

NEW SERIES : Price 1 dollar : VOL. xxv No. 3

VERMONT *History*

Formerly the Vermont Quarterly



October 1957

The PROCEEDINGS of the
VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



INDIAN TROUBLES IN EARLY VERMONT

PART I

By JOHN C. HUDEN

On page 79, Volume I of Walter Crockett's VERMONT appears a reference to a speech uttered by "Missisquoi Indians at the North End of Lake Champlain" in September, 1766. A complete account of this oration, together with the Iroquoian complaint transcribed in this offering, was found in Section Q-3 of the Colonial Office Records at Ottawa. After careful annotation the Missisquoi speech will probably appear in this magazine.

MANY years of readjustment followed the surrender of New France in 1760. Vermont, later to be four counties of New York, was considerably affected by boundary surveys, by disputes concerning lands along Lake Champlain, and by Indian affairs. By 1766 landholders had become discouraged, even alarmed; while the Indians, Algonkian and Iroquoian alike were nearing destitution as the following transcription has revealed.

"At a Meeting of a Deputation from the Seven Confederate Indian Nations¹ in the Province of Quebec with their Excellencies, the Governors of New York² and Quebec,³ in the North End⁴ of Lake Champlain the 8th September 1766.

The following Speech was consulted upon.

Brothers, the Governors of New York and Quebec, the seven Confederate Nations of the Province of Quebec having heard of your coming to these parts, thought it their Duty to send a Deputation to wait upon & address you on your Arrival.

We their Deputies Therefore thank the Being above for having been pleased to let us meet you in good health, & for having guarded you on your journey from any Accident, and likewise for having protected our New Governor on his Voyage over the Great Lake⁵ to arrive safe in his Government; and we most heartily bid him Welcome, and wish him perfect Health and Happiness to govern the same, recommending the Indian Nations in his Government to his Favor and Protection, this we confirm with these

Strings of Wampum.

Brothers,

Having at the same Time heard, that you were to ascertain and fix the Boundaries between your respective Provinces, we saw it a very proper and Convenient opportunity to return the great King of England our Father our most humble Thanks through you for having most graciously taken Notice of all Indian Nations, their Lands & Trade in America in his Royal Proclamation of October 1763; which our friend & brother Sir William Johnson⁶ had then published to us by his Deputy Captn. Claus & we most heartily Request of you to support and Protect us in the same, as our hunting grounds lay chiefly in your two Governments.

A large Belt of Black Wampum.

Brothers,

Since we lived under the French Government we enjoyed our Hunting & Fishing about this Lake without interruption or Molestation, & were assured by the French Governor to continue so to do, as long as we lived hereabouts. . . . As to the Dominion of the Lake and the Lands thereupon, it is true he reserved that to the French King; but as to the Wild Beasts in the Wood and the Fish in the Waters thereof, he said were for the use and disposal of the Indian Nations living about it without Exception, & which accordingly we have enjoyed above these Eighty years⁷ past. . . . But now, Brothers, since this Lake & Country is in your Possession, we find there have Several Settlements been made thereupon, which, altho' it was not the Case in the French Time, yet we make no objection to it. . . . All that Surprizes & Alarms us is, that some of these new Settlers have told to some of our People, that they should not hunt within their Right. Should this be the Case & they have it in their power so to do, it would at once frustrate our present Hopes of His Majesty's good Will towards us, & deprive us of our Principal Substance and Livelihood; And we beg by this Belt of Wampum, that you will be pleased to Support us in what His Majesty was graciously pleased to reserve to us, and be glad of your opinion and Answer upon what we have now laid before you.

A long Belt of Wampum.

Brothers,

What we have been speaking to you concerning the Lake and Lands in Question was only since the Time the Europeans⁸ have come amongst us; as to the Original Owners thereof, it is well known to

have been the undisputed Right of the Six Nations,⁹ and was chiefly Occupied in the Hunting Seasons¹⁰ by the Ancient Mohawks, whose descendants we are; and our Forefathers going to hunt chiefly in this Neighborhood was one of the principal Reasons for our settling upon the River St. Lawrence¹¹ near Montreal, as whenever they killed any Game nearest that Market, they carried it there, & being well received and flatter'd by the French, & on the contrary Slighted & Neglected by the Dutch, who then possess'd the Province of New York, Families after Families Settled and remain'd in Canada, which Occasion'd the Establishment of what to this Day is call'd the French Mohawks, and where we now live. . . .

As to the first building ever made upon Lake Champlain is known to be Crown Point¹² which our middle aged men all well remember, and the six Nations¹³ hearing of it immediately remonstrated against it to the French Governor, who, telling them it was only to guard against a sudden Attack from the English, prevailed upon them with difficulty to let him finish it, which at last they consented to, with this Condition that no other Settlement should be made upon the Lake hereafter, which he readily enjoyed in & promised to observe.

