

Debwewin: The Oakville Truth Project Launches New Report, historical and Indigenous interpretation of Oakville-based treaty relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oakville, Ont., March 1, 2023 - The work of Reconciliation begins with the Truth, and as Mississauga Elder Peter Schuler explains “what better place to seek the truth than your own local community.”

On the 203rd anniversary of Treaty 22, February 28th, Debwewin: The Oakville Truth Project marked the date by sharing knowledge of local treaties from both a historical and Indigenous perspective. The report *Friendship, Peace and Respect For All Future Generations: Oakville-based treaty relations between the Mississaugas and the Crown* is now available for free online and for sale in print with proceeds to support the Debwewin project.

Oakville’s Treaties and Indigenous history are not well known or readily available. This report seeks to remedy this knowledge gap by exploring the Treaties between the Mississaugas of the Credit (MCFN) and the Crown in what is now Oakville.

Throughout the report, the records show that the Mississaugas never surrendered their land, but it was instead given in trust to the Crown; they went to great lengths to protect both the land and waters in their traditional territory.

The title of the report comes from the following quote by Indigenous historian Dr. Karine Duhamel: “Treaties can be part of the foundational fabric of society, but only if society embraces them for the agreements they were intended to be: agreements based on the principles of friendship, peace and respect for all future generations.”

These local Treaties are not one-time land transactions but signify the relationship between allies. They are meant to last and symbolize the allyship and reciprocity between the two nations: the Mississaugas and the Crown. The need to renew these Treaties that connect us as allies is incumbent on us all. Opportunities to engage in acts of Allyship are available at the DebwewinOakville.ca website.

The report is a new tool in the efforts to understand and restore the Treaty relationship as part of Debwewin: The Oakville Truth Project, a collaboration between the Oakville Community Foundation and MCFN. There have been many contributors to this project including Elder Peter Schuler, Dr. Karine Duhamel, Kim Fullerton and Georgia Laforme, who advised and provided oversight, Author Emma Stelter and reviewers Margaret Sault and Darin Wybenga.

“Treaties are connected to Oakville’s past, exist today, and live in the future,” said Gimaa R. Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit. “We hope that in reading this narrative you are able to see the greater allyship between MCFN and Oakville.”

The Friendship, Peace and Respect For All Future Generations: Oakville-based treaty relations between the Mississaugas and the Crown report is supported by RBC, The Oakville Community Foundation, Sagen, the Larry & Gerry Wilson Family Fund and the Kenny Family Foundation and designed by the Jensen Group.

Purchase Debwewin T-Shirts, Buttons and Reports:

https://ocf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/list/event?event_date_id=1449

-30-

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge all our relations, we acknowledge the first relationship with Mother Earth, the original nations of the trees and plants, the original stewards of the four legged, the flyers, the swimmers, the crawlers. We acknowledge the waters as being life and sacred as we acknowledge the carriers of those teachings, the females. We acknowledge the grandfathers, as well as Father Sun, Grandmother Moon and our distant relations, the stars.

We acknowledge Oakville Community Foundation is located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, as well as the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat people. Further, we acknowledge that the Town of Oakville is covered by Treaty 14, the Head of the Lake Purchase (1806) and Treaty 22 (1820).



About Debwewin: The Oakville Truth Project

[Debwewin: The Oakville Truth Project](#), a collaboration between the [Oakville Community Foundation](#) and MCFN, is proud to present this integrated community celebration in recognition of Treaty Week and the signing of Treaty 22 in Oakville. The Project relies on an Advisory Council led by Elder Peter Schuler and local allies through Gimaa's Ally Leadership Council.



About Gimma Laforme

R. Stacey Laforme is the elected Chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN). Born and raised on MCFN, Chief Laforme has served his community for over twenty years being first elected to council in 1999.



About the Report Author

Emma Stelter is a graduate of the University of Guelph, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in History and Geography (Honours) and a Master of Arts in History. Emma wrote her Master's thesis on the treaties signed between the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Crown. Emma's thesis highlights the problems in relying exclusively on English written versions of Treaties to understand the formation of Upper Canada, and reveals that Mississauga fisheries and

waterways were never surrendered through the Upper Canada treaties. The findings of her thesis helped inform the narrative of this report, focusing on Oakville and its treaties.

Emma currently works for the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation as a Governance Coordinator- Policy Analyst.



Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Mississaugas of the Credit are an Ojibwe (Anishinaabek) First Nation with 2,600 Members, 850 of whom approximately live on the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Reserve near Hagersville, Ontario.



Oakville Community Foundation

The Oakville Community Foundation is a local charitable solutions provider, delivering the tools to realize your charitable passions. The Foundation acts as a philanthropic medium, investing donations to generate new money for our community. We conduct local research to provide our diverse donors with knowledge and solutions to make an impact in the local community, both today and in the future. Thanks to the visionaries in our community who started The Foundation more than 25 years ago, The Foundation has granted more than \$57 million to support charities locally and beyond.

Media Contacts:

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Contact:

Georgia LaForme (she/her)
Communications and Engagement Lead
Gov.Comm@mncfn.ca | 905-516-1830

Oakville Community Foundation Contact:

Michael Salem
Director - Communications
michael@theocf.org | 905-844-3562 x. 312