THE structure of Micmac society was simple and not sharply defined. Small settlements (*udan*) consisted of a family or group of related families, each with a chief of limited power.

## THE CHIEF

The old method of selecting a chief could not be definitely ascertained. Chieftainship, said some informants, was hereditary and went to the oldest son. If the oldest son was dead, the dying chief chose his successor. At a meeting held after the chief's death, the assembled men simultaneously pointed a finger at the designated one, thus signifying approval of his appointment. Other informants said that the oldest son succeeded to office only if fitted for the position; all informants said that a chief, when he believed he was about to die, designated his successor.

In this matter of choice, early French observers were not much more helpful than were the Micmac of 1911. Lescarbot, who was at Port Royal in 1607–8, said that the office went from father to son if the son had the proper qualifications; Biard, his closest contemporary observer, remarked only that the chief was the oldest son in a powerful family. A century later, Dièreville was certain that the office was never hereditary either in direct or in collateral line, and that it was conferred on an outstanding and ambitious hunter who thereafter could not be deposed except for commission of a crime.[1]

The chief who headed a small band, composed of several families, was addressed as *sa'gama* (in 1911 spoken of as *mui sagama* in distinction from a white gentleman, who is addressed as *sagama*). Authority of the chief, which was not absolute, was symbolized by a baton, *a'ptuan*, which only he might carry. Lashed on it with spruce roots were choice feathers from the wingtips of the duck and brightly colored feathers of other birds. The handle was covered with weasel fur, which is soft and silky.

One role of the chief was to question strangers who appeared in his settlement and to exclude those of whom he was suspicious.[2] The most important function named by 1911 informants was the allotment of land to the families under him, which numbered from two to fifteen. Each family was assigned territory on which only its members might hunt. The boundaries were indicated by blazings on trees; no particular sign or emblem was used for this purpose. According to one informant, the hunting grounds were designated by the chief annually; according to another, every seven years. I could not learn of any clan or totemic organization; or ascertain the method of determining what families would be associated in a common hunting territory.

In LeClercq's day the chief assigned territory to individuals at spring and autumn assemblies held especially for this purpose. Hunting limits were strictly enforced.[3]

If a serious crime was committed, group opinion, according to informants, rather than chiefly power decided upon and carried out the punishment. In the old days the group were of one mind. One man said something and all gave their assent. (Now, as a result of education, each has a different opinion and there is no harmony.) A murderer's hands and feet were tied with several thongs. A score of people grasped these and pulled on them until death relieved the sufferer. This might continue until the body was badly mangled. Or, the offender was tied to a tree and was shot with bow and arrows.

A distinction was made between murder and manslaughter. One night a man went to hunt moose, gave the moose call, and heard an answer. He was wearing, as a disguise, antlers of bark, in imitation of a moose. He called again, and this time was sure that the answer came from a moose. The other, who was in fact a man, saw the antlers in the bushes and shot at it. He heard a fall, and went over to look at his kill. He peeled off a piece of bark, lighted it, held it up as a torch, and saw a fallen man, shot through the heart. He carried the body home, and explained how the misadventure had happened. He was not punished. If the hunter had known that he was shooting a Micmac, the people would have torn the offender to pieces.

In the seventeenth century, in settling disputes and ending hair-pullings between members of a band, and in punishing serious crime, the chief seems to have been only one of the possible arbiters. Biard

said local quarrels were settled by either Sagamores or common friends, and LeClercq agreed. The "great offenses" of murder and wife stealing, according to Biard, were left for individual vengeance or, if the victim was dead, vengeance by his relatives. "When this happens, no one shows any excitement over it, but all dwell contentedly upon this word habenquendonic. 'He did not begin it, he has paid him back; quits and good friends!' But if the guilty one, repenting of his fault, wishes to make peace, he is usually received with satisfaction, offering presents and other suitable atonement."[4]

In the Gaspé and Miramichi districts, however, group opinion condemned a deliberate murderer to death. "'Take care, my friend,' say they, 'If thou killest, thou shalt be killed.' This is often carried out by command of the elders, who assemble in council upon the subject, and often by the private authority of individuals, without any trial of the case being made, provided that it is evident the criminal has deserved death."[5]

According to those who saw the institution functioning in the seventeenth century, the duties of a chief were advisory in time of peace and active leadership in warfare. Young unmarried men and others without family were a part of his household. How human nature worked under these conditions in Acadia was described by Father Biard:

All the young people of the family are at his table and in his retinue; it is also his duty to provide dogs for the chase, canoes for transportation, provisions and reserves for bad weather and expeditions. The young people flatter him, hunt, and serve their apprenticeship under him, not being allowed to have anything before they are married, for then only can they have a dog and a bag, that is, have something of their own, and for themselves. Nevertheless they continue to live under the authority of the Sagamore, and very often in his company; as also do several others who have no relations, or those who of their own free will place themselves under his protection and guidance, being themselves weak and without a following. Now all that the young men capture belongs to the Sagamore; but the married ones give him only a part, and if these leave him, as they often do for the sake of the chase and supplies, returning afterwards, they pay their dues and homage in skins and like gifts. From this cause there are some quarrels and jealousies among them as among us, but not so serious. When, for example, some one begins to assert himself and to act the Sagamore, when he does not render the tribute, when his people leave him or when others get them away from him; then as among us, also among them, there are reproaches and accusations, as that such a one is only a half Sagamore, is newly hatched like a three days' chicken, that his crest is only beginning to appear; that he is only a Sagamochin, that is a Baby Sagamore, a little dwarf [*sagamotcite*]. And thus you may know that ambition reigns beneath the thatched roofs, as well as under the gilded, and our ears need not be pulled much to learn these lessons.[6]

And these were Father LeClercq's observations from the Gaspé:

The most prominent chief is followed by several young warriors and by several hunters, who act always as his escort, and who fall in under arms when this ruler wishes particular distinction upon some special occasion. But, in fact, all his power and authority are based only upon the good will of those of his nation, who execute his orders just in so far as it pleases them.[7]

## ASSISTANT CHIEF

According to 1911 informants the chief's assistant, *mudjekdidegwinu*, foresaw everything. "If he should say, 'That schooner must go into the field at once,' it must go at once; if he said 'It must go back into the water,' it must go back. He had power to do anything, but seldom, except in time of trouble, did anything superhuman. If trouble should now come to the Indians at Burnt Church, one would assert himself, although no one now knows who he would be. One is certainly here. If we need news from Cape Breton in half an hour, he will get the news to us in that length of time."

This assistant to the chief, or "captain," as he is now called, is represented in the present (1911) political organization of the Micmac. Probably he was formerly a medicineman and adviser. Some declare that in times of difficulty he had sole charge of affairs and the chief was then subordinate to him. In the seventeenth century, the *autmoin* was the

only person other than sagamores who made a speech at tribal gatherings. If the chief was also a medicineman, he was "greatly dreaded." Membertou was such a medicineman, famous war leader, and chief.[8]

A Nova Scotia informant (1911) asserted that in each settlement there were two assistant chiefs or, literally, a second watcher, *ud'jenkap'toget ta'boac't*, and a third watcher, *sisto wadj ud'jenkap'taget*. In northern New Brunswick the *ä'kusitc* was said to be the leader in time of war, and in peace was second in authority. Every fortnight, or at least once a month, a messenger (*aganudamaanetc*) went from each reserve to one or more neighboring ones to learn the news and ascertain whether help was needed. The chief dispatched the messenger, and might choose any available man. Sometimes two or more men (*eskemadjik*), "watchers," were detailed for this purpose. Small stone beads, *elnu'pskul*, were mnemonic devices for conveying messages: Each bead suggested a story or a bit of information. Only one specimen was in existence (near Sydney, C.B.); I did not see it.

The use of the *elnupskul* was explained as follows: "Suppose a Micmac is out in the woods and hears a crackling or something there. He knows the Mohawk are coming. He runs to the chief as fast as he can. He does not say a word, but takes these beads and arranges them thus [indicating the arrangement]. The chief watches, and as soon as the man has arranged them, he orders the men to get ready for a fight."

## SETTLEMENTS

The local chiefs were of equal power; no settlement was superior to another.

From the most distant times, each settlement seems to have had a distinguishing symbol done in quillwork on the clothing and marked on the canoes. At Restigouche the symbol was a salmon; at the present Red Bank, Little Southwest Miramichi, a beaver; on the Northwest Miramichi (Eel Ground), a man with drawn bow and arrow; on the Main Southwest Miramichi, the sturgeon.[9] Each canoe on a ceremonial visit carried a banner, *kwitantawegan*. Canoes visiting a reserve on St. Anne's Day in the nineteenth century are described by John Newell as carrying each a distinctive color.[10]

More importance attached to the chief of a group of settlements. At the beginning of white contact the country was divided into districts bounded by geographic features, usually bays and rivers. Along the Pentegoet, St. Croix, and St. John rivers, in New Brunswick, there was one sagamore for each.[11]

Similarly, the Burnt Church settlement, according to a local resident, was the *ju'ktä*, "fire," or meeting place for the chiefs of reserves as far north as Baie des Chaleurs and as far south as Point du Chêne. He designated as belonging to this, about 120 years ago, Eel Ground, Red Bank, Restigouche, Bathurst, Pokemouche, Tracadie, Shippegan, Richibucto, Shediac, and Southwest (near Red Bank). The chief at Burnt Church was recognized as head chief of these eleven settlements.

