

Selected Reprints from the Grand River Branch Newsletter, *Branches*

"The Loyalist Land Holdings in Brantford's Surrounding Areas" (With Surveyor Lewis Burrell's Map of 1833 - PART I)

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One of my favorite challenges is to study early maps of Upper Canada, or Canada West, and interpret the place names and persons identified on the maps.

Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century maps of Upper Canada, often show the loyalist settlements along the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes and the Grand, Ottawa and Thames Rivers. The accompanying map shows the early loyalist land holdings of the area surrounding Brantford, in the 1830's.

Surveyor Lewis Burwell, grandson of a loyalist, an early resident of Brantford, surveyed the region.

He not only drew a map of the town plot of Brantford and its environs, but also had much to do with the division for settlement of land, either leased or sold by the Six Nations.

Leaving a legacy of extensive correspondence with the Superintendent of the Six Nations, John Brant (1794 - 1832), Burwell recorded his place in the annals of local history.

By August 13, 1839, Lewis Burwell completed a detailed survey of the area which showed the Brantford town plot having eight streets running east and west and thirteen streets intersecting north and south.

On this map, there are fourteen place names, which have early historical significance. Starting on the left corner of the map, I shall attempt to explain some interesting facts about each demarcation.

1. Indian Farms and Lands

By Governor Haldimand's Proclamation of October 24, 1784, 675,000 acres, six miles on either side of the Grand River, from its source to its mouth, were transferred to the Six Nations, for their loyalty to Britain during the American Revolution. Joseph Brant and his people settled on some of this land and gave, leased or sold other sections of the tract to family members, friends or settlers.

2. Methodist Mission House

The Methodist Society started its work in 1827. The Reverend Alvin Torry was the first Wesleyan minister among the Six Nations.

3. William Kennedy Smith (999 year lease, 1200 acres)

W. K. Smith was the oldest son of John Smith, a loyalist from New York State, who built the Mohawk Chapel. W. K. Smith, magistrate of Brant County, married a sister of Joseph Brant and they had two children, W. K. Smith and Margaret Smith, who married William Kirby. They were later given the Smith and Kirby Tract of 1300 acres, part of which was located on the site of Brantford.

4. Brantford Town Plot

On April 19, 1830, 807 acres of land was purchased for five shillings, lawful money of Upper Canada for the site of Brantford. The delivery of the deed was made in the presence of John Brant, William Holme, J. P., James Racey, J.P., Lewis Burwell and John Norton.

5. Mohawk Parsonage of the Anglican Church (1827)

The Mohawk parsonage was built on glebe land, which was set aside for the use of the Anglican Church. The Anglican Clergy lived in this parsonage. It was destroyed in the early 1900's.

6. Mohawk Village or Loyalist Village

The Mohawk Village became the focal point for the Six Nations. The Mohawk Chapel, a Council House, a mill, a school and about twenty-four log houses were located in the village, on the bend of the Grand River.

7. Oneida Mission School

The Oneida Mission School was financed by the "New England Company for the Propagation of the Gospel", and served the Oneida settlement.

8. John Thomas (999 year Brant lease, 200 acres)

John Thomas helped his father-in-law build the Mohawk Chapel. Rent payment for his land was one dunghill fowl yearly.

9. Cayuga Village

Cayuga Village was a community of loyal Cayuga natives, who settled in the area of Cainsville, east of Brantford.

10. Eagle's Nest

For Natives, the sacred eagle was the highest order of birds, who flew close to the spiritual realm and carried thoughts and prayers to the Creator. According to oral tradition, there are two origins to the name "Eagle's Nest". One history maintains that an eagle's nest was found at the location in early times. A second tradition claims that the bend of the Grand River represented an eagle's nest. By 1890, the residents of the "Nest", were proud of their village and did not want it annexed to Brantford.

11. Clench Tract

Captain Ralfe (Ralph) Clench, U.E., Butler's Rangers, married Elizabeth, daughter of Lt. Brant Johnson. She died August 15, 1850 (77 years) and her husband died January 19, 1828 (66 years). Their son, Robert Addison, received a large tract of land in Brantford Township. He died on June 23, 1824 (47 years). The Clench Tract was divided into lots and sold to early settlers.

12. Jacob Brant (237.5 acres)

Jacob Brant was the second oldest child of Chief Joseph Brant. He fought at the Battle of Beaver Dam (June 24, 1813) along side his older brother Isaac and his two younger brothers, Joseph and John.

13. John Brant (237.5 acres)

John Brant was the youngest son of Captain Joseph Brant. He became Superintendent of the Six Nations and followed the land policies of his father.

14. Kerr Tract (999 year Brant lease, 6000 acres)

Dr. Robert Kerr (1764 - 1824), a military surgeon employed by the Indian Department, married Elizabeth Brant, daughter of Molly Brant. Elizabeth Brant, daughter of Joseph Brant, married Colonel William Johnson Kerr. Both died in 1845. The Kerr Tract was divided into lots and sold to early settlers.