

# THE IPPERWASH PAPERS

by Mary-Lou LaPratte  
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Ipperwash has experienced three land disputes in 1992, 1993 and 1995.

The first in 1992 was a landclaim for the West Ipperwash subdivision comprising of 114 properties and 83 acres. . At the onset of the land claim residents started experiencing harassment and intimidation from members of the First Nation .

The OPP refused to address the complaints of the residents. We suffered vandalism, theft of property, break and enters and home invasions while residents were in the home.

I personally suffered a home invasion at two in the morning by a native who had climbed the upper deck of our home to enter our bedroom by the patio door in April/94. My husband immediately called the OPP and was informed he was not to touch the native in any way or he would be charged. It took twenty-three minutes for the police to arrive. By this time the native was gone.

We realized very quickly that we had become a community without a Province or Country. No one wanted to deal with the trauma we had to endure.

Some residents were denied mortgage renewals, some had their power lines cancelled. We won the land claim in court but we suffered for seven years at the hands of a few native radicals with no help from the government or the OPP.

In 1993 natives from Kettle Point calling themselves Stoney Pointers, broke away from the band and occupied the Ipperwash Army Base. For two years crime escalated in the communities surrounding the base. Break and enters, thefts, harassment and threats of residents and tourist was commonplace and this eventually escalated to assaults and bodily harm. We often heard gunfire from the base and the MNR properties in the area. Police continuously told us it was firecrackers. However, the OPP at the Inquiry testified That they had indeed, heard gunfire coming from the base.

By July/95 The natives living on the base forced the army to leave after several hours of violence. The OPP was informed the army had left, but the Town was not told. A document under Freedom of Access to information reveals those deserting the base did so because of the violence against them and they feared for their lives. Two years after the desertion of the base these men were recommended for an award for their courage under duress. For a month our lives were a living hell with the militant violent actions of those occupying the base. Crime was so rampant in Port Franks that the Towns work crews tried to block an east exit from the base and were shot at by individuals on the base.

In Sept/95 The Ipperwash Provincial Park was taken over by the natives occupying the former base. Within three days Dudley George was shot and the OPP deserted the residents of Ipperwash. Those waiting to be evacuated by the OPP would not see the police back to do so.

When incidents occurred the OPP when called would not come stating that they were targets. A community was thrown into utter chaos and left to fend for ourselves in the midst of angry , aggressive natives. We were patrolled by native warriors. Many cars coming into Ipperwash were natives from Michigan, New York or Quebec. Police would call many of us to see what was going on at the base or the park, but not to stop the lawlessness that pervaded the area.

The crime scene was not kept pristine because the police abandoned the area. We had the army desert the base because of the Violence and now we had the OPP desert the community because of the extent of the Violence. Some insurance policies were cancelled under the insurrection clause. Residents were terrified for their children and their homes and possessions.

The OPP returned at the whim of the native agenda. The OPP have not patrolled the base or the park since 1995. The politicians would answer our letters with acknowledgement of our LEGITIMATE concerns and then proceed to say we must be patient and understanding until the land claim is resolved while our lives were turned upside down with fear and violence.

When the Inquiry began, the residents of Ipperwash were hopeful that our story would be told. Part of the Ipperwash Inquiry mandate was to make recommendations that would prevent violence in future land disputes. I was part of the Inquiry. None of my responses to the seminars was published on the Inquiry website. Not one line of my affidavit was made public. In two years of the Inquiry the residents were assigned one two hour session with the Judge, the legal counsel and the Policy and Research rep to tell their story.

Not one final submission from anyone at the Inquiry dealt with the issue of violence perpetrated on innocent people caught in land claim disputes through no fault of their own. It is unconscionable that innocent residents and visitors to communities on the periphery of a land claim dispute should have to be victimized indefinitely to satisfy the native agenda. We are not allowed any input into negotiations, nor to be part of the solution. What possible reason could the government have or the OPP to allow criminal offenses to occur and not deal with them?

The park and the base are still occupied. We still have selective policing based on race. It is interesting to note that two years after the death of Dudley George, some members of the OPP could not testify at the Deane trial due to post traumatic shock syndrome. These men were trained for crisis intervention. How are law-abiding ordinary citizens supposed to deal with daily trauma in their lives without this training or without help?

Ipperwash was the catalyst for the policing policies now ongoing. I must add to this that several native residents were caught in the same crime cycle we were and repeatedly asked for relief and help as well. Their pleas fell on deaf ears.

No one at Ipperwash has received compensation of any kind from the government.

Mr. McGuinty has publicly stated that Ipperwash has gone nowhere due to the tactics of the previous government. I would like to say Mr. McGuinty that you have been in power for over three years. You have no excuse for not dealing with the occupied park.

How many years of suffering by a whole community do you consider enough to warrant your attention and concern?

Mr. McGuinty has never taken the time to visit Ipperwash.

M. LaPratte