



## MOSES MUSKRAT MARSDEN (1871-1968)



Joseph Muskrat - Treaty 78, 1856 Doodem (Clan Crest Signature)

The son of Moses Muskrat and Sophia Marsden, Moses was born June 15, 1871, on Alderville First Nation territory, of the Muskrat Clan of the Michi Saagiig Nation. His father died before he was born, and his mother died by the time he was eleven years of age. Since Moses grew up in the Marsden household in Alderville, he took their family name. He married Nellie Franklin, also of Alderville, in 1896 and together they had thirteen children:



Cecil, Elsie (Binnington), James, Esther (McKercher), Jessie, Vera, Lawrence, Mildred (McIlmoyle), Fred, Percy, Winnie (Dunford), Katie, and Ruby (Hicks). Unfortunately, three of the children died during childhood in Alderville.

In his early years, Moses worked as a farm hand, a river driver running log booms down the Trent system, and as a carpenter. He was the Chief of Alderville from 1904 to 1909 and was a driving force behind the Alderville Brass Band. He enlisted with the 139<sup>th</sup> Battalion in World War 1 but due to his age, did not serve overseas. He played in the 139<sup>th</sup> Battalion marching band during the war.



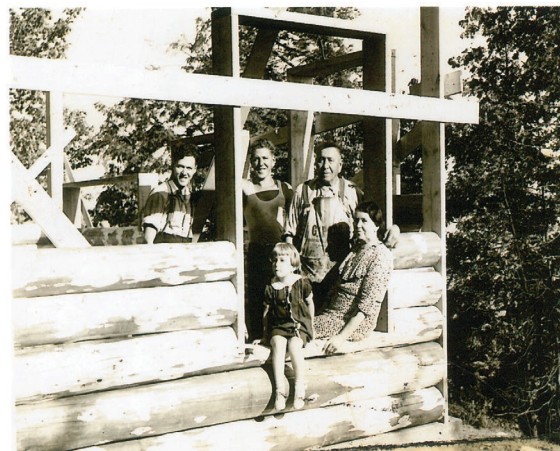
**139th Battalion Marching Band - Moses back row, 2nd from left**

In the early 1920's, Moses, Nellie and the family moved from Alderville to establish the first Indigenous household in Lakefield. Moses's uncle, Joseph Muskrat, had a camp on Lake Katchewanooka in the 1800's, so it was familiar territory. It was also close to Curve Lake, where Nellie's sister Sarah Whetung lived.

After moving to Lakefield, Moses became well known for his log cabin construction throughout the Kawarthas and further afield. In the 1950's, he built a cabin for U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on Main Duck Island in Lake Ontario.



**Moses, age 80, carved several miniature log cabins**



**Marsen family (Percy, Fred, Moses, Nellie, and grand daughter Jean) building the Severin Cabin, St. Lawrence River, Sep. 1937**

As well, Moses built beautiful rustic cedar fences, one being located at the Marsden home on Edward Street. He built the small stone house with mortar and fieldstones on a lot that later became part of Ridpath Memorial School grounds. Moses also used his talents to craft a gateway for the entrance of Lakefield Park.



The park was a special place for Moses and Nellie to come and fish or just sit and look out over Katchawanooka, the lake of their Michi Saagiig ancestors.

*The Lakefield Trail acknowledges collaboration with Mae Whetung-Derrick and Vintage Lakefield. Archival photographs courtesy of the Marsden family, the Globe and Mail (Nickels), and the Lakefield Historical Society collections.*