Brothers,

This last part of our Speech we have only made you by way of Information, & therefore give no Wampum upon it.

*Answer*¹⁴

Brothers

We return you our Sincere thanks for your Compliments of Congratulation on our Arrival here, and are extremely happy on having the earliest opportunity of giving you the Strongest Assurances of our good Will towards you.

Brothers,

As we are persuaded, that you will not be wanting on your Parts to merit that Protection which has been granted to you by the British Crown, we shall always discourage every attempt made in our respective Provinces of New York and Quebec to disturb you in those Rights and Privileges which have been confirmed to you, & shall endeavor, by every means, to promote a Mutual Confidence and good Understanding in the Seven Confederate Indian Nations; recommending it at the same time, on this as well as any future Occasion to make a proper distinction between Acts of Government & the Proceedings of Individuals, nor to Suppose, from the Rash & Unjustifiable

Actions of particular Persons, that any Public Countenance will be given to Violence and Oppression.

Endorsed: Copy of the Speech of the seven Confederate Indian Nations to the Govrs. of New York & Quebec. 8 Sept. 1766 & their Answer."

NOTES ON PAGES 331-337, SERIES Q-3

¹ Mohawks, Hurons, etc.

² Sir Harry Moore was Governor of New York in 1766.

³ In 1766 General James Murray, Governor of Quebec, was called to England; his Lieutenant-Governor (Sir Guy Carleton, Baron Dorchester) became Acting Governor. Sir Guy succeeded General Murray as Governor two years later.

⁴ Probably at Isle La Motte; possibly at Windmill Point near Alburg.

⁵ Great Lake means Atlantic Ocean and the passage refers to a voyage from England.

⁶ Sir William Johnson (1715-1774) was Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

⁷ Probably a figure of speech. If literally interpreted, "eighty years" would date back only to 1686; Mohawks were there as early as 1500.

⁸ Since Cartier's landing, 1538? or Champlain's visit, 1609?

⁹ "The Six Nations"—The Iroquois confederacy; Tuscarora, Seneca, Cayuga, Onandaga, Oneida, Mohawk.

¹⁰ The Mohawks anciently controlled all of Northeastern New York, including both sides of Lake Champlain which is labelled "The Iroquois Sea" on some old maps; the Vermont lake shore is marked "Irocoisia."

¹¹ The Mohawks had villages at Caughnawaga, near Lachine Rapids and at Lake-of-Two-Mountains (Oka) west of Montreal.

¹² Fort Frederick, etc., fortified by French around 1731.

¹³ Same as above No. 8.

¹⁴ This answer was probably uttered by representatives of the British Colonial governors and transmitted by interpreters.





INDIAN TROUBLES IN EARLY VERMONT

PART II

By JOHN C. HUDEN

Following a clue located on page 79, Volume I of Walter Crockett's VERMONT, the ensuing transcripts were found in Section Q-3 of the Colonial Office Records at Ottawa. An Iroquoian complaint uttered at about the same time (fall 1766) was printed in the October 1957 VERMONT HISTORY.

* * *

THE Speech of the Misiskoui Indians to the Governor of Quebec in the North End¹ of Lake Champlain 8th Sep^r 1766.

Brother

We the Misiskoui Indians of the St. Francis or Abenaki Tribe have inhabited that part of Lake Champlain known by the Name of Misiskoui² Time unknown to any of us here present, without being Molested or any one's claiming Right to it, to our knowledge, except about eighteen Years ago, the french Governor M^r Vaudreuil³ and Intendant came there, and view'd a Spot convenient for a Saw-Mill to facilitate the building of Vessels & Batteaus at St^t Johns,⁴ as well as for the use of the Navy at Quebec; and on the occasion convened our People to ask this approbation, when they Consented & marked out a Spot large enough for that Purpose, as well as for the cutting of the Saw-Timber, *about half a league Square,*⁵ with the Condition to have what Boards they Wanted for their use Gratis. But at the Commencement of last War,⁶ said Mill was deserted, and the Iron Work buried; after which we Expected every thing of the Kind would Subside; but soon after peace was made, some English people came there to rebuild the Mill, and now claim Three Leagues in Breadth & Six in Depth, which takes in our Village and Plantations by far.

We therefore request of you, Brother, to enquire into this affair, that we obtain Justice as it is of great Concern to us.

We also beg you will not allow any Traders to come & bring

Spirituous Liquors among us, being near enough to bring Peltries & Skins to Montreal Market.

A Belt and Stringe

* * *

Answer

Brothers of the Misiskoui Indians, I will enquire into the particulars of your Request, in the mean while you may rest assured of Justice and Protection, your Continuance in the same Dutifull Conduct you have observed, since under the British Government, will procure you Marks of Favor.

