pp68-69.

⁸ G.F. Playter, *The History of Methodism in Canada*, Toronto, W.P.E., 1862, p279.

⁹ Playter, *op.cit.*, p279.