The chief over a district of settlements was known as *bun*. The local chiefs met at Burnt Church every summer and every winter, to discuss tribal affairs. Another district included settlements in western Nova Scotia and about a third of the settlements in Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia. A district chief was also the chief of his own settlement.

It was also stated that there was a chief of the entire tribe. This office may be no older than the Wabanaki Confederacy (mid-eighteenth century); in the early days there was no tribal hierarchy, and the presence at a council of several chiefs of equal power frequently resulted in adjournment without reaching a decision.[12]

## BONDS OF UNITY

Without firm and elaborate social structure, the Micmac tribe was held together by the recognition of common need, reinforced by formal courtesy and by frequent meetings for fellowship as well as for tribal business. The hungry were always fed. If a hunter had been successful and others were short of supplies, he shared his bag equally with the group. Communism seems to have been practiced only in times of scarcity. In January or February, when many were near starvation, the man who killed the first moose would carry meat even to distant wigwams and urge the dwellers to move nearer him so that he could supply them with food more often. Highly skilled hunters sometimes gave furs and meat to a friend who needed help to pay off a debt, or made a present to widows and orphans.[13] In time of hunger, a man who shot no

more than a single teal, barely sufficient to restore his own strength, would take it to a wigwam and share it with others.[14] However, by subterfuge, too painful hospitality might be averted. Biard related such an instance:

> Once when we had gone a long way off to a fishing place, there passed by five or six women or girls, heavily burdened and weary; our people through courtesy gave them some of our fish, which they immediately put to cook in a kettle, that we loaned them. Scarcely had the kettle begun to boil when a noise was heard, and other Savages could be seen coming; then our poor women fled quickly into the woods, with their kettle only half boiled, for they were very hungry. The reason of their flight was that, if they had been seen, they would have been obliged by a rule of politeness to share with the newcomers their food, which was not too abundant. We had a good laugh then; and were still more amused when they, after having eaten, seeing the said Savages around our fire, acted as if they had never been near there and were about to pass us all by as if they had not seen us before, telling our people in a whisper where they had left the kettle; and they, like good fellows, comprehending the situation, knew enough to look unconscious, and to better carry out the joke, urged them to stop and taste a little fish; but they did not wish to do anything of the kind, they were in such a hurry, saying *Coupouba, Coupouba*, "Many thanks, many thanks." Our people answered: "Now may God be with you since you are in such a hurry."[15]

Traveling Micmac who had shot no game were accustomed to help themselves to provisions of dried fish and meat found hanging in any wigwam they reached during the owner's absence, a custom still followed in 1784.[16]

In 1911 the old hospitality to any member of their tribe was fully practiced. A visitor might stop at any house and remain a welcome guest for weeks. According to Rand, it was the custom to stop at the first wigwam in the settlement; but my informants said that a man entered whatever wigwam or house he felt prompted to go to.

To a visitor whom one has invited into the house the greeting is *up'chila'si*, "come in and sit down." The visitor, before entering a dwelling, must knock. If welcome, he is greeted with *up'chila'si tcim'ana*, "come up and be seated" (that is, take the seat back of the fire, the freest from draughts and the most comfortable in the wigwam).[17]

To strangers who are not of their tribe Micmac are hospitable, provided the stranger frees himself from suspicion — not an easy thing to do. They then treat him as though he were a tribesman.

In the old days the first sign of hospitality and friendship was the proffered pipe. Frenchmen in 1607 watched with amusement the reception of guests by the chief, Membertou:

> We have many times seen savage strangers to arrive in Port Royal, who, being landed, without any discourse went straight to Membertou's cabin, where they sat down taking tobacco, and, having well drunken of it, did give the tobacco-pipe to him that seemed the worthiest person, and after consequently to the others.
>
> Then some half an hour after they did begin to speak. When they arrived at our lodgings, their salutation was: 'Ho, ho, ho!' and so they do ordinarily; but making courtesies and kissing of hands they have no skill, except some particulars which endeavoured themselves to be conformable unto us, and seldom came they to see us without a hat, to the end they might salute us with a more solemn action . . . But our savages have not any salutation at the departure, but only the '*A Dieu*' which they have learned of us.[18]

## FEASTS

Binding the members of the tribe together in the days before government interference were the feasts of meat, accompanied by song, speeches, and dance, held on any possible occasion — one might say excuse — if the host had sufficient food. "There were feasts of health, of farewell, of hunting, of peace, of war, of thanks," said LeClercq; and Denys added to the list marriages and funerals. Food was especially abundant at spring feasts to rejoice over a successful winter of hunting, but as at all feasts, the meat was limited to the flesh of a single species of animal: beaver, bear, and moose were never mixed at the same meal. At special feasts grease and oil were drunk straight. To procure success in future hunting, an "eat-all" feast was held; everything had to be consumed before anyone might leave the wigwam; and even the smallest scrap might not be fed to a dog. One who could not finish his portion might present it to a more expandable neighbor. Remainders were thrown on the fire, but these were kept to a minimum, because of the glory attached to him who could eat more than the others.

The host, as a rule, did not eat with his guests; he should not diminish their portions. Only men "in condition to go to war against the enemy responded to his cry of *Chigoudah ouikbarino*, 'Come here to my wigwam for I wish to entertain you'." It is not clear whether this means the exclusion of the aged as well as the sick and the ritually unclean. Crying "Ho, ho, ho!" three or four times, the men, carrying their dishes, entered the festive wigwam, sat down in the first vacant place, smoked some of the chief's tobacco, and were tossed some meat or offered it on a pointed stick. When all had eaten, two or three distinctive cries summoned the women, children, and the young boys who had not yet killed a moose, and any disqualified men, to receive the remains of the meat outside the wigwam.[19]

All feasts began with speeches, including one from the host explaining the reason for the invitation. Nicolas Denys, who considered the Micmac good orators and good laughers, mentioned the customary recital of genealogies at marriages and funerals:

> in order to keep alive the memory, and preserve by tradition from father to son, the history of their ancestors, and the example of their fine actions and of their greatest qualities, something which would otherwise be lost to them, and would deprive them of a knowledge of their relationships, which they preserve by this means; and it serves to transmit their [family] alliances to posterity. On these matters they are very inquisitive, especially those descended from the ancient chiefs. This they sometimes claim for more than twenty generations, something which makes them more honoured by all the others.[20]

All seventeenth-century feasts closed with dances and songs in tribute to the host.

A century and a half later, the Abbé Maillard, writing from "Micmaki Country," March 27, 1755, viewed these still popular feasts with ambivalence. That part of him which considered it his priestly duty to spur the savages on to "make copious chase," so that furs would pay the Micmac debts to French traders, deplored the waste of time, meat, and peltry. But his weakness for Indian oratory has given us a detailed account of the speeches following a friendly feast of undercooked dog (de-fleaed) and hot seal grease. After dinner, when pipes were half-smoked, the most noted man present gave a speech in praise of the feast and of the giver. He compared the host to a tree, "whose large and strong roots afford nourishment to a number of small shrubs; or to a medicinal herb, found accidentally by such as frequent the lakes in their canoes." At winter feasts, the host was compared to a "turpentine tree" that never fails to supply sap and gum, or to the mild days that occur in the midst of even the worst winters. Next, the lineage of the host was mentioned:

> "Your great-great-great-grandfather was a great-great-great-hunter. His skill was no better than others, but he had some miraculous secret way of seizing creatures by springing upon them. Your great-great-grandfather was wonderful with beavers, those animals who are almost men. Your great-grandfather was an expert trapper of moose-deer, martins, and elks. Your grandfather has a thousand and a thousand times regaled the youth with seals. How often in our young days have we greased our hair in his cabin. Your father never missed his aim at game flying or sitting. He was particularly admirable in decoying bustards by his imitations. He had better inflections in his voice than most of us; he moved his body to sound like the clapping of their wings; he even deceived us. As for you – I am too full of good things to say more but thanks."

A younger and less important man then rose and summarized the first speaker and praised his manner. He did the thanking, shook the host's hand, and said: "All the steps I am going to take as I dance lengthwise and breadthwise in thy cabin are to prove to thee the gaiety of my heart and my gratitude." He now does his *Netchkawet*,

> advancing with his body erect, in measured steps, with his arms a-kimbo. Then he delivers his words, singing and trembling with his whole body, looking before and on each side of him with steady countenance, sometimes moving with a slow grave pace, then again with quick and brisk ones. When he makes a pause, he looks full at the company, as much as to demand their chorus and the word *Heh!* which he pronounces with great emphasis. Then they often repeat *Heh!* fetched up out of the depths of their throats – when he pauses, they cry aloud in chorus, *Oh!*

The dancer got his breath and then praised the host and asked the company to agree with him. He shook everyone's hand, danced again, "sometimes to a pitch of madness." He kissed his hand as a final salute to all and resumed his place. All the other men did the same thing.

Then girls and women entered, the eldest at their head, carrying a great piece of heavy birch bark which she struck as a drum. All the

women danced, "springing round on their heels, quivering with one hand lifted, and the other down; other notes they have none but a gutteral loud aspiration, of the word *Hehl Hehl Hehl* as often as the old female savage strikes her bark drum. As soon as she ceases striking, they set up a general cry, expressed by *Yah!*" If approved, they repeated the dance.

