

"Unlike the nearby American states, Upper Canada never had an angry Indian frontier." The British kept to the letter of the Proclamation and did indeed avoid the bloody armed conflict of the American Northwest. But was the adjustment of Canada's native peoples to British rule really as harmonious as Canadian historians have assumed? A quick review of the experience of the Mississauga Indians under British domination strongly suggests a far more complex situation, in which, by the late 1790s, considerable discontent against British rule definitely existed.

Historians have made little reference to the Mississauga chiefly on account of the scarcity of available source materials. In contrast to the Hurons, whose past and present were so minutely described in the early seventeenth century by the Jesuit Fathers, white British North Americans in the late eighteenth century wrote very little about the Mississauga. Fortunately though, there is one hitherto ignored source of information. Shortly after their conversion to Christianity in the mid-1820s several Mississauga completed accounts of their people's recent past. Using these Indian sources, as well as the existing non-Indian materials, the story of the Mississauga's first years under British rule can be more fully told.

At the outset of white-Indian contact in the early seventeenth century, members of two large linguistic families occupied present-day southern Ontario: the Algonkians and the Iroquoians. The Algonkians, whose modern descendants include those peoples called Algonkins, Nipissings, Ojibwa and Ottawa, lived on the Georgian Bay, around Lake Nipissing and in the Ottawa Valley. Essentially nomadic peoples, the Algonkians relied almost exclusively on hunting and fishing. The Iroquoians, who included the Hurons and the Five Nations or Iroquois Confederacy, lived south of the Algonkians, the Hurons on the southern shore of the Georgian Bay and the Five Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca) across Lake Ontario in what is now northern New York State.<sup>6</sup> Semi-sedentary peoples, the Iroquoians relied heavily on horticulture as well as on hunting and fishing for their survival.

Although they shared the same culture and spoke a similar tongue, the Hurons and the Iroquois at the moment of European contact were hostile to each other. Eventually the Five Nations or Iroquois obtained the upper hand and dispersed the Huron Confederacy in 1649-50, and then attacked the Hurons' allies, the Algonkian tribes.<sup>7</sup> For the next forty years the Five Nations held their territorial gains, until they were seriously weakened by disease and mounting casualties from their battles with the French. At this point the Ojibwa (or Chipewa as the Americans term the same tribe) took the offensive, migrating southward from Lake Superior and the north shore of Lake Huron and expelling the Iroquois from present-day southern Ontario.<sup>8</sup>

According to Kahkewaquonaby, or the Rev. Peter Jones, a native Mississauga missionary, the skirmishes between the two Indian groups in the late 1690s were so bloody that a century and a half after they took place, "there has been, and still is, a smothered feeling of hatred and enmity between the two nations; so that when either of them comes within the haunts of the other they are in constant fear."<sup>9</sup> Kahkewaquonaby pointed to the large mounds of human bones at the south and north ends of Burlington Beach as evidence of the intensi-