

# In defense of Joseph Brant and the Mohawks

By Jim Windle

**KANATA VILLAGE, SIX NATIONS** - Revisionism isn't the exclusive domain of non-Native governments and lop-sided google-historians. It can also be held that even amongst Six Nations traditionalists there is a lot of revisionism believed by some to be true accounts of "the way we were" so to speak.

Looking back over more than 300 years of history from our place in 2015, it is next to impossible to determine exactly what the contemporary understanding of any historical event or agreement was to those who participated in it. That is why reading old documents recorded by those directly involved are so very important.

The Mohawk Workers submitted to the Two Row Times the minutes of a meeting of the Confederacy Council of the Grand River with the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, dated 1805.

This document explains quite clearly what the accepted understanding within the Confederacy Chiefs of the day was regarding the Haldimand Deed as well as the Mohawk Nation's place within the Grand River Tract.

It also defends Joseph Brant himself who was being accused by some of seeking personal gain by his work on behalf of the Six Nations.

All have opinions on these matters, but we thought it would be most valuable to publish this

original document verbatim to see what the people of the day thought. These minutes were recorded only 20 years after arrival on the Haldimand Tract and two years before the death of Brant.

The Two Row Times welcomes the submission of other historical documents for printing in our newspaper so we can bring the words of the past to light in the current day.

## Grand River May 4th 1805

*At our usual Annual Meeting at our Council House.*

Brothers: (Henry Tekarohogen principal Chief and first Sachem of the Mohawk Nation speaks)

In consequence of some late extraordinary transactions at a pretended Council at Buffalo Creek and afterwards at Niagara, we think it necessary to inform the public of their sentiments in regard to these affairs. In order to do this it will be necessary to mention some things that have happened many years ago.

Brothers: At the commencement of the trouble between Great Britain and the late Colonies the Mohawks and some other(s) mindful of the engagement of their ancestors took a decided and active part in favour of his Majesty and at the hazard of their lives brought Johnson and the Indian

Department through a hostile country from the Mohawk River to Lower Canada.

Brothers: In the year 1775, Sir Guy Carlton one of His Majesty's Generals and then Commander in Chief of that Province of Quebec promised the Indians in general that any loss they might sustain by the war which had now commenced should be fully and amply compensated; ...confiding in his Excellency's promise, the Mohawk exerted themselves to the utmost of their abilities, they were also instrumental in confirming others of the Six Nations in their attachment to the King and their conduct during the war is still fresh in our memory.

Brothers: The promise of Sir Guy Carlton was confirmed by his successor General Haldimand and at the peace a Deed was executed by him for lands we now possess on the Grand River, this grant was at first intended for those Indians who had lost their lands on the Mohawk and Susquehanna Rivers, and at their request extended to such others of the Six Nations as wished to settle there, ...at this time we were invited to remain within the American territories but such was our attachment to the King our Father, that we preferred retiring to an uncultivated wilderness in Upper Canada with our Brother Soldiers and fellow sufferers the Loyalists.

Brothers: At the time we obtained our grant

from his Excellency General Haldimand, we represented to him the advantage it would be to us to have a few white families settled among us in order to show our people the benefits of agriculture and the advantage of having good roads to which his Excellency readily assented and there are now a sufficient number settled for these purposes.

Brothers: After several years residence on the Grand River we considered it to be for the interest of the people that part of our lands should be sold and the proceeds put to interest, we accordingly with consent and approbation of the Chiefs sold part of the said lands and received some of the interest which was applied to sundry public uses for the benefit of our

people.

Brothers: The purchases (purchasers) inability to make the payments as stipulated caused some of the Lower Mohawks and old women to murmur and some young men not capable of distinguishing right from wrong, or of judging of the nature of disappointments, began also to be

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