When they withdrew, an old woman gave thanks in the name of all the women,

the introduction of which is too curious to omit as it so strongly characterizes the sentiments of the savages of that sex, and confirms the general observation that where their bosom once harbours cruelty, they carry it to greater lengths than even the men whom frequently they instigate to it.

"You men! who look on me as of an infirm and weak sex and consequently of all necessity subordinate to you, know that in what I am, the Creator has given to my share, talents and properties at least of as much worth as yours. I have had the faculty of bringing into the world warriors, great hunters, and admirable managers of canoes. This hand; withered as you see it now, whose veins represent the roots of a tree, has more than once struck a knife into the hearts of prisoners, who were given up to me for my sport. Let the river-sides, I say, for I call them to witness me, as well as the woods of such a country, attest their having seen me more than once tear out the heart, entrails, and tongue of those delivered up to me, without changing color, roast pieces of their flesh, yet palpitating and warm with life, and cram them down the throats of others whom a like fate awaited. With how many scalps have not I seen my head adorned, as well as those of my daughters! With what pathetic exhortations have not I, upon occasion, roused up the spirit of our young men to go in quest of the like trophies that they might achieve the reward, honor, and renown annexed to the acquisition of them: but it is not in these points alone that I have signalized myself. I have often brought about alliances which there was no room to think would ever be made, and I have been so fortunate that all couples whose marriages I have procured have been prolific and furnished our nation with supports, defenders, and subjects to eternalize our race, and to protect us from the insults of our enemies. These old firs, these ancient spruce-trees, full of knots from the top to the roots, whose bark is falling off with age, and who yet preserve their gum and powers of life, do not amiss resemble me. I am no longer what I was; all my skin is wrinkled and furrowed, my bones are almost everywhere starting through it. As to my outward form, I may well be reckoned amongst the things fit for nothing but to be totally neglected and thrown aside; but I have still within me wherewithall to attract the attention of those who know me."[21]

More praises followed. This pleased the hunters and spurred them on in that essential occupation.

A twentieth-century survival enacted at the mission of Ste Anne de Restigouche at the tercentenary celebration of Membertou's baptism was described by an attending priest (see illustration 38):

An unscheduled and unrehearsed part of the three-day celebration was the performance by the Micmac of a mixture of songs, speeches and dances, which it is Micmac custom to hold in honor of an individual in the great moments of family or group life, such as mourning, marriage or the departure of an important member of the tribe. They gather together to give each in turn a eulogy of the dead, the fiancé, or the one about to depart. Exaggeration is permitted and is even *de rigueur*. From time to time the orator raises his voice and chants in rhythm, "*Iouana, oouana, Haiouana, yo, ha, yo, aahe, aahe, aahe*"; then suddenly he stops and throws towards the audience a searching and pleading look to get their approbation of the praises of the hero. . . . In one voice they respond, "*hal hal hal*"

Women and young girls are commonly allowed to take part in the celebration; they may even address the gathering – and do so – but only after the men have spoken, and not until they have presented their allegiance to the gathering. This office is generally entrusted to the oldest Micmac woman present. On this occasion, in respect to the presence of many priests, the Indian women had the delicacy to limit their participation to applause of their chiefs.[22]

Great ceremony and prolonged feasting attended the summer meetings of the tribal chiefs which, Father Biard said (1616), were held to consult about peace and war and to make "treaties of friendship and treaties for the common good." The host chief feasted his guests for as many days as he could. The guests made him some presents, but expected that each visiting chief would receive a parting gift; the host was not required to present anything to men of lesser rank.[23] Of particular importance in tribal ritual was the ceremonial arrival of the visiting chief and his followers, a feature complied with by French traders eager for Micmac furs. This account dates from 1675–87:

They are fond of ceremony, and are anxious to be accorded some when they come to trade at the French establishments; and it is, consequently, in order to satisfy them that sometimes the guns, and even the cannon, are fired on their arrival. The leader himself assembles all the canoes near his own and ranges them in good order before landing, in order to await the salute which is given him, and which all the Indians return to the French by the discharge of their guns. Sometimes the leader and chiefs are invited for a meal in order to show to all the Indians of the nation that they are esteemed and honoured. Rather frequently they are even given something like a fine coat, in order to distinguish them from the commonalty. For such things as this they have a particular esteem, especially if the article has been in use by the commander of the French.[24]

## St. Anne's Day

Long after the political purpose of the summer councils had died, tribal gatherings flourished in cultural syncretism as the proper way to celebrate St. Anne's Day.

The future patron saint of the Micmac was first established in New France in 1628 when, at the Cape Breton mission, the priests Vimont and Vieuxpoint kept the promise made to their patroness, Anne of Austria, Queen Mother of France, by dedicating the first chapel they built in the New World to Sainte Anne d'Apt. Ste-Anne au Cap-Breton antedated by twenty-nine years the establishment of Ste Anne de Beaupré.[25]

Here in eastern Canada, as in many other times and places, the Roman Catholic Fathers found an aboriginal institution – the summer tribal gathering – and a saint whose festal day would fuse pleasantly with it. St. Anne's Day, July 26, is the most important date in the Micmac calendar. She is their own saint; a great helper of the Micmac, a sort of culture hero who taught them moose-hair weaving, a trait of relatively recent introduction.[26] St. Anne is described as the wife of an Indian named Swasan (a common family name on New Brunswick reserves). She is of very good family and is the mother of the Virgin Mary. At her first meeting with Micmac she told them that she wanted to show them how to do things, and said she would like to meet them again on July 26. They remembered the day and have observed it ever since.

Two accounts of early St. Anne's Day celebrations were obtained in 1911; one at Burnt Church, N.B., the other at Pictou, N.S. The Pictou version, John Newell's, though told as a St. Anne's celebration, is entirely lacking in religious reference and in political significance; the people gathered for a good time.

CHAPTER II

# The Tribal Community in Industrial Society

## Tribe and Social Network

Throughout the years of their transition from hunters and gatherers to industrial laborers, the Micmac have endured as a tribal people and, more to the point, have endured largely because their tribal organization was flexible enough to meet external pressures without sacrificing the integrity of the group. Culture loss is a theme which frequently arises in discussions of contemporary American Indians, as if, after being museumized, tribal groups began to suffer an inevitable decay of custom. Every deviation from tradition can be seen as breakdown or loss, but greater credit is given to living Indians when the possibility of cultural adaptation and cultural gain is admitted as an explanation for social



change. No group is capable of a perfect functionalism; yet when a people survives over generations, the first questions asked should be about continuity, not discontinuity. There are few Micmac today who hunt full-time or make canoes or live in wigwams; for their economic behavior to suit the demands of industrial society it is much more appropriate for them to know how to drive and repair a car, how to live in small houses and apartments, and how to find work for cash. There are no great sagamores or forest warriors. Courage and endurance have instead found an urban arena, so that contemporary Micmac political activity is divided between tribal contests with imposing bureaucracies and a traditional egalitarianism sustained by the tribal network. Today, Micmac bands no longer gather for ritual celebrations. But the traditional principle that kinship orders behavior is at the very core of tribal organization, the goal of that organization being, as ever, to insure the perpetuation of the people.

To think of a tribal group operating in contemporary urban society is somewhat difficult. In the United States, native tribal groups are accorded a legal status which harks back to the Roman roots of the word *tribe* as a civic unit. Yet Biblical and nomadic connotations of the same word make of it the kind of human organization which belongs to less secular times than our own times when simple homogeneous bands could wander the earth. Because urbanization is usually considered as a force which moves society towards greater complexity and so-called higher levels of organization, it is often assumed that less complex forms are destroyed by it.

Urban industrialization has not, however, been ultimately hostile to tribal forms of social organization. The literature on tribal groups in the new industrial centers of Africa make this very clear.[1] Because American Indians are a numerically small minority and because an era of thoroughly corporate postindustrialism is apparently upon us, the existence of tribes in an urban setting is obscured and the functional aspects of tribal organization go unnoticed. The social structure of the Micmac, for example, who are generally representative of American Indians, is elastic enough to permit the geographic mobility of workers as an expansion of the perimeters of the tribe. The community remains a community even as its network of affiliations is spread over the physical distance between reservations and cities. It is subject to some stress and open to some change but its flexibility and the fact of tribal affiliation assure its continuity.

The nature of the tribal network, with its unique combination of centripetal and centrifugal energies permitting homogeneity and elasticity, is such that it must be contrasted with other social networks which are accurately associated with urban life but which describe more arbitrary and specialized associations. Studies of

[1] See, for example, A. L. Epstein, "The Network and Urban Social Organization," *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 1961, Vol. 29, pp. 29–62; Philip Mayer, *Tribesmen or Townsmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City*, Capetown, Oxford University Press, 1961; and A. W. Southall, "Kinship, Friendship and the Network of Relations in Kisenyi, Kampala," in *Social Changes in Modern Africa*, ed. A. W. Southall, London, Oxford University Press, 1961.



social networks are motivated by curiosity about the principles by which people associate informally. In an urban society such as ours it makes very good sense to inquire into the reasons for social interaction, making no assumptions about the necessity for adult social relations beyond those required in the corporate context of office work. The severity of urban *anomie* is alleviated by employment in government and private industry so that, at a minimum, one has to keep to a fixed schedule of interaction with coworkers in return for a private life characterized by the freedom to choose or reject friends. Since there are no claims on a bureaucrat's time except those of the bureaucracy, it becomes necessary to ask basic questions about kinship, age, residence, and status as factors which might but do not necessarily have to motivate social interaction.[2]

The kind of network of social relations which is typical of American Indians is maintained outside the influence of corporate institutions, although the network articulates with larger systems at lower levels of industry and by contact with government agencies. The patterns of organization discernible in a tribal network are cultural imperatives operating to maintain cohesion in the community. While individual members may at times interact with non-Indians or with Indians from other tribes, all associations are directed by cultural goals so

[2] Philip Slater's *Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1971) is one of the most concise if informal descriptions of the extent to which the choice of social alienation is not only possible but valued in the dominant American society.

that interaction with fellow tribesmen is more highly valued than relationships with outsiders. This is perhaps the most important fact to realize about a tribal network: its apparent flexibility supports a maximum level of interaction among members beyond any issue of complete freedom of choice and beyond the notion of the right to privacy.

