

## GETTING TO KNOW OUR HISTORICAL NEIGHBOURS

# Remembering the Algonquins: Constant Pinesi

by Robert Serré

“Getting to know our historical neighbours” is a five-part series offering readers a glimpse into who was here before Manor Park existed. These articles focus on the main players, major issues and the social, political and economic forces at play when people from different traditions meet. Some 213 years ago this area was the hunting land of the Anishnabek (or Algonquin) people whose claims to use of the land go back more than 1000 years.

Constant Pinesi, of the Partridge band, was the son of Chief Wambolak. His mother, Helen Metchikawikwe, died in August 1800. He spoke French, and his full name was Pierre-Louis-Constant Pinesi (spelled Penency in English), the word *pinesi* meaning *partridge* in Algonquin. He fought with the British in the War of 1812 and, by 1830, was Grand Chief of the Algonquins.

On 1 July 1783, Constant married Marguerite Nipawikwe, daughter of Pandikeassunk, in the Roman Catholic Church of *L'Annonciation de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie* at the mission run by the Sulpicians in Oka, on the Lake of Two Mountains near Montreal. The Oka parish register has recorded the baptism of several children of Constant and Marguerite. They include Jean Baptiste (Kikons, also spelled Kigonz) born in 1795; Simon born in 1799; Jacques (1801-02); Martin (1803-04); Louis (1806-15); Jean Pierre (1808-14); and Jean Basile (1812-14).

The hunting territory of Pinesi's band was centred at the confluence of the Rideau and Ottawa rivers. Band mem-

bers spent the summer at the Lake of Two Mountains. According to a census, taken in the early 1820s for the Lake of Two Mountains, Pinesi's tribe then numbered 64 Algonquin families (253 individuals), out of a total of 206 families (854 individuals) divided among Algonquin, Nipissing, Ottawa and Iroquois tribes.

Constant is known to have lived for several years on the Madawaska River in the Upper Ottawa Valley, and the Oka parish register indicates that he had another wife, named Marie-Josèphe Pinessiikwe. They both died on 13 August 1834. There was a cholera epidemic at the time. Their burial, on the following day, was witnessed by Constant's son Jean Baptiste (Kikons), who continued in his father's footsteps. The mission cemetery, where Pinesi's bones lie, is no longer visible; it has been paved over.

## Sources

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View of the Falls in the Chaudière River, 1777, by Henry Hamilton. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. R9266-1623 Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana



From the Upper Side of the Grand Rideau Falls. Photos courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. 1989-255-3