Endorsed: Copy of the Speech of the
Misiskoui Indians to the L^t
Gov^r of Quebec⁷ & his Answer.

* * *

How the Missisquoi Abnakis felt about the boundary line established by the governors is revealed in this letter from Sir Guy Carleton to the Lords in Council:

A Copy/

Quebec 18th. Oct^r 1766

My Lords,

The Plan of Lake Champlain that Accompanies this Letter, which I sent by Captain Coxen of the ship Eltham, will point out to your Lordships the several observations taken of the Sun and Stars, by order of Sir Harry Moore⁸ and myself,⁹ to trace out the Line of 45 Degrees North Latitude; it will also show the uncertainty of these observations, and how much they differ from each other, after seeing these Variations, Your Lordships will be able to Judge which is most advisable, to leave the Latitude still for the South Boundary of this Province, or to fix some Natural Boundary, as a Creek or River, to serve as the Frontier.

Your Lordships will be pleased further to observe, that by some of these observations, the Misiskoui Indians¹⁰ are severed from the Province of Quebec, who in their Speech to me desire that no Traders may be permitted to go among them, as they are near enough to Montreal to go to Market for all their Wants, whereas should they be fixed in the Province of New York, they will then be obliged to go to Albany, the nearest Court of Justice under that Government, to obtain Redress of any Grievance, which will be a very new Scene to them, besides the great Length of Journey.

The Speech of the seven Confederate Nations,¹¹ to Sir Harry Moore and me, with our Answers, The Three Addresses of the Inhabitants of Quebec, the unanimous Address of the Inhabitants of Montreal, the Petition of Mr. Allsopp, with my several Answers, I believe do not require my troubling Your Lordships with any Explanation.

Complaints were made to Sir Harry Moore and to me when at Windmill Point,¹² by some English and Canadians, since my arrival in the Province more have been presented, setting forth, that contrary to the Faith of Treaties, which confirmed all the Canadian Grants, their Lands had been given away from them to others by the Government of New York, and that they humbly conceived, the King, in separating the Lands on Lake Champlain to the Southward of the 45th Degree of Latitude,¹³ from His Province of Quebec, did not thereby mean to deprive them of their Grants. The English said that depending on the Treaty of Peace confirming these Grants, they had purchased these Lands, and paid the [registration fees?] as is the custom in this Province, and that they must be Great Sufferers, if these Lands were taken from them. I requested of Sir Harry Moore that he would grant no more of these Lands, till His Majesty's Pleasure was known concerning them.

On my arrival here, Lieutenant Colonel Irving complained to me, that Mr. Mill's, the King's Receiver General, had, of his own accord, published an Advertisement in the Gazette, threatening to prosecute all Traders who should interfere, or be concerned in the Trade with the Indians, at what is commonly called the five-posts, of the King's Domaine, except the Lessees to him and Gray, tho' this very Trade had been, in compliance with His Majesty's orders, Laid open by Government here by a Proclamation published also in the Gazette the thirty first of January 1765, as likewise by an Advertisement in said Part of a letter from Sir Guy Carleton, Acting Governor of Quebec to the Lords-in-Council respecting the boundaries between New York¹³ and Quebec; also concerning the Missisquoi Indians, etc.

NOTES

¹ Probably at Isle La Motte; possibly at Windmill Point, Alburg.

² Missisquoi Bay; Swanton region.

³ Mr. Vaudreuil—Pierre Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil, last Governor of New France; visited Swanton area in 1747 or 1748.

⁴ St. Johns: St. Jean—Iberville, on Richelieu River.

⁵ Italics mine (JCH). A simple calculation will show that the English *seized* seventy-two times as much land for their sawmill operations as the French had *leased* for theirs.

$18 \div \frac{1}{4}$ equals 72

⁶ Campaigns of 1755-1760, resulting in transfer of Canada from France to England and subsequent settlement of Lake Champlain region (and upper New York, and Vermont) by "English" settlers from New York and New England.

⁷ Sir Guy Carleton, Baron Dorchester. (In 1768 Sir Guy succeeded General James Murray as Governor of Quebec.)

⁸ Sir Harry Moore, Royal Governor of New York.

⁹ "Myself", "me":—Sir Guy Carleton, Acting Governor of Quebec.

¹⁰ The Misiskoui Indians were Abnakis, or Abnakis and remnants of River Indians from New England and New York. Captain Carver's map of 1763 shows *Missiasiks*; B. M. King's CXXI map dated 1757 shows *Schachtacooks* at this site, Missisquoi Bay.

¹¹ Iroquois, "The Long House", etc. This speech was printed in the October 1957 *Vermont History*, 288-291.

¹² Windmill Point, north and west of Alburg, on Lake Champlain.

¹³ This included all of present day Vermont, as well as New York lands west of Lake Champlain.