The second most important fact about tribal networks follows from the first insofar as the community, and not individual goals, dictates the nature of the group's boundaries. The apparently total freedom in the informal relationships of a conventional White is limited only by personal preference. An individual may theoretically interact with anyone and the frequency, purpose, and quality of interaction, and the number of people interacted with can vary by choice. An adult may have a small stable network or may travel impersonally through a series of unrelated networks, only occasionally checking in with former friends. A married couple, as a single social unit, may claim this same interactional freedom. Their children, if raised to independence, will probably claim the right to choose their own friends and provide the parents with the classic dilemma between their belief in freedom of association and the fact that the autonomy of their children will infringe on their own right to control interaction. Again, theoretically, there are no boundaries on the networks of so-called free people who, as the song goes, have "nothing left to lose."

Ideally, freedom should make it possible to explore an area of informal ties within which everyone is equal or should be treated as if they were. In contrast to this, the internal hierarchy of institutions presents the only



legitimate structuring of inequality, the only system of ranking which is impersonal enough to let individuals escape the pain of personal evaluation and simple enough in its requirements to give security to thousands upon thousands of its managers. To admit inequality in the informal, private sector is so taboo that most respectable people limit their social relations in fear of meeting and having to treat as equals those inferiors without economic security and without corporate commitment. This theoretical freedom to travel through infinite networks gives an illusion of choice; but we each have a great need to control social interaction, to keep ourselves from different others who threaten our single-mindedness with the suggestion of other value systems.

A tribal community, on the other hand, has the boundaries of a traditional community with a relatively stable membership. Its membership can be identified by first-hand testimony, so that the question of who is a member, if it should arise, can be quickly settled. For American Indians, the natural boundaries of the tribe have added the restraints imposed by racism. That is, while the natives might prefer each other's company, there is really little intrusion from the outside on the part of non-Indians wanting to associate with them as equals. Although their rank in the racial hierarchy varies from one locale to another, depending on what other minorities they are compared to, Indians are usually close to the bottom. Prejudice further insures the strength of the tribal community's boundaries, as does the formal and equally demeaning treatment which government agencies give Indians.

Yet, within community boundaries, truly egalitarian

associations occur naturally and without fear, so much so that the interpersonal contests and conflicts between people are continuous and continuously resolved, much more than among those who use their freedom to avoid social interaction. The tribal network also provides multiple bonds between individuals—kinship, reservation ties, and a shared history of human relations.

The idea of an urban network is useful in the study of tribal people for two reasons. First, it allows their forms of social organization to be compared with those of other urban people, including non-tribal ethnic groups. Second, the concept releases them and other groups from the need to have community identified with geographic stability, because the concept essentially treats patterns of communication as social structure, or at least allows that possibility. The definition of community with which the social sciences have been most concerned is that of a geographically stable population which, because of its fixed locale, permits observation. A Yankee City, an Elmtown, and a Street Corner Society can be physically located and their physical structures seem to assure us that community social organization must have a material base or in some way exist only within physical boundaries. Even used metaphorically, the network concept permits a definition of community that can put aside the usual concern with place and property and instead consider enduring patterns of culture spread over time and space. In societies like our own, minorities have been urbanized for generations, yet remain a people apart, without the establishment of conventional, land-based communities. There are ghet-



toes and slums, places for marginal people, but these cannot be understood simply as pathological communities any more than they can be dismissed as chaotic dumping grounds. An urban minority community, whether or not the label *tribal* is properly affixed to it, is inevitably a network of relationships among the propertyless, among people for whom the city is a backdrop, a setting, and for whom survival often means maintaining a high rate of mobility beyond any initial migration to the city. The urbanization of minorities has failed to be the transformation of individual country bumpkins into alienated cosmopolitans; it has been typified instead by the development of a variety of social networks which have defensive characteristics as well as an internal social organization. As Fredrik Barth writes on the social organization of ethnic groups,

> Stable inter-ethnic relationships presuppose such a structuring of interaction: a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact, and allowing for articulation in some sectors or domains of activity, and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors, and thus insulating parts of the cultures from confrontation and modification.[3]

Racist prescriptions and proscriptions make the dominant society appear as the chief perpetrator of minority culture. My own belief is that the human tendency for cultural diversity is shaped rather than created by racism. While academics speculate about the universality of an urban Culture of Poverty, minority

[3] *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. with an intro. by Fredrik Barth, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1969.

groups recognize and act upon the cultural differences they perceive between one another. For Native Americans, an individual's tribal affiliation is extremely important. In New York City a native of Harlem and a former Jamaican consider themselves members of two different cultures. For a Spanish-American, the village his family comes from may be crucial in locating him in a specific network and excluding him from others in the urban community. Of course there are similarities in the ways in which many of the poor have accommodated themselves to the economic demands of urbanization. Still, it is necessary to balance that comparative overview with an understanding of the "flavor" of culture, as Kroeber called it,[4] the group's total communication to an individual that he is among the people who speak, look, feel, and act in ways most deeply familiar to him.

For most Micmac, associations with other tribal members make up a primary network in which one is much more likely to stay with one's own kind than to cultivate relationships with non-Micmac. This varies somewhat from individual to individual, but, generally speaking, a child is raised to be aware of the difference between his own people and the strangers of whom one has to be suspicious. As an adult, he or she is still likely to regard as outsiders both the local Whites whose towns neighbor the reservation and the other "ethnics" and lower-class people who live nearby in the city. In addition, the middle-class people who represent corporate service organizations in the Maritimes and in industrial centers are considered peripheral to the Micmac interpersonal network.

[4] A. L. Kroeber, *Configurations of Culture Growth*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1944.



The institution of a formal reservation system and the simultaneous draw on the Provinces for labor to service New England has had two important effects on the tribal network. First, there was an increase in communication between diverse subgroups of the Micmac influenced by some geographic consolidation of dispersed bands, especially in Nova Scotia, through efforts on the part of the federal government to promote a more efficient administration of a single, localized bloc of people. In addition to the larger settlements, such as Eskasoni or Shubenacadie, there still remain small groupings of Micmac people outside reservation boundaries. Even their isolation, however, has been minimized by the effects of industrialism. Improvements in transportation, particularly in travel by bus and automobile, and the possibilities for earning a wage in industrial centers attract Indian sons and daughters from every hamlet and reservation. The community is today quite knowledgeable about the extent of its own tribal boundaries. Each member in the course of a lifetime is likely to meet up with many other Micmac who are relatively difficult to place in an immediate kinship network and yet look, speak, and act Micmac and have to be accounted for. There is no such thing as a stranger, because information about any individual's alliances is widespread and a part of general knowledge. Who he or she is related to and has been friends or lovers with is counted as a factor, provided the intermediary person is identifiable as kin, friend, or enemy within one's own

group. How an individual has declared himself or herself in past dramatic events also figures in assessing how he or she will be placed. "Were you in that big brawl they had up at St. John? Did you see Charlie Francis there?" These are the kind of opening questions an Eskasoni man might ask of an Eel River man with an eye to learning whether this person was one of the antagonists who helped beat up his cousin Charlie or one of the friends who dragged him away. A woman will be similarly identified by the company she keeps and by her alliance in a noteworthy feud or fracas. Each Micmac newcomer, whether he shows up for the first time at a party on the reservation or in a barroom in Boston, carries a history of associations which makes it fairly easy to locate him in the tribal network.

Kinship is still very important as a means of classifying others who are outside the extended family household and yet still associated with it, perhaps as a third or fourth cousin or as the person who married in at one of the more remote branches of the family tree. Kinship can often be a very neutral way of acknowledging the social existence of others. Older people and younger children, for example, were often described to me in terms of their family ties (sometimes irrespective of their kinship to the speaker) while adults of the same generation were much more likely to be identified as friends or rivals, whether or not they could be counted kin.

For both men and women, talking about their own generation (which was also the generation of their siblings and numerous cousins) prompted much reference



to rivalries, confrontations, and adventures in which various *personae* emerged clearly as allies or enemies throughout a personal history. For men in particular, the details of what was happening among younger people or what had happened among adults of the parent generation were of less interest, unless, of course, they involved a close relative. One night at a gathering, I sat talking to a Micmac man in his middle fifties when a young woman of about twenty passed by us, someone whom I had met but whose name had slipped my mind. I asked the man if he knew her. He described her benignly, and, as it turned out, inaccurately, as one of Leroy Cleaver's daughters who had just married into the Samuels family. Interestingly enough, he had the correct form of a kinship designation without the correct content. When it came to talking about his own age group, the same man had a great amount of information to recount and a considerable fund of accurate detail.

