MIDDLE SCHOOL · AGES 11 TO 14

The Posterity: Unascertained

The Crown set the oath in 1796 and never took it. The Register takes it now.

Read

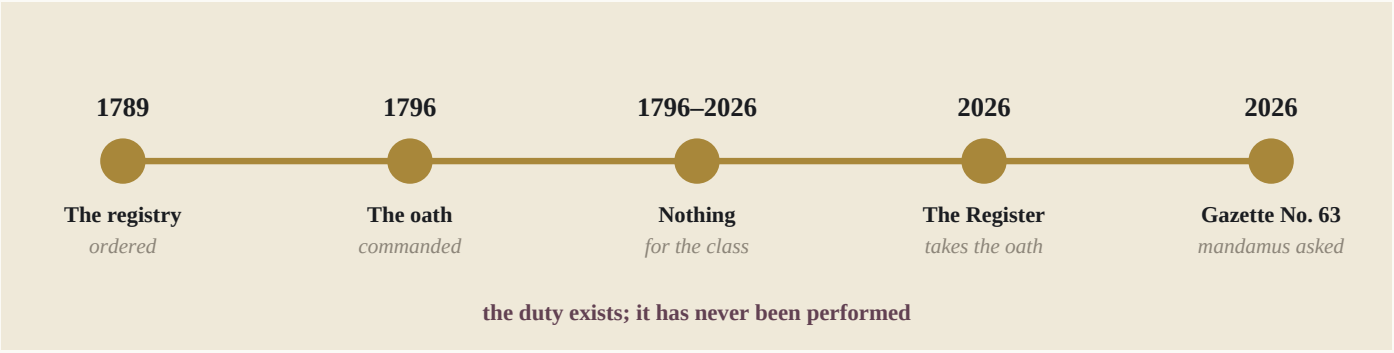
In 1789 the Crown ordered a registry of the families who stood with the King, so their posterity could be told apart from later settlers. In 1796 Simcoe found it had not been made. He ordered each person to prove it on oath before a magistrate.

For many settlers, those oaths were taken and their names put on a list. For the Mohawks of the three villages, the Nation says, the oath was never taken and no register was kept. For 230 years their page stayed empty.

That is why the posterity is “unknown in number”. It is not that the people do not exist. It is that no one ever counted them. The Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s Register now records each line and takes the oath. It has asked the courts to order a magistrate to do the same.

Look

How to read it: the duty set, then 230 years of nothing, then the Register.



Words to know

Word	What it means here
Posterity	All of a person’s descendants, including those not yet born.
Unascertained	Not yet found out for certain.
Registry	An official book or list that is kept and added to.
Magistrate	An officer who receives oaths; today, a justice of the peace.
Mandamus	A court order telling an official to do their duty.
Specimen	A sample, not a real entry.
Adoption	In Mohawk law, being received into the Nation.

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Work with a primary source

> *"... to ascertain the same upon oath before the magistrates in the michaelmas quarter-sessions ..."; those who neglect it "will not be considered as entitled, in this respect, to the benefit".*
>
> Simcoe's Proclamation, 6 April 1796 (shortened).

Ask the source	Your answer
What were people told to do?	
Before whom, and when?	
What would happen to those who did not?	
What can the source not tell us?	

Three points of view

Why the posterity is not counted, described three ways. Read each, then explain why they differ.

Who	Why they are not counted
Canada	The registry lapsed long ago; membership is set by the Indian Act.
Historians	Records of many Indigenous Loyalists were never kept the way settlers' were.
The Mohawk Nation of Grand River	The Crown set the oath and never performed it; the Register does it now.

Claim, evidence, reasoning

Choose one claim the poster makes, for example "the duty exists; it has never been performed". Then fill in the table.

Claim	Evidence	Reasoning

Answer

1. **Historical significance.** Why does an empty page matter 230 years later?

2. **Evidence.** What words in the source show the oath was required, not optional?

3. **Cause and consequence.** What followed from the oath never being taken for the class?

