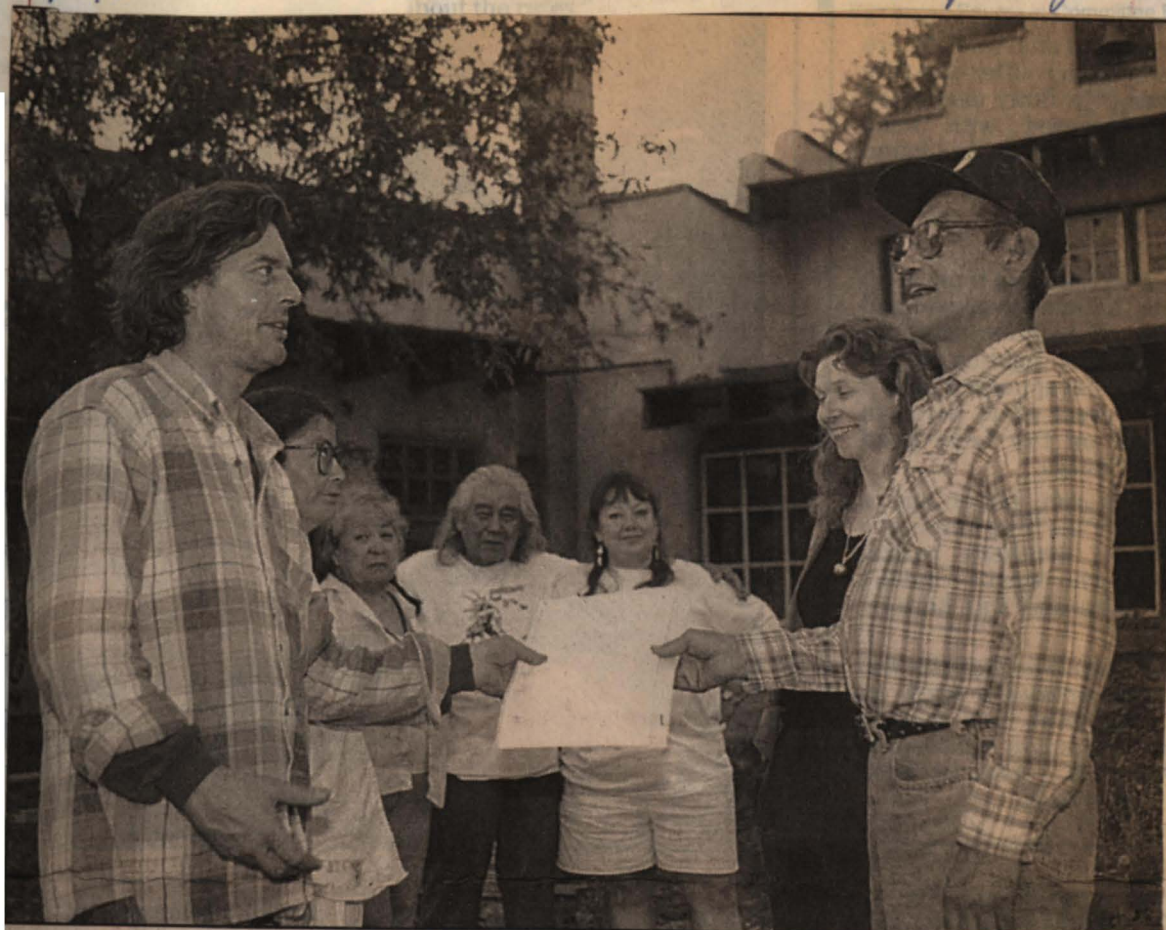


# Mohawks Take Over Cooke Property

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Photos by Brian Thompson, Expositor Staff

## Peter Cooke hands over the deed to his Gilkison Street property to Mohawk representative Andrew "Ozzie" Staats Wednesday night.

True to his words, Peter Cooke showed up at the land registry office Wednesday to legally transfer his house and property to the Mohawk people.

The controversial figure at the centre of a garden growing on city land has given up all rights to his Gilkison Street house to the Mohawk people and Mohawk nation in return for \$1.

The deed to the property at 110 Gilkison was handed over to the Mohawks on Wednesday night.

"It's a wonderful idea for them because they've been looking for a place in the city," Cooke said.

The self-described artist said he is leaving Brantford and moving to New Mexico.

In the spring, Cooke began building what he calls a community garden behind his house in a city park. It grows many different and nontraditional species including varieties of tobacco, vegetable plants, sunflowers, cone flowers and many plants considered weeds.

On Wednesday, an Inukshuk — a traditional rock sculpture — was built in the garden by Inuit artist David Ruben to bless the area before it was turned over to the Mohawks.

"The structure was built to mark the area," Ruben said. "It's a gift to the new property owners."

The cairns are used by Inuit people as landmarks to denote food caches, good hunting and fishing areas, and are also used as decoys in caribou hunts.

The base of this ceremonial cairn has an area for grass offerings to be burned.

Ruben is an internationally-known artist whose work is on

Ozzie Staats, who was appointed by the Mohawk Nation to sign the legal papers regarding the land transfer, said the future of the property hasn't been decided.

"The chiefs, clan mothers and Mohawk people will decide," he said.

While no decision has been taken, one of the possibilities is that a Mohawk may move into the house to care for the property and guard the garden, he said.

Phil Monture, director of land research for the Six Nations band, said Cooke's property and the Gilkison area is in the process of being claimed as native.

Monture said a change in ownership of Gilkison Street property won't affect the claim.



**Inuit artist David Ruben Piqtoukun stands beside the Inukshuk (stone cairn) which he made Wednesday.**