For an adult the ties of kinship mean the designation as a certain member of the family that comes with birth and endures until death. There is very little that has to be worked out in matters of alliance between grandparents, parents, and children, between siblings, between nieces and nephews, or between aunts and uncles who have lived together within the same household or stayed in close contact with the family. Beyond kinship, there exists a whole range of people, discounting children and the elderly, with whom issues of amity and enmity have to be settled. Because the status of a Micmac adult lies in an individual's strength within the tribal context, the friendships, confrontations, court-

ships, and sundry adventures which involve most Micmac between late teens and mid-forties are the events within which power and will are rested and personal reputation augmented or tarnished. In a life history perspective, the family and usually the extended family household provides an initial vantage point from which a child considers and then enters into relationships, friendly and less-than-friendly, with his peer group. Of the Micmac I met during my field work, most were either born in the reservation area or, if they were born in New England, raised in the Maritimes. The experience of Micmac under twenty-five who have come as children to visit Boston and other cities contrasts with the more abrupt rural-to-urban shift their parents' generation underwent when they first ventured into the city as youths of nineteen or twenty. Nonetheless, while adults consider it good for children to get an idea of what city living is like, the preferred place for children to grow up is "down home" in the Maritimes, and the reliance on relatives who remain there to help care for children born in the city makes it still a first experience of the world.

## *Reservation Communities and Household Organization*

When Sidney Mintz wrote in 1953 about the development of a certain kind of rural community within the contemporary plantation system, he could also have been describing the kind of economically peripheral



community which typifies an Indian reservation, provided that a hunting and gathering tradition is substituted for an agricultural one:

> The same forces which have molded the rural proletarian community into an unexpected analogue with the ideal folk society have also been those which have made it more "urban." Independent freehold primary production has been replaced uniformly by plantation estates; exchange labor, tenancy, and sharecropping have been replaced by cash labor; cash is used exclusively to buy essential commodities; personal relationships between employer and employed (or between owner and tenant) have been supplanted by purely impersonal relationships, based on the work done, and with a standard payment for that work; home manufacture has practically disappeared; consumption commodities have been standardized; and outside agencies of control and service—medical, political, police, religious, military, and educational—have developed. As a result, the rural proletarian community associated with the modern plantation system exhibits a character which is superficially folklike in some ways and yet might be labeled "urban" in others. But actually such communities are neither folk nor urban, nor are they syntheses of these classifications. They are, rather, radically new reorganizations of culture and society, forming a distinctive type not amenable to the folk-urban construction.

One cannot understand reservations without recognizing the greater economic structure which makes them segregated by class as well as culture. At the same time, one cannot understand reservation communities without an appreciation of their dependence upon and support of a mobile urban population. To look at a map of the Maritimes and to drive through the reservation area could lead one quickly to the conclusion that the

Micmac or at least some part of the tribe lived in quaint rural isolation. The ties which connect the reservations to urban industrial areas are, of course, people, and to deduce the nature of Micmac social organization from the evidence of social interaction is much more appropriate than to take the physical plant of the reservation as primary evidence. Its appropriateness lies in the fact that the Micmac consider relationships among themselves more important than the setting in which they take place. Because of this, human urban and rural settlements where people provide the context are preferred to natural contexts. The forests on and adjacent to reservations are still used for hunting and fishing by some Micmac men. Rather than having a full traditional reliance on nature, however, the Micmac simply allow their forests and waterways to be. They use them more in times of economic recession than in times of plenty, yet always with the understanding that nature has its own incontrovertible rules, some of which provide man with resources, others of which operate irrespective of human wants. As a Micmac Indian who worked as a guide put it, "Going out into the woods here is a dangerous thing to do. You've got to watch and listen and remember everything. Then you can make your catch and get home." The White men who hired him for his knowledge of the forest did not need to understand nature. They just returned home with their game after a good hunting trip. It is an unusual Micmac who goes for poetic, solitary walks in the woods or who seeks to get away from it all by isolating himself for communion with nature. The biological force of nature, like the biological fact of humanity, is accepted by the Micmac; the former fact is not abstracted and violated by subjection to human ends, no more than the latter is denied and depersonalized as an atomistic machine. In any place where Micmac tend to congregate, such priority is put on social interaction that the locale as an objective physical entity apart from or even reflective of the community literally never arises spontaneously as a subject of conversation. For example, I would often mention to Indians that I met that I lived at Shubenacadie. The universal reaction was to respond to that fact in terms of people, referring either to those who were relatives or friends who came from there or to those who were old enemies from past confrontations. When I would press the matter further and ask, "Well, what do you think about the homes there?" the response was invariably to mention people known who had worked on the construction of government houses or to dismiss the question with a shrug and, "Could be worse." It is a telling fact that when I encountered missionaries or local White people or Bureau officials and made the comment, "I've been staying at Shubenacadie," their responses were almost always about the "things" which made up the reservation landscape: houses in better or worse repair, the size of the school building, the proliferation of abandoned cars in the last twenty years, a new road, the size of the reservation forest. With bureaucrats, people were a kind of secondary subject, incidental to the place in which they could be found or, at least, explicable and even determined by what could be seen there. The most sympathy for Indians was ex-

pressed over the dilapidated condition of many homes, especially the tar-paper and wood shacks which characterized some of the settlements.

To a stranger, the aura which pervades the locale which is labeled a Micmac community is one of dispossession. The tar-paper shacks set up on a flat of cleared land are one- or two-room affairs with small metal chimneys on top and washlines strung on poles outside. The government-built houses are large and solid by comparison—four- or five-room frame dwellings lined up along a narrow road, each on an identical patch of land. For every two that are being lived in, another has collapsed into its cinderblock foundation, its roof spilling over onto what was to have been, theoretically, a properly tended green lawn. While I heard more than one local White deplore the way the Indians let those "free" houses slide into disrepair, there were simply not that many Micmac who could afford to stay on the reservation; it was the familiar predicament of "just passing through" which had, in a good number of cases, allowed houses to deteriorate a bit more after each family's temporary retreat to the reservation. The houses in good repair belong to those who have been able to find some kind of steady work in the area, in a paper mill for example, or with the Bureau itself, and even these families number only a minority in any Indian community.

More often, the reservation area is a place to which one retreats in hard times until opportunity beckons elsewhere. In a government-built house that was completely bare of furniture except for beds, a kitchen table and two chairs, a living room couch, chair, and lamp,



Kathy Meuse, a middle-aged woman born and raised at Eskasoni and married to a Micmac man from Shubenacadie told how she and her seven children had come back to live on the reservation.

> I been in better places than this, you understand. My husband was in Korea, in the army, and he done right well with them. Then he got throwed out 'cause of a fight with one of them officers. But he did okay after that. He did carpentry and electrical stuff all around the place. Sometimes me and the kids, we'd follow him around, spend a year in Montreal, then go to the States, down as far as near Philadelphia. Then there got to be too many kids. Charlotte and Roy [the two eldest] I sent for a while [two years] to stay with my sister at Eel Ground. I always like to keep the little ones near me, but that wasn't always for the best. The children's grandma [on their father's side] took them on here at Shubie the year before last when I had pneumonia real bad. Now this time, things got so bad that I thought we'd better lay low for a while, take all of us down home while Eddie looked for some work. He's in Boston or thereabouts.

What the reservation actually supports in the way of a stable household is a conglomeration of "home bases," that is, extended families which will host individual adults and children for longer or shorter periods of time, depending on what a visit is prompted by: ill health, good luck and a desire to make a munificent display, or bad luck and the need to put up somewhere for a while. The extended family includes three or even four different generations. A married man and woman or a married woman alone are typical heads of the household. The many children in the household are often only about one-half to two-thirds their own, while the rest

are informally adopted from near and distant relatives. In the case of Kathy Meuse's family, she and two of the the older children joined her husband in Massachusetts before a year had passed; Charlotte and the five youngest were accepted into the homes of relatives in Shubenacadie and Truro, as, it should be noted, a temporary and not necessarily unpleasant solution to economic ups and downs. The extended family, in fact, survives on the understanding that such favors are only lent, and on the assumption that the more people associated with the household, the greater its chances for present and future support. The child left with relatives is still the concern and ultimately the responsibility of its parents, who will send funds, if they can, to help out. The elderly grandmother who is taken in by a son or daughter will let it be known to her other children that extra cash should be given to that household. The adult (man or woman) who is between jobs and sleeps on the couch is expected to remember whose hospitality was enjoyed. There are always some "bad debts," some whose fortunes never peak, some whose memories are poor when it comes to remembering old favors, some who simply do not live long enough to do a service to the family. Nonetheless, it is understood that the more people a family can claim as allies in kinship and draw into a reciprocal network of specific obligations, the better its chance of survival from one generation to the next.

The interiors of such extended-family homes are more filled with the presence of people than dominated by things. The furniture available through social assistance is characteristically discount-house plastic, from upholstered chairs to night-tables to lampshades. Many bedrooms have iron beds and heavy, framed mirrors from another generation and, occasionally, a patchwork quilt of the tiniest triangles made by an old grandmother or aunt years ago. Almost every home has one or more little bric-a-brac shelves with family snapshots placed among the ceramic statues of puppies and ballerinas. A television set, sometimes working, sometimes broken, is typically found in the living room.