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4. **Continuity and change.** What has stayed the same since 1796? What has changed in 2026?

5. **Historical perspective.** Why might the oath have been taken for settlers but not for the Mohawk villages?

6. **Ethical dimension.** If the Crown failed to do its duty, should people lose their rights because of it?

> **Think about it.** Is there anything important about you or your family that has never been written down? Who should write it?

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Performance task: The empty page: write the entry the clerk should have written in 1796.

Show what you have learned by explaining it to someone else. Your work should help a reader who has never seen the poster understand it.

Choose one

A letter	Write a one-page letter to your Member of Parliament or to the King explaining why the posterity is “unknown in number”, and what the Crown ordered in 1789 and 1796 that was never done.
An infographic	Design a one-page poster that explains why the posterity is “unknown in number”, and what the Crown ordered in 1789 and 1796 that was never done, with a drawing that puts a person in the picture.
A short talk or podcast	Record or give a two-to-three-minute talk explaining why the posterity is “unknown in number”, and what the Crown ordered in 1789 and 1796 that was never done to someone your age.

What your work must include

- At least three facts with their dates.
- One quotation from the primary source, Simcoe’s Proclamation, 6 April 1796, in quotation marks.
- At least three of the “Words to know”, used correctly.
- One point of view other than the Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s, explained fairly (Canada, Historians).
- Your own claim, with the evidence and reasoning behind it.
- A list of the sources you used.

Steps

- Day 1: reread the poster and this sheet; choose your format; write your claim in one sentence.
- Day 2: gather your facts, your quotation and the other point of view; plan your work.
- Day 3: make a first draft; trade with a partner and give each other one compliment and one suggestion.
- Day 4: improve your draft, check the success criteria, and hand it in.

Success criteria: check before you hand it in

☐	My claim is clear.
☐	My facts and dates are correct.
☐	I quoted the source exactly and said where it is from.
☐	I explained another point of view fairly.
☐	I used at least three new words correctly.
☐	I listed my sources.

Due: About four class days from the start. Marked with the Achievement Chart on the teacher’s page.

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For the teacher: standards met

Universal competencies	Identify key facts and claims; Understand perspective and point of view; Make connections, personal to community to larger systems; Analyse and evaluate evidence. The same everywhere, whatever the curriculum.
Curriculum	Ontario History, Grade 7, Strand A, and Grade 10 Civics (CHV2O): how laws are made, kept and enforced.
Specific expectations	Teachers choose which specific expectations to assess. The sheet supports the overall expectations named above.
Historical thinking	Each question names its concept: significance, evidence, cause and consequence, continuity and change, perspective, ethical dimension.
Reading level	Flesch–Kincaid grade 5.1 (reading ease 81)
Plain language	Written to ISO 24495-1; new words taught in “Words to know”.
Balance	Three explanations side by side; the sheet names its own position.
Time and materials	Two periods of 40 to 50 minutes.
Accommodations	Read aloud or in pairs; give the timeline as cards to put in order.

Assessment: the Achievement Chart

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge and Understanding	Names some facts with help	Names the main facts and dates	Explains them accurately	Explains them and how they connect
Thinking	Answers with little use of the source	Uses the source in part	Uses the source to support answers	Weighs the points of view against the source
Communication	Ideas are unclear	Some ideas are clear	Clear, with the new words	Clear, precise, new words used well
Application	Makes few connections	A simple connection to today	Connects the past to today	Explains why it still matters

Answer key

	A good answer includes
1	Without a record, the people cannot be counted or protected.
2	“will not be considered as entitled … to the benefit”.
3	The posterity was never counted, and dealings went on without them.
4	The duty has stayed the same; in 2026 the Register takes the oath and asks for mandamus.
5	A reasoned answer: distance, war, records kept for settlers only.
6	A reasoned view: for example, that people should not lose a right through the Crown’s own failure.

Sources: Lord Dorchester’s Order in Council, 1789; Simcoe’s Proclamation, 1796; the Gazette of the Nation, No. 63. This sheet explains the Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s position beside others.

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