UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC

Mark of Honour: a Study Brief

The Crown's mark, the clan, and status: three ways belonging passes down.

Learning outcomes

By the end, a student will be able to	Level (Bloom)
State the terms of Dorchester's Order of 1789 and its note	Remember
Distinguish the mark, the clan and Indian Act status as hereditary systems	Understand
Analyse how the Indian Act's rules of descent discriminated by sex, and how they were changed	Analyze
Compare the mark as the Crown's with the mark as a society's honorific	Analyze
Evaluate the claim that the mark is the unbroken legal line of the class	Evaluate

Overview

Dorchester's Order put a Mark of Honour on the families who adhered to the Unity of the Empire and on all their descendants by either sex, and ordered a registry. The Mohawk clan passes through the mother; Indian Act status passed through the father until Bill C-31 in 1985, and still carries the second-generation cut-off. The Mohawk Nation of Grand River treats the mark as the Crown's own, hereditary and individual, and the one line no statute broke.

Primary sources

Lord Dorchester's Order in Council, 9 November 1789

"to put a Mark of Honour upon the families who had adhered to the Unity of the Empire"

LAC, RG 1 L1, vol. 18, p. 110.

The note to the Order

"all their children and their descendants by either sex, are to be distinguished by the following Capitals … UE"

Simcoe's Proclamation, 6 April 1796

"such registry has not been generally made"

Indian Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. I-5, s. 6

"the rules for registration as an Indian, including s. 6(1) and s. 6(2)"

As amended by Bill C-31 (1985) and later bills.

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Three readings

	Canada and the courts	Loyalist societies	The Mohawk Nation of Grand River
The mark UE	A historical distinction without present legal effect	An honorific for members who certify descent	The Crown's mark, hereditary and individual, kept by its Register
Descent by sex	Indian Act status: by father until 1985; still a cut-off	By either sex	By either sex, as the 1789 note says
Who keeps the record	No public registry since the Old U.E. List	The societies' own lists	The Register, on oath, as Simcoe directed

Historiography

The UE mark has been studied as part of Loyalist memory, revived by the societies from the late nineteenth century. Indian Act status has been studied through the struggles of women who lost it, from Lovelace to McIvor. The Nation's Register brings the two together: the same families, two kinds of descent, one of them never broken.

Discussion questions

1. Why might the Crown have chosen descent "by either sex" in 1789, when land and titles usually passed through men?
2. How did Indian Act status treat women who married out, and what did Bill C-31 change?
3. Is the mark the Crown's, or the societies'? What would decide it?
4. How do the clan and the mark sit together in one family?
5. What would follow if the mark were recognised as the class's legal line today?
6. **Apply.** A woman lost status in 1960 and regained it in 1985. Trace what happened to her mark through the same years.

Further reading

In Chicago style (17th ed.), bibliography form.

Mohawk Nation of Grand River. *Honours, Heraldry and Ceremony*. National Books VI. Grand River Territory, Ohsweken: Mohawk's Printer for Grand River, 2026.

Mohawk Nation of Grand River. *The Indian Act and the Loyalist Mohawk Posterity*. National Books III. 2026.

Lovelace v. Canada, UN Human Rights Committee, Communication No. 24/1977 (1981).

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Assignment brief

Choose one prompt

A	In 1,500 words, compare two of the three hereditary systems, and assess the claim that the mark is the unbroken legal line of the class. Quote at least three sources.
B	Is the mark the Crown’s, or the societies’? What would decide it? Answer in an argued essay.
C	Apply. A woman lost status in 1960 and regained it in 1985. Trace what happened to her mark through the same years. Write it as an argued essay that applies the readings.

Requirements

- An argument: a thesis stated in the first paragraph and defended throughout.
- At least three primary sources from the list below, quoted precisely and read in their context.
- At least two secondary sources, one of them from outside the Nation’s own books.
- The strongest objection to your thesis, stated fairly, and your answer to it.
- Footnotes and a bibliography in Chicago style (17th ed.).
- 1,500 words, 10 per cent either way, not counting notes and bibliography.

Sources you must use

- Lord Dorchester’s Order in Council, 9 November 1789
- The note to the Order
- Simcoe’s Proclamation, 6 April 1796
- Indian Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. I-5, s. 6

A suggested structure

- Introduction: the question, why it matters, and your thesis.
- Context: the instruments and events, briefly, in order.
- Analysis: the sources, read closely, one claim at a time.
- The objection: the best case against you, and your reply.
- Conclusion: what follows, and what remains open.

Timeline

- Week 1: choose a prompt; read the primary sources; write a one-paragraph proposal.
- Week 2: research the secondary sources; draft an outline with your thesis and the objection.
- Week 3: write the full draft; exchange with a peer for written comments.
- Week 4: revise and submit.

Format and submission

Twelve-point type, double-spaced, page numbers, your name and the prompt on the first page. Submit as your instructor directs; this sheet can also be filled in online for the discussion questions.

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Integrity

Your work must be your own. Quote and cite every source. If you use an AI tool for any part of the work, say which and how, in a note at the end.

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For the instructor: standards met

Universal competencies	Identify key facts and claims; Understand perspective and point of view; Analyse and evaluate evidence; Apply: what does this mean for us?. The same everywhere, whatever the curriculum.
Learning outcomes	Five outcomes with Bloom’s verbs, each matched to an activity.
Reconciliation	TRC Calls to Action 62 and 63.
Rights in education	UNDRIP arts. 14 and 15; art. 9 on belonging to a nation in accordance with its traditions.
Primary-source practice	The Order, its note, Simcoe and the Indian Act quoted and attributed.
Citation	Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition.
Balance	Three readings side by side; the brief names its own position.
Time	One seminar of about two hours; the assignment over a week.

Assessment: the assignment

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Needs work
Use of sources	Three or more primary sources, quoted precisely and read in context	Three, quoted accurately	Fewer, or quoted loosely	Missing or misread
Analysis	Weighs the readings against the documents and shows what turns on the difference	Compares the readings clearly	Describes them	Restates one
Argument	A clear judgment that answers the strongest objection	A clear, supported judgment	Thinly supported	No clear judgment
Writing and citation	Precise; Chicago style throughout	Clear; minor slips	Some unclear passages	Hard to follow

This brief states the Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s position alongside others. It is for study, not legal advice.

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