The more people of all ages there are around, the more it seems that the material things in the home—the lamps, the chairs, the T.V.—dissolve as entities which make demands on human beings (e.g., needing to be dusted, polished, washed, not stepped on, treated with care, etc.) and become subservient to the random demands of people. A sofa which might last a conventional nuclear family two years (speaking hypothetically, for most welfare furniture is hardly of the quality most conventional families would choose), will serve many more Indian people and in a much shorter period of time show signs of tears and chips and cigarette burns, the natural marks of wear which are not blamed on any one person. In a similar way, a television set, which might otherwise be understood as a thing which makes exclusive demands on individual human consciousness and demands, now and again, mechanical repair, becomes subservient to and acts as a kind of amplifier of the social interaction which is already going on in the living room. For example, while nine or ten people are talking with each other, a child or an adult might decide to flick

on the T.V. as just another visual and auditory input. Rather than distracting from the social interaction, it provides a kind of background rumble and roar, adding no new information to the scene than its particular light and noise. The person who turned the set on wanders away; children sit down in front of it and begin to play "Slap Jack"; a grandmother shifts her chair and inadvertently blocks out the screen from the view of most others in the room. After some time, the baby of the family will switch the channel, perhaps find something familiar or amusing such as cartoons, and fall asleep on the floor in front of the T.V. Later still, an adult will reach past the grandmother and turn off the set. The social use, not the abuse, of property leaves its mark on every material thing.

## *Socialization*

Growing up in the midst of this kind of family, with many other children around, with many adults dropping in, which sometimes moves from one household of relatives to another, is a common experience of childhood for many Micmac. Peter Dunn, born in Bear River in 1931, described his family in the following way.

My mother had twelve children in all, well really fourteen but two are dead. Sam, Claude, Ann Mary, and me were the closest. Her brother's two children, Betty and Leonard, lived with us for a long while after their mother died. Then there was her own mother who came from Bear River and had a lot of her family there. Well, my father also had a brother who he'd go



hunting with and he lived in a little shack right close to our place and he'd eat with us. Then he got took away 'cause he had t.b. My cousin Henry lived with us too, he's my age. My mother's younger brother, Joshie, used to come and stay and me and Henry and Sam would have to double up so's he could have our bed. That's a lot of people already but we always seemed to have room. Then there was the babies, the little ones, Pauline's [Peter's older sister] boy Alfie and Zeke who came to us when he was just a baby. His mother took him back when she got out of the hospital and got married again. And, of course, Martha and Elmer [Peter's two youngest siblings].

Being in charge of a "home base" in the reservation area is a role which fairly conservative women seem to opt for, e.g., a woman who has never left the area and has never wanted to, a daughter who tried out the city for a while and did not like it, an older woman who considers her days of traveling behind her. The male head of such a household need not feel constrained or tied down to home ground. He might be relatively less mobile than men his own age who travel the circuit from reservation to city, but a man always has good reason to be independent in his "business" from the affairs of women and children and, particularly for reasons of finding employment, will go off with his friends on jaunts which take them away from the home for varying lengths of time. The household, with many children and visitors, continues in his absence.

Cooperation among women remains an important part of running a household, particularly among women of different generations. A woman who is the head of a household will be helped by her mother, even if she only lives nearby and not within the household itself,

and by her older daughters. In an established home base household, there is, however, typically only one woman in charge and she is likely to be the only woman of her generation in the home. Sisters-in-law, friends, and sisters visit and even send their children to be cared for without ever intruding on the hierarchical structure of the household. Competitively claiming the responsibilities of a married woman is less a factor in their adult years than the release of other women to participation in the economy.

Arnold Lefebre, born in New Brunswick in 1938, gave this description of his family:

> My mother never could've managed without her own mother living right in the little cottage next door. I got four sisters older than me too and they was a great help, I know that. My dad used to fish and every once and a while he'd bring home a deer and we'd have some right good venison. He was very quiet and he didn't bother anyone too much. He and a few of my mother's brothers would go out fishing a bit in a wooden boat. Sometimes I'd get to go for a ride. When one of my father's sisters got t.b., her three kids came on to stay with us. But they were already big, sixteen and seventeen, as old as that and they didn't stay around. They come back even now though just to say hello to my mother. My father's mother lived with us just before she died. She had a gift, she could see the future and ghosts, too. We always had people dropping by to talk to her. We had family everywhere, too, it seems.

In households such as these where people of several generations live together and in a community where human relations makes up nine-tenths of the subject matter of conversation, the facts of sex and death are, relative to our society, demystified. Children laugh among themselves at their own contrived jokes about



the "mic" (penis) and the "wekitc" (vagina). Sexual relations among people in the community are of consummate interest and generally discussed, even in the company of young children. At one time, a man who worked in New England left his wife for a long while on the reservation. He came back to find out that she was about to give birth to a child that could not possibly be his. Everyone else in the community had been following the details of the relationship between the married woman and her lover, the real father of the baby. A group of children, some of them in the early years of grade school, filled me in on the details, adding that, as a matter of fact, this was the second time poor Mr. Brown had been "fooled."

A Micmac house has its separate bedroom with a double bed where the mother and father of the household usually sleep. Yet, with the changes in number and composition of the household, the bedroom is usually not a secret domain and may have to accommodate visiting relatives, an assortment of children, or an elderly person who has taken ill.

Death as a subject is about as open to discussion as sex, although instead of humor, the subjects of illness and dying are usually accompanied by ghost stories and references to a realm of spiritual power which can be seen as either beneficial or frightening. Mary Dunn, a teenager, described how her mother's mother passed away:

> You know the room where Stevie, Ida, Johnny, and me sleep in? That used to be my grandma's room. She had a bad cancer, in her stomach, I think, and she used to complain that her mouth was always feeling bitter, sour-tasting. I'd make her

some warm milk and carry it in to her. She didn't say nothing much to me, but I knew she liked me to sit next to her while she had her milk. My mother really had the most work with her. She'd have to get up at night and make Grandma stop moaning because it was keeping everyone awake. Johnny was real tiny then. One day I brought in the milk as usual 'cause I heard her [the grandmother] calling, that is, making them little noises in her throat. I brought in the milk and grandma put her hand on my arm and kind of pulled me near her. I said, "What is it?" She whispered to me that she would come back after she died and give me special help. I wasn't even sure it was her talking because she had lost her voice for a few days. I told my mother what she said and she got afraid. She told me to stay away from grandma after that. She died the next day. My mother and my aunts washed the body and dressed it. After the funeral, my mother didn't want to put me in that room. I wasn't afraid. I was only twelve at the time but I told her that Grandma had promised to help me, not to frighten me.

Sex and death, while demystified, are perhaps the two most fundamentally important areas of community concern, for they have to do with its reproductive continuity and the generational cycle from birth to death within which all Micmac participate. As such they are devoid of associations of romantic love, which we tend metaphorically to link with sex, and of violence, which we associate with death. The polarities of euphoric love and the destruction of nuclear war which count for so much in the dominant society mean much less in a tribal community and are, in fact, concepts unavailable to most of its members. The interactional realities of human conflict make up the very life of the community and it is in the larger households that a child is educated into the continual ebb and flow of human relationships.



While reservations are hardly considered ideal places to live, most Micmac women agree that a child is better raised there than in a city environment. Once again, this is a judgment made for interpersonal reasons, not out of disdain for the physical setting. In the city, a young child has to associate and go to school with Whites and risk the conflicts which that contact inevitably engenders. The reservation household can offer protective care at least until the child reaches his or her teens and becomes independent. One woman, Maureen Paul, who was born in 1945 in Boston, was raised at Eskasoni in a large household managed by her grandmother and then her aunt:

It would be hard, right hard to say just how many there was in the family. My grandmother was always trying to keep us in line but there were a lot of kids, a whole lot of us little bastards running around. Sal [Maureen's brother] and me were about the oldest, though there was Francine that my grandmother brought up and she was about three of four years older than me. But she left and went to Halifax when she was about, oh, fifteen or sixteen. She run away but she come back later, all grown up and with a job. Anyway, after Sal and me there was Eveline and Debbie, my mother's sister's children, that was Aunt Helen, and there was the twins, one of them nicknamed "Popeye" cause he had one eye blue and the other brown, the other was Matthew who I told you about got Estelle's girl pregnant. The twins was from my father's side of the family. Their mother was a close cousin of his and Seda [Maureen's grandmother] took them in when she couldn't care for them no more. Let me see, then there was Uncle Alfred who stayed at home when he came in from the States and

Aunt Dee who lived with us and kinda took over when Seda died in 1962. My mother took me and Sal down to the city with her in about 1953, but that was just for a short time. Sal would get into fights with the boys there and they were real tough. So we were sent down home, to Seda.

Even as a reservation household protects children in a physical sense, it gives them an Indian identity which emphasizes individual autonomy and personal strength. The ideal Micmac adult has the will and spirit to travel, to make spontaneous choices, to be aggressive and assertive, to take risks—all within the context and with the approval of the tribal community. The power of an individual does not exist in a vacuum; it is the group which continually witnesses, verifies, and makes comprehensible individual behavior, putting limits on individualism and optimally preventing autonomy from becoming isolation.

In the socialization of children, the personal strength which is encouraged has two aspects. One of these is an aggressive physical hardiness or toughness, the other is a sense of unique access to spiritual resources. The two aspects are so interconnected that the presence of the former is taken to indicate the existence of the latter, physical endurance being the proof of spiritual power.

