

LEARNING AND SHARING OUR HISTORY:

BEGINNING A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION



Who are we as a community?

**Where did our ancestors
come from?**

What is home?

**What does our language
mean to us?**

**How should others learn
about our community?**

**Let's re-start these
conversations!**

Use this flyer to kick-start those conversations,
around your kitchen table, at the community
centre, or wherever.





WHERE IS HOME?

The Moose Deer Point First Nation is located on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay, broken up into three parts. The reserve boundaries were set in 1917, though they do not reflect the length of time that this community has lived here, nor the area which the community made use of for hunting, trapping, fishing, and indeed settlements and burials. Ancestors of Moose Deer Point First Nation have been settled in the Georgian Bay area since at least the 1830s, with the original settlement and burial grounds lying outside of the current reserve boundary. We are a Pottawatomi community, with close ties to Anishinaabeg communities around Georgian Bay - and beyond. Many of our ancestors came to this place from the south west shores of Lake Michigan. They had settled in that territory in the 1700s, but had to leave their homelands because of pressure from American settlers taking up Pottawatomi lands, and because of American policy that began forcing Pottawatomi out of their territory.

Although some people say the Pottawatomi territory is “the Chicago area”, the idea of territory shifts a lot. As Pottawatomi, we are the fire keepers of the Three Fires Confederacy. The Ojibwe are the known as the faith keepers, and the Odawa as the trader peoples. When we think of ourselves as Anishinaabeg, or part of the Three Fires Confederacy, our traditional territory is the Great Lakes, and especially Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. We know that our people have always used a wide area of our territory, and beyond. A long time ago, the Anishinaabeg journeyed to “the great salt-water lake” (the Atlantic ocean) to learn about governance. With the guidance of the Seven Fires Prophecy and the Midéwin, we made our way back from the east coast into the Great Lakes area around the 1400s. Like most nations around the work, our territory has shifted over time based on political and economic alliances, and the health of our communities – but the Great Lakes area is our home.



WHAT ARE SOME KEY EVENTS THAT CAUSED OUR ANCESTORS TO COME HERE?

While the whole history of the Pottawatomini nation and its interactions with other Indigenous nations, as well as European nations, is important, there are a few moments in history that we can look to as key to leading our ancestors to this place.



ROYAL PROCLAMATION & TREATY OF NIAGARA

In 1763, King George issued the Royal Proclamation, which was a way to make clear that the French were no longer a European government with any control over this territory. It was also a chance for the British Crown to say that certain lands were to be set aside for only the Indigenous peoples to use. This was meant to stop settlers from taking lands from Indigenous peoples. In 1764, thousands of Indigenous leaders met with the representative of the King, Sir William Johnson, at Niagara, a gathering which came to be known as the Treaty of Niagara. This Treaty is one of the foundational settler-Indigenous treaties, and referenced previous treaties made by Indigenous nations with each other, and which they brought Europeans into. This event showed that the British government could engage with Indigenous treaty



and diplomacy protocols. This was the moment when Indigenous communities responded to the British government's assertion of sovereignty, by setting the conditions under which the Indigenous nations would welcome these Europeans to share the lands. The Treaty of Niagara, and especially the Covenant Chain wampum, were frequently referenced after that by government officials in discussions with Indigenous nations. It was meant to reassure the Indigenous peoples that the British would not forget their promises. Unfortunately, ever since then, the way that settlers understand treaty as more of a contract that we move on from than a relationship that is constantly returned to and cared for, means that the promises made over the early treaties have been ignored and broken.

There are many who argue that the settler government was always intending to break these promises, however, it is important to remember that whatever has happened since then, these treaties are significant, and they are based on the fact that Indigenous peoples have been in these lands since time immemorial, and are sovereign nations. After that time, many treaties were signed, promises made and broken, and new settler governments emerged and asserted their ownership of land over Indigenous lands.



AMERICAN EXPANSION AND INDIAN REMOVALS POLICY

In the 1780s the new American government, with its ever-growing settler population, was signing treaties and pressuring Indigenous nations to give up territory, in particular in the area south of the Great Lakes. The US government also made promises around what lands were to be kept aside for Indigenous peoples exclusively, and they too broke these promises over the years.



As the US was trying to gain more territory, and the British government was trying to maintain its territory, and in all this, the Anishinaabe were hoping to push out settlers from their territory and regain it, the War of 1812 broke out. Most of the Anishinaabe (including the

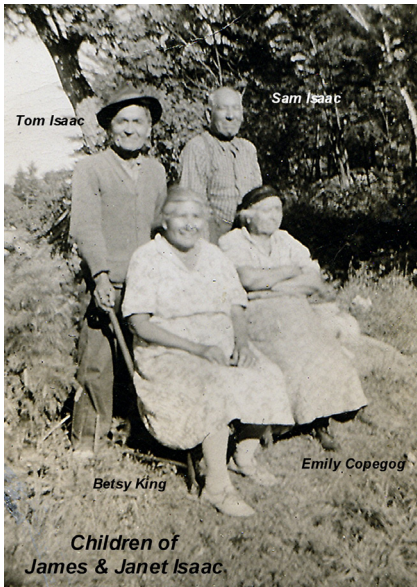
Pottawatomi) fought alongside the British, thinking that the British would support them in their efforts to regain their territory. For their role in the War of 1812, the Anishinaabeg leaders were given gifts and medals and offered lands in British territory. The ancestor of many at Moose Deer Point, Ogemahjewon, was given one of these medals.

By 1830, the American government had introduced the "Indian Removal Act", which forced the Indigenous peoples living in the eastern states (including the territory then of the Pottawatomi) to move west of the Mississippi, or south to one of the large reservations set up for many



different Indigenous nations to move to. Some moved peacefully, though this was still forced on them, but many resisted. However, the outcome was that the Pottawatomi had to leave that part of their homelands.

INVITATION TO SETTLE IN BRITISH/ CANADIAN LANDS



At the same time, the British government offered these allies asylum in British territory. To many Anishinaabeg, this was welcomed because they wanted to stay within their wider homeland of the Great Lakes.

It wasn't only the Pottawatomi who were affected by these constantly changing settler policies, and settler habit of forgetting and ignoring treaties. The Pottawatomi were joined by their Three Fires

Anishinaabeg kin, the Ojibway and Odawa, for example, in signing treaties with the US and British governments.

VISITING ANISHINAABEG RECEIVING PRESENTS IN BRITISH-CANADA

Even when the Anishinaabeg were still able to live in the US, they would visit kin in what had become known by settlers as British/Canadian territory, as well as visiting to receive payments and presents for their contribution as allies to the British government. These present giving ceremonies took place at important locations for the Anishinaabeg, such as at Drummond Island (up near Sault Ste Marie) and later at Penetanguishine. In the 1830s, the settler government was continuing to invite its Indigenous allies to live in Canada, but was promoting the idea of creating large reservation areas for multiple Indigenous nations to live. One attempt was at Coldwater, where some of the Moose Deer Point ancestors lived for a time, alongside Ojibwe and Odawa, under the leadership of Chiefs Snake, Yellowhead, and Aissance. However, another location being proposed by the British/Canadian government was Manitoulin Island.



MANITOULIN ISLAND TREATY, 1836

In 1836, Lieutenant Governor Sir Francis Bond Head met with the Anishinaabeg at Manitoulin Island, when they came to receive their annual presents, and invited them to settle on Manitoulin Island, where they would be free from the pressures of settler society. This became the 1836 Manitoulin Treaty, in which the Odawa and Ojibwe agreed to let any Indigenous nations settle on Manitoulin Island (this was seen as “surrendering” lands, from the perspective of the settlers). No payment was made for this “surrender”, but it was understood by the Indigenous nations that their land on Manitoulin Island, and the many islands around there, and their hunting and fishing grounds, were now being protected from settler encroachment.



ANNOUNCEMENT OF END OF PRESENTS FOR “VISITING INDIANS”



The following year, in 1837, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, William Jarvis, attended the annual gathering instead of Bond Head, and he announced – somewhat unexpectedly – that in order for those Indigenous peoples who were still travelling from what was now called the United States, to continue receiving presents from the British Crown, they had to settle permanently on the British/Canadian side of the border. This is now considered to have been a treaty.

So these policies and treaties, among numerous others, came together to persuade many Anishinaabeg living on the US side of their Great Lakes territory to move into the British/Canadian side.

It is not clear when, exactly, Moose Deer Point’s ancestors made their way to Georgian Bay, in this period. We know that as the community made its way towards its location now, people settled in Anishinaabe communities on the way. Some Pottawatomi stayed in those communities, such as at Walpole Island or Cape Croker, but others kept moving – sometimes because of conflict with the Indigenous community they were seeking to stay with, and other times because



they wanted to avoid the Christian missionaries trying to convert them. Even after they had settled at Moose Deer, some of the families attempted to settle at Parry Island, and although the community welcomed them in, Indian Affairs told them they could not stay there because they were not treaty holders.

MOOSE DEER POINT AND TREATIES

Ever since the 1830s, Moose Deer Point's ancestors have had a difficult time getting their treaty rights acknowledged. The Pottawatomi had signed numerous treaties of Peace and Alliance with the British Crown, prior to the large migration from the US side of the Anishinaabeg territory to the British/Canadian side. And there are a number of treaties that the Pottawatomi have signed since being invited into Canada. For some reason, however, the families of Moose Deer Point have largely been considered as excluded from those treaties.

When the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 and the 1923 Williams Treaty were signed, Moose Deer Point was already settled in its current location, yet this community is not included in either treaties. Although petitions have been made by various leaders within the Robinson Huron treaty nations, for example, on behalf of Moose Deer's recent ancestors, to urge Indian Affairs to acknowledge them as treaty holders, this request was never accepted. Although other communities – including Pottawatomi people - who were not initially acknowledged as part of the Robinson Huron treaty were able to be added into that treaty after the fact, Moose Deer Point has not been able to do so. Although there have been Moose Deer families living in this area since the 1830s, there have been times when Indian Affairs claimed it did not even know of its existence.

In the 1932, under Chief Isaac, Moose Deer Point requested inclusion into the Robinson-Huron Treaty. The response from the Department of Indian Affairs was that there was no evidence on file to support this claim, and instead said that they had information stating the contrary. It appears



that the information stating that they were not eligible was based on previous Indian Affairs officials saying so, and not from genealogical evidence. The fact that relatives of Moose Deer families receive treaty annuities indicates that this response was not a fair one. Which is why, in the 1980s, under Chief Ed Williams, Moose Deer Point once again sought inclusion into the Robinson-Huron Treaty. This request, though initially supported by treaty chiefs, was rejected.

In 1999, an Inquiry was conducted into Moose Deer Point First Nation's claim of Pottawatomi rights, which concluded that, yes, the Crown had made promises to the Pottawatomi ancestors of Moose Deer Point First Nation that amounted to a treaty, in 1837 - at or connected to the Manitoulin address by Jarvis, when Jarvis invited the "visiting Indians" to settle on this side of the border. The Claims Inquiry Commissioners felt that despite the research conducted, they were not able to articulate what kind of obligations those promises amount to. That is, what are Moose Deer Point's treaty rights? The Claim Commissioners recommended that Canada and the Moose Deer Point First Nation conduct research into what these treaty obligations are, and whether or not the Crown has fulfilled them.



MOOSE DEER POINT AND THE TADENAC CLUB

After the 1850s, settlers began coming to this area to hunt and fish, camp, set up clubs, and eventually build cottages. The lands on which these camps, clubs, and cottages was purchased from the Crown – through the federal department of Indian Affairs. It was often a very informal process – sometimes settlers would camp on lands without permission, find a place that they liked, and then send a letter to Indian Affairs requesting this or that island, at which point Indian Affairs would do a survey to confirm that parcel of land existed. Close to Moose Deer Point, at the end of the 1800s, several people who had purchased land, brought together their privately-owned land to form a fishing club – the Tadenac Club. This Club was able to purchase hundreds of acres of land south of Moose Deer point, for very little, and with little effort.

Some of those club members, and other new cottagers in the area, had established working relationships with individuals at Moose Deer Point – for example, Wallace Nesbitt employed John King and Joe Sandy as guides and builders. Eventually, in 1917, it was the efforts of Wallace Nesbitt that brought some success in getting Moose Deer Point some land allocation. The amount of land designated for the reserve is approximately half the amount requested – the request when Nesbitt was involved was approximately 1200 acres (from Moose Deer Point to Moon River) and bordering the edge (at the time) of the Tadenac Club.

The lands south of the reserve boundary, where the original Moose Deer Point settlement had been, and where the burial grounds remain today, was sold to the Tadenac Club. There was an informal agreement that the Moose Deer Point community could continue to hunt, fish, trap in their

traditional grounds that had been taken up by the Tadenac Club, but over the past few decades that agreement seems to have been forgotten.

AFTER 1917

Since the late 1800s, lands around Moose Deer Point have been sold by the Crown, largely to cottagers, and in some cases made into provincial park land. There were times when Indian Affairs claimed no knowledge of the Moose Deer Point community, and even land surveyors seemed not to know about us. Sales of lands to cottagers increased in the 20th century. The reserve itself, already smaller than the requested size, was made smaller in 1969, when portions of it were granted to Freeman Township for road purposes. The increased access between the First Nation and nearby Mactier brought many good things – easier access to groceries, for instance – but it also brought with it language loss. Today there are efforts to re-awaken the language within the youth of the community. As well, there have been ongoing attempts to reunify the land base of the community, though they have not yet been successful. Much has happened in the courts around aboriginal rights since the last time Moose Deer Point sought to get its rights recognised, and needs to be done at the community level to support this work.

This is a very short summary of a long and complex history of the Moose Deer Point First Nation. But ultimately, this story has not yet been told by the community itself. Many of these reports and papers have been informed by interviews with community members, but this has not resulted in a community-held story that is shared among members, and presented to the outside world. Perhaps now is the time for us to tell our story?



WHAT STORIES DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HAVE...

... of journeying to Moose Deer Point?

... of gathering medicines, berries, and hunting?

... of kin beyond the boundaries of this reserve?

... of Anishinaabemowin?

... of loss?

... of resilience?

... of home?



Fishing with Charley, Percy & Clifford



