

Traditional Land Acknowledgement

The First Yarmouth (Plains) Baptist Church acknowledges that it is located on the land of the McKee Treaty that was signed by the Wyandot and by Anishinaabe Nations, including ancestors of Chippewas of the Thames First Nation. It is also the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Attiwonderonk (Neutral) and Mississauga Nation. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) endure in Canada and we accept responsibility as a religious institution to seek to correct miseducation and damaging stereotypes and to renew respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.

Background

The federal government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report of December 2015 contained 94 calls to action to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples. It contains the government's commitment to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples based on recognition, rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. The TRC report spurred organizations, businesses and provincial and municipal governments across the country to parallel the federal government's commitment through a variety of initiatives that speak directly to their immediate communities.

Traditional land acknowledgement statements are increasingly being used in Canada by governments, schools, post-secondary institutions, non-governmental organizations, and other civil institutions as a practice of reconciliation to recognize the traditional or treaty territories of Indigenous Peoples.

The Haudenosaunee (hoed-eno-show-nee) are identified as having historical association to usage or occupancy of the lands where the Municipality of Central Elgin is now situated.

Treaties are defined by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada as solemn agreements that set out long-standing promises, mutual obligations and benefits for both parties.

The McKee Purchase includes the lands now comprising the Municipality of Central Elgin. The Treaty is the southernmost Upper Canada treaty.

"In May 1790, Alexander McKee, Deputy Agent of the British Indian Department and the principal chiefs of the Ottawa, Potawatomi, Chippewa and Wyandot negotiated a treaty whereby the British Crown acquired title to what is now southwestern Ontario. This treaty completed the process begun with Niagara treaties of 1781 and 1784, with the result that most of the Ontario peninsula was soon opened to British and Loyalist settlement." Blenheim plaque. Canadian Encyclopedia McKee's Purchase of 1790 (also known as the McKee Treaty and Treaty 2) was an early land agreement between Indigenous peoples and British authorities in Upper Canada (later Ontario). It is the southernmost Upper Canada treaty and consisted of a large strip of territory from the southwestern shore of Lake Erie north to the Thames River and east to a point southwest of modern-day London, Ontario. This land was made available for settlement by Loyalists who were displaced by the American Revolution.

The treaty was signed "in consideration of the goodwill, friendship and affection" for Alexander McKee, "who has served with us against the enemy during the late war." McKee's mother was Shawnee and he had been raised in the hinterland in the ways of his mother's people. McKee was

born in what is now Pennsylvania around 1735. He worked as a fur trader and Indian Agent in the Ohio River area but supported the British in the American Revolutionary War. He died around 1799 in what is now Southwestern Ontario.

The land that McKee obtained for the British extended as far inland as the Thames River. The chiefs sold the land for goods worth 1,200 pounds. Among the items were 840 pairs of blankets, various kinds of cloth, ribbons and thread and a dozen black handkerchiefs, valued at 722 pounds; 240 plain hats, 60 guns, 20 rifles, ammunition, 2,000 flints, 360 mirrors, 144 scissors, 288 combs, 1,000 fishhooks and 272 kilograms of brass kettles, worth 290 pounds; and 39 gallons of rum, a bullock, 181 pounds of tobacco, 24 laced hats, 1,584 pipes and 288 knives, valued at 187 pounds. A few other items of lesser value were included. The impact for Indigenous communities was substantial including loss of hunting territory.

The surrender of 1790 legitimized the land transfers of 1784 and 1786 as well as many other private illegal sales of Indigenous land to settlers in the southernmost part of modern Ontario.

Sources: -

- Municipality of Central Elgin's Traditional Land Acknowledgement and Policy.
- The Canadian Encyclopedia (TCE; French: L'Encyclopédie canadienne) is the national encyclopedia of Canada, published online by the Toronto-based historical organization Historica ... Wikipedia. Article/Mckee-s-purchase.
- Traditional Lands Statement, Westview Baptist Church, London, Ontario

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