Among the Micmac, childhood is considered a biological phase through which human beings pass naturally and without conscious educational efforts on the part of adults. Childhood is seen as an adequate state in itself, rather than merely a path to the final goal of adulthood. Children are not expected to talk or think



like adults and they are not rewarded if they do. To the contrary, a child who tries to assert himself during a conversation between his elders is misbehaving. The individual child is, however, encouraged to assert himself in his own league, among other children. The adult in his prime of life has maximum access to the ideal of physical and spiritual fortitude. The child, like the old person, has an appropriate arena for performing according to the values of the community. When a small child stands up to a bully, he is courageous, not simply acting courageously and mimicking adult behavior. When an old person boasts about long-ago adventures, he is acting within the value system in a way which fits his physical limitations. The child is not rushing toward another state; he is living in the present reality of a child's body. The old person is not chagrined by the loss of a youth he expected to go on forever; he is living with the biological fact of his body.

From the time a Micmac child is very young, he or she is encouraged to be strong. A father or uncle or older brother will show a toddler of two or three how to make a fist and jab with it like a boxer. An older sibling will affectionately urge him to fight and then feign retreat under the miniature torrent of punches and kicks and even four-letter words. The women in a family might verbally protest such aggression, but nonverbally, with smiles and without taking action to intervene, show pride and approval. When a young boy acts fearless of physical retribution from older children and from the women in his family, his behavior is generally condoned. If he begins to get too aggressive with the

men in the household, his behavior will be checked, not to make him fearful but to communicate to him that taking on an adult male is more presumptuous. I observed one incident typical of how this message on the limits of aggression is communicated and how the household cooperates to do it. A sturdy boy of three decided that he was going to try out a few punches on his father who was sitting at a table talking with some friends. The father tolerated some pummeling and then pushed his son away. The boy came back and his father gave him a slap which was hard enough to make the child cry. Instead, the boy, with his face very red, held back the tears that were in his eyes. An older sibling, a girl of about thirteen, came to the rescue with a good-humoured invitation to spar with her. The friends of the father remarked on the boy's courage in holding back his tears and he proudly nodded in agreement.

Any child, boy or girl, who takes to whining and crying will be ignored by the adults and mocked by other children as a weakling and a sissy. Infants are cared for and indulged by an array of people who meet their needs so as to avoid the necessity of their crying. When infancy is left behind, there are still the other children and adults, who anticipate individual physical limits and take on the responsibility for tying shoes and buttoning coats, for reaching high shelves, finding lost toys, and giving up indulgences like candy or some trinket to a young child. Micmac children learn by observation and are not subjected in a family to intense verbal instruction. Younger children are expected to imitate their older siblings in the basics of eating, toilet



training, and general physical dexterity without individual instruction, and the expectation is apparently justified. The reason a child who whines is despised is that he would seem to deny a correct ratio between the care offered by the group to a dependent child and his limited, but real physical autonomy. The whining child says, "I'm not getting enough" and the group says, "we're giving you what you need for your age. The problem is with you."

The solidarity which exists among children in the same household is complex. Blood relationships count and the child with remote or no real kinship ties, the child actually liable to be transient, is acknowledged as a less permanent member of the family, unless, of course, the parents legally adopt him or her. This is an unusual step to take, because in the great majority of cases, the circulation of children is kept informal and flexible.

Age and sex differences are important additional factors. There is a point at which closest siblings become part of a larger adolescent peer group and will see each other both in and out of the family setting. Because the whole function of the peer group seems to lie in the proliferation of social ties it offers and because independence is a strongly supported value, siblings coming into their teens at about the same time tend to keep some distance between themselves. It is very unlikely that two brothers or two sisters would ever openly fight with each other, but they may avoid each other in the larger peer group. The quick defense of a sister or brother, especially a younger one, is a common reaction

which persists from childhood all through life and which, despite adolescent autonomy, can be elicited in a crisis. If a quarrel arises, for example, over the matter of flirtation and stolen affection, brothers and sisters will defend each other. A brother is most protective of a sister, younger or older, while a sister is likely to defend her sisters and the younger children, both brothers and sisters. A hierarchical bias in the large household makes all other children assume responsibilities of caring for younger children, responsibilities which are not directly reciprocal when children become adults. A young man is likely to be protective towards the older sister who cared for him and the younger sister for whom he cared, but he is likely to view his brothers as somewhat independent rivals. A young woman accords her older brothers the same autonomy and feels a lifelong solidarity with her sisters and younger siblings. Themes of competition and caring figure strongly in the relationships between children of the same family and through life there is a general bias of males towards the former and of females towards the latter. Adolescence as a phase in life requires movement out into a wider peer network and for a time the de-emphasis of all kin ties in favor of a more competitive individualism.

The socialization of Micmac girls prepares them for this phase even as it prepares them for a later, adult phase of increased mutual support and caring among family members. The show of physical strength that is encouraged in boys is rewarded in girls as well, although in girls stoic endurance, more than physical aggression, is praised. Young girls seem to get into just as



many fights where blows are exchanged as boys and are similarly expected to hold back their tears when hurt or frustrated. A child's physical hardiness, much more than physical attractiveness, and personal independence, more than passivity, are characteristics in which adults take delight.

The physical vulnerability of Micmac females is admitted to in an interesting, indirect way. It is women who are preoccupied with the subject of medicine, with accounts of accidents, and, more frequently, internal illnesses, their symptoms and their cures. Folk medicine has been supplanted by remedies available in drugstores but, very importantly, a cure is only assured by a combination of human products and human spiritual resources. A woman has the cultural license to approach the problem of illness, her own and others', with speculations about the specific motivations behind the fact of sickness: are there bad feelings in the kin group of the sick person; is there an old enemy who has reappeared on the scene; is the sick person, for a lack of spirit, ready to die? There is no formal witchcraft or sorcery among the Micmac but there is an understanding that explanations of the physical fact of illness must include information about human relationships and, further, that humans must be understood as embodiments of spiritual forces, never machines. The area of competence within which a girl works is the home and her sense of responsibility in helping with younger children, the old, and the sick helps enormously in the operation of the household.

No professionalization of the female's housewife role,

however, is really possible in a large Micmac family. Specific responsibilities vary with the number of people around so that there is no formal possession of chores or control of space, no chance for a girl to play at being her mother and thus arrive at a total occupational understanding of the role of housewife. The mother of the family orchestrates the carrying out of domestic tasks and relies particularly on her daughters to accommodate themselves to a shifting array of responsibilities. It is the ethic of responsibility, not pride in having accomplished a task, which makes the home run smoothly, and a young girl has to get used to working gracefully along with her sisters, mother, aunts, and grandmothers in a system within which work is not divided but shared. The verbal directives to assume responsibility are very few, leaving the initiative to the child. By the time a Micmac girl is eleven or twelve, she has learned to be basically noncompetitive about family responsibilities.

In Micmac society and, I believe, in other minority communities as well, the women in a household and any old people who are around socialize children in a way which allows them to deal with more than the internal value system of the Micmac. As every student of colonial literature knows, few people know the oppressor better than the oppressed and it appears that verbally instructing their children in the ways of White society is as much a tradition among Micmac women as the communication of tribal culture. The role of men in socializing children is extremely important but most of it lies, as does much of the role of women, in an area



where the ideas of a child are shaped by an informal mixture of nonverbal and verbal communication concerned with what is happening in the present tense within the kin group. In addition to that fundamental education, Micmac women make a special point of enunciating the abstract tenets and "respectable" values of the dominant society. They tell their children that they should stay in school, that they should go to church, that they should get legally married before having sexual relations, and that they should in general act "right." Very few Micmac have lived or even could have lived according to these tenets. Prolonged education is hardly feasible, legal marriage implies a completely different family system and relationship to property, and the participation of most Micmac in institutionalized religion amounts to a nominal Catholicism. The demands of life for the Micmac have very little to do with so-called civilized behavior and even a radical transformation of their tribe into respectable folk would not alter their position in society.

What women are doing when they tell children to act right is articulating the differences between two value systems, that of the Indians and that of the dominant society. They urge the young to look at themselves from the point of view of the White man and to understand the behavioral limits which are imposed upon them from without. To tell a child to act right according to White convention is, in reality, to give a warning, to communicate the fact that a Micmac would have to make an effort to become acceptable to the dominant society, and the fact that one's natural, culturally sufficient

way of behaving is not widely approved. So it is that women who are most respectable in White terms become the heads of large reservation households and raise children who in no way accommodate themselves to White institutions. Nor is it by accident that women, children, and older people on reservations have an access to respectability not shared by the rest of the community. Most of the children will repudiate that access to school and church and legal behavior before they are twenty, as their grandparents did, and find it again when they are old and less mobile and have grandchildren themselves who will need instruction in the ways of the world.

All Micmac women are self-educated experts in the ways of the dominant society. In each stage of life, in every interaction with a bureaucrat, they perceive the nuances of communication from behind a polite, if impassive, mask. Good demeanor keeps Micmac girls in school for a longer time than their male peers; and this gives them the opportunity to learn thoroughly the value system of the oppressor. Women of all ages go to church more frequently than men and have again the opportunity to pick up bureaucratic categories and metaphors. As it turns out, a woman is good when she is respectable, not because she meets a White model of behavior, but because she brings information into the Indian culture which adds to the defenses of her children against the total society which keeps them at its periphery. It is only in her public performance that she appears to have capitulated; among her own, she has only to phrase the legal value system and let the perception of its variance with Indian reality fall to the children, a variance which very few children fail to perceive. It is interesting how educational and religious institutions, which always seek to reform, inevitably only inform, their abstractions being reworked by cultural imperatives.



The endurance of a traditional Micmac language is a vital part of the socialization of children and a well-protected aspect of Micmac culture. When questioned directly about the survival of their language, many Indians deny its continued use and their own proficiency in it and claim that the old people still speak Micmac but very few others remember the language. Basically the same claim is made about traditional myths. But in fact, the use of Micmac, more than being a second language to English or, in parts of Quebec, to French, is common within the household. Denials of its importance stem, I believe, from several sources. First, the researcher who asks about the Micmac language implies that there is a known grammar and vocabulary to some extent rigidified by tradition. What the Micmac are speaking is a living language which has dropped some words over time and included others, notably English words for technological inventions, car, T.V., transistor, etc. A man or woman might speak fluent Micmac but not feel expert enough in it to live up to the standards of linguists. Second, denial of fluency in Micmac may come from an individual's need to present himself as a civilized rather than a savage person to an inquirer from outside the community. It takes a great sense of humor on the part of Indians to put up with anthropological ex-

pectations of a traditional, museumized culture; such expectations usually postulate a maximum distance between the ways of the Whites and the antiquated, primitive customs of the natives. It is not surprising that any Micmac given that choice should try to associate himself with contemporary ways of acting and disclaim knowledge and practice of tradition. Third, as with mythic images, language is a part of culture which the Micmac, to refer to Fredrik Barth's description, insulate from confrontation and modification. It is truly the language of the family group which strangers passing through are not likely to hear. It is the form of communication used in conflict and in courtship across family divisions. It is the language which is absent when Micmac Indians find themselves on the boundaries of their community in interaction with Whites, unless aggressive exclusion of non-Indians is intended, for the great majority of the Micmac are bilingual and can speak the language of the dominant society.

## *Mythic Images of Power*

The physical strength and fearlessness praised in children is idealized in Micmac tales of giant folk heroes who walked the land long before Indians or any other human beings existed. These mythic characters were not only strong in body but possessed great supernatural strength. They had power enough to create islands by simply tossing huge rocks into the ocean and, in addition, they had the power to transform an enemy



into a tree or cast a fatal curse on a malefactor. In real life, the Micmac often take the physical strength of an individual as an indication of special access to spiritual power, although the subject of magical practices, except as an activity which properly belongs to the realm of folklore, is greatly underplayed. It is acceptable to describe the supernatural gifts of mythic giants or even of Micmac Indians who lived a generation or so ago but reference to a living person's ability to deal in supernatural cause and effect is strongly avoided, at least in the presence of non-Indians. Nonetheless, it is admitted that some Micmac have magical power and are to be feared for what they might do in anger and, on the other hand, protected against the anger and suspicions of others. From their earliest years children are watched for signs of special communication with the spirit world and with the dead. The child who claims to have talked with a deceased relative or received a message from a ghost is taken seriously and never dismissed as overimaginative. It is impossible to will or earn favoritism from spirits. Extraordinary magical abilities are innate, and then are developed over time.

Simply being born a Micmac, however guarantees an individual his share of spiritual resources. Ordinary *keskamzit* or the kind of good luck that gets one out of risky situations is claimed by everyone. The ability to "think" evil on another person, not in the specific sense of causing disease or death, but in the general sense of adding to another's store of bad luck, is also at the disposal of every Micmac. Between these ordinary powers and the adventures of folk heroes lies the full range of

preoccupation with the outward appearance of power and the possession of inner strength. Both of these are appropriate concerns for any people who, like the Micmac, have to maximize their defenses against a hostile environment. The tales of the Micmac, whether old or new, deal with this duality of human resources and, conversely, with the basic issue of human vulnerability and weakness.

The stories about the past present a blend of personal and historical information which indicates that the French, English, and Mohawk became incorporated into mythic structures as occasional enemies who gave the Micmac reason to demonstrate their physical and more-than-physical powers. In future generations there will be other categories of enemies—Canadian Mounties, city police, other minorities—who will exist in Micmac adventures as a similar category of *provacateurs*. Wallis, in his first field trip to the Maritimes in 1911–1912, recorded this explanation of how Micmac mythology evolved to its present mixture of historical reference and exploits, which includes a sense of the past as a single category "collapsing" discrete eras into one:

> Among the first generation of old-time Micmac there were no stories. The second generation told a true story about the first generation. The third generation made a story about the second, and added it to the other. The process continued and today a great many stories are known to us all.[5]

[5] Wallis and Wallis, *The Micmac Indians of Eastern Canada*, p. 11. See also Père Adrien "Conservatisme et changement chez les Indiens Micmacs," *Anthropologica*, Vol. 2, 1956, pp. 1–16, for a defense of the persistence of belief in the supernatural among the Micmac in Quebec.



Mythology among the Micmac exists less as a set body of traditions than as a means for presenting images of power in situations which are linked to "real-life" history. If one asks a Micmac Indian today about traditional stories, the reaction is invariably one of vaguely concerned interest in the "old ways" about which it is sadly remarked not too many Micmac really know very much. One will be sent down the road to an elderly person who knows all the old tales everyone else has forgotten. But if the same researcher, having gone through the arduous process of recording a few tales in isolation with an old person, stays close by the Micmac families he has come to know, he soon discovers that there is a more natural context for folklore in the family. In a casual moment, someone will bring up the subject of ghosts and this will lead to a recitation of wondrous tales of supernatural forces. The figures in such stories are either decidedly traditional, such as the giant *Gluscap*, or they are individual Micmac with the special physical power of a *ginap*, or with the witchcraft power of a *buoin*, or more commonly a person with *keskamzit*. The figures may also be ghostly apparitions of once-living Micmac which have, even in death, physical and magical powers of their own. Whether a giant or specially-endowed human, the Micmac in each story demonstrates great strength, sometimes over lesser beings such as ordinary humans and animals, as is the case with *Gluscap*, sometimes in competition with others of nearly equal power.

The Micmac culture hero *Gluscap* exists in the mythological past, in the time of other giants and of the first Micmac Indians. *Gluscap*'s origins are more natural

than supernatural. He claims Bear as his mother and Sable as his younger brother, with fishers and martens as his kinfolk. The paternity of *Gluscap* is sometimes linked to Turtle, but more often left ambiguous. Instead of being a god who created the Micmac, *Gluscap* organized and ordered the natural and moral world within which the Micmac were living. He directed natural species to their correct habitats, whether woodland, lake or ocean. The Micmac he instructed in the construction of tools, weapons, and canoes so that they, like the animals, might fit their environment. He also acted as a judge in conflicts among the early Micmac, encouraging them to share with each other and taking it upon himself to punish the selfish and the proud. Along with his enormous size, *Gluscap* had the power to change men into natural, inanimate forms as a way to immortalize them and is said to have left monumental evidence of this power in the Maritime landscape.

The most interesting thing about this culture hero is his disappearance, which seems to coincide with the English phase of colonization. The dislocation of the Micmac from their natural economic environment is reflected in mythic history by the retreat of *Gluscap*, who has no cultural solutions to offer, although he attempts to the end to use his transformational powers to absorb, i.e., culturalize, the British. The following story, told to me in Nova Scotia during the summer of 1970, illustrates the style of *Gluscap*'s retreat.[6]

[6] This and the stories which follow were recorded during fieldwork in various settings both in the Maritimes and in Boston. For other sources of traditional Micmac myths, see Silas T. Rand, *Legends of the Micmac*, New York, 1894; and pp. 317–493 in Wallis and Wallis, *The Micmac Indians of Eastern Canada*.



At Cape Breton, there is an island made by *Gluscap* from a whale. First he gave the muscles from the whale to all the Micmac so that they would be strong and would not be afraid of the whale. He gave muscles to all the animals as well. Then he put the whale in his canoe, which was made of stone, and he paddled out into the bay and pushed the whale into the water. It is an island there [at Broad Cove] today. One day, a long time ago, a Micmac man asked *Gluscap* for a favor. He wanted to live for many years. *Gluscap* said that would be all right and he turned him into a big tree. Another man asked *Gluscap* to keep him and his family from starving. *Gluscap* gave him plenty of animals to hunt. When the French came, he was very kind to them. When the English came, he had to leave. He told the Micmac that they would get their land some day in the future but until then he could not live with the English. *Gluscap* was so big that he could walk from one end of Nova Scotia to the other in just a few minutes. He could stretch out one leg and touch Prince Edward Island but wouldn't step on it because he might sink it, that is, squash it down. He could stroll over to Quebec and New Brunswick. When the British came he left. There is some red agate in the ground around here that used to be British soldiers. *Gluscap* raised his arms and they turned into red agate, to stone. Then he left to live high on a mountain [Mt. Katahdin]. *Gluscap* picked up some rocks and threw them into the ocean, right off Halifax. That's Five Islands. One of them has a cleft made by his hand. You can see that today.

*Gluscap* has an aggressive counterpart in another mythic giant, *Kitpusiagana*, who sometimes appears in stories as his twin, sometimes as *Gluscap*'s rival. *Kitpusiagana* was influenced by an awesome giant from the west, *Djenu*, the Cannibal, which explains the se-

verity of his vengeance and the ferocity associated with his warrior image. With colonialization *Kitