

Faith Vital to Native Leader

During the War of 1812 between the United States and Canada, a group of Delaware Indians who felt close ties with the British migrated from their original home territory along the Delaware River to Canada. Legend has it that they asked permission to stay in the Grand River country for one night. The next day, when asked why they had not left, the men replied that their wives wouldn't let them leave what they felt was a good place to settle.

A Methodist preacher, Frank Weaver, enlisted the assistance of Delaware band member Joe Montour as his translator. Through working Sunday after Sunday with this Christian minister, Joe himself became an able evangelist. He also named a son Frank Weaver Montour after the preacher.

Soon the Delawares who became Methodists decided to build their own church. Unfortunately, there were others in the community who opposed the Methodists. One night, when three tiers of logs were in place, they were knocked down: the same thing happened the next night. A sympathetic father with six husky sons stood guard the next night, tackling the invaders. From then on, construction proceeded smoothly.

Joe's son, Frank, decided to seek work in Hamilton when he was 21. Six foot one, and 245 pounds, he was hired

as a policeman. When the first World War broke out, Frank joined the army, rising to the rank of non-commissioned officer. After the war, he and his wife, Charlotte Brant, purchased the family farm with a government loan. Work in the gypsum mines at night as well as farming by day enabled him to pay it off gradually. When the second World War broke out, he volunteered for service again.

For about 30 years, Frank served as a councillor on the Six Nations reserve: his picture now hangs in the council house along with others who have served their community.

Although Frank believes he had been baptized as a baby, last year, at age 94, he asked to be baptized in his granddaughter's pool as a way of witnessing to the Lord who has granted him such a long and full life. Though failing eyesight has made it impossible for him to continue living on his own this year, he remains in good health and spirits in his new home at the Iroquois Lodge in Ohsweken. There are many family members to keep track of: Frank's six children gave him 35 grandchildren. Now there are nearly 90 great-grandchildren.

Thanks to Frank's minister, William Wilkison for supplying Contact with this glimpse of a congregation's beginning and one of its most interesting members.



Frank Weaver Montour, proud Delaware, proud Canadian, committed Christian, poses following a veteran's parade. He is a true successor to the Methodist preacher after whom his father named him.