

Algonquin Petition of June 6, 1835

To His Excellency, Major General Sir John Colborne Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Military Order of the Bath, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Upper Canada, etc., etc., etc.

The humble Memorial of the Chiefs and Warriors of the Algonquin and Nipissingue Indians, in the Name of themselves and their respective Nations, Tribes, and Kindred,

Most respectfully represent,

That we, the Indian Chiefs and Warriors who now most respectfully approach your Excellency, do for ourselves and our respective Nations, Tribes, and Kindred, humbly and obediently implore your Excellency as our temporal Father and Protector, to vouchsafe your gracious Intention to and Consideration of this the humble Memorial of the Grievances and Deprivations which we your Red Children have long endured patiently and submissively without Complaint, under the Conviction, however, that those Grievances, now becoming more and more burdensome, when made known to your Excellency our Father would obtain Retribution, Justice and Equity having ever been co-ordinate with the Government over which you continue so meritoriously to preside.

We most humbly beg to expose to your Excellency our Father, that we and our Ancestors have immemorially, or from the remotest Antiquity, held, used, occupied, possessed, and enjoyed as Hunting Grounds the Tract of Land lying on either Side of the River Ottawa and Little Rivers as far as Lake Nipissing, that is to say, comprehending both Banks of the River Ottawa and of the River Matawangué, called by the Voyageurs the Little River, to the Height of Land separating the Waters of the Lake Nipissing from those of the Little River, together with the Countries Watered by several tributary streams of the River Ottawa and Little Rivers running North and South from their Sources. The above tract of land is bounded to the southward by a ridge of land separating the waters which fall into the Lakes and into the River St. Lawrence from those falling to the Northward and into the River Ottawa. The Distance from the Township of Hawksbury (Pointe D'Original) to Lake Nipissingue by Canoe Navigation is computed at 117 Leagues, 100 of which comprise the River Ottawa to the Junction of the Little River, with the River Matawangué. The actual Settlement at present by the Whites extending from the said Township of Hawsbury to the last settlement inclusive --

That our Great Father George III, of glorious Memory, by his Royal Proclamation given at the Court of St. James the 17th Day of October 1763, promulgated to us your Red Children, and the other Indian Tribes of North America, by the Honorable Sir William Johnson, Bart, our Great Father's Superintendent of Indian Affairs, in a Proclamation dated at Johnson Hall on the 24th Day of December 1763, did expressly declare and provide, "That the Lands claimed by the Indians as their Hunting Grounds are reserved to them for that Purpose, and that they shall not under any Pretence whatever be molested or disturbed in the Possession thereof unless they should be inclined to dispose of the same;" in which Case it is further declared and provided, "that the same shall be purchased for our Great Father in His Royal Name at some public Meeting or Assembly to held for that Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief."

Now, may it please your Excellency our Father, extensive Grants have been made, and converted or erected into Townships and Settlements for the Whites, by your Excellency's Predecessors, of the Territory so immemorially held, used, occupied, possessed, and enjoyed by us your Red Children as Hunting Grounds, without regard to and notwithstanding the Provisions of the above Royal Proclamation of our Great Father, no Purchase or Compensation for the Lands so taken and dismembered from our Hunting Grounds ever having been made of or to us or any of our Tribes, Nations, or Kindred, although in all similar instances where Lands claimed by contemporary Tribes in Upper Canada have been required by our Great Father, the same have been uniformly purchased at a stipulated price or for some certain compensation in obedience to the above Royal Proclamation of our Great Father.

That it may please your Excellency our Father, We the Algonquin and Nippissingue Indians do not possess any Lands yielding to us any Revenue and hence are solely dependent upon the Chase on our Hunting Grounds for support and Maintenance, and although your Red Children have not failed to view the progressive Settlement by the Whites of our Hunting Grounds from the Township of Hawksbury to the last Settlement inclusive as a Forgetfulness of the above Royal Proclamation of our Great Father, we have nevertheless abstained hitherto from preferring any Representation on the Subject to the Government whereof your Excellency our Father is now at the Head, but observing that the present rapidly increasing Settlement of the Upper Province, and of that Part thereof comprehending the Hunting Grounds of your Red Children lying on the South Side of the River Ottawa, and that the indiscriminate and wanton Destruction by the Whites or new Settlers of the Beaver and other Animals from which the most valuable Furs are derived will ere long annihilate our Chase and deprive us of the sole means which have hitherto been the support of our Tribes from long and immemorial Custom, we are irresistibly compelled to supplicate the Aid and Protection of your Excellency our Father touching our humble claim to reasonable Indemnification for the Lands on the South Side of the River Ottawa, thus dismembered from our Hunting Grounds without Purchase or Compensation [notwithstanding the above Royal Proclamation of] our Great Father the King.

That, may it please your Excellency our Father, we your Red Children of the Tribes of the Algonquin and Nipissingue Indians do not presume or venture to entertain the Belief that the Lands already dismembered from our Hunting Grounds, and converted and erected into Townships for Settlement by the Government over which your Excellency our Father now presides, will be restored to us but we do believe that a fair and reasonable Compensation for the Lands lying on the South Side of the River Ottawa so dismembered from our Hunting Grounds will be allowed and conceded unto us in obedience to the above Royal Proclamation of our Great Father. And we do humbly and confidently appeal to your Excellency our Father to ratify and confirm to us your Red Children the Use, Occupation, and Possession of the Hunting Grounds on the South Side of the River Ottawa which yet are reserved to us, and that in case we, your Red Children, or our Descendants may at any Time hereafter be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, that the same be purchased for our Great Father in His Royal Name at such public Meeting or Assembly of the Indians to be held for that Purpose. And moreover we humbly pray that your Excellency our Father will be pleased to command, by Proclamation or otherwise, that all Intruders or Squatters do forthwith depart from and leave undisturbed and unmolested the Hunting Grounds yet reserved to and possessed by your Red Children, the whole in obedience to the above Royal Proclamation of our Great Father.

We do by this our Memorial humbly submit to your Excellency our Father the foregoing Representation of the Grievances and Deprivations which we your Red Children have endured and are likely to endure from the gradual Dismemberment of our Hunting Grounds, possessed by us immemorially, and reserved and confirmed to us by the above Royal Proclamation of our Great Father of glorious Memory; and while we humbly recall to Your Excellency Our Father that our Tribes have respectively been distinguished for Fidelity, Bravery, and general good Conduct and Attachment to the Royal Cause of our Great Father, particularly during the American Rebellion, we do yet wholly repose on the Wisdom of your Excellency our Father, to whom we humbly pray for the Redress of our Grievances and Deprivations, and for the Dispensation of Justice and Equity touching the same.

And as in Duty bound we your Red Children will every pray.

Nipissingues

Francs. Ka-on-tinoKetch
J. Bte. Keijic-o-manitou
Ignace. cha-wa-na-bais
Ta-nas-Kon
Fr. Ojick
Pa-Ku-Ku-si-ketch
Tchan-gi
Wabe-cecip
S. Takwa-nin
etc., etc., etc.....

Algonquins

Ign. Mai-ya-was-ka-watch
Kiconce
Ant. Paki-na-wa-tick
Fr. Mi-co-nabais
Ka-pi-ni-ching
Osa-wa-kick
etc, etc, etc,.....

Montreal 6th June 1835

I certify that this is a true & correct copy -

Signed
J. Hughes,
S. Ind. Dept.

[Reference: P.A.C., R.G. 10, Vol. 96, pp. 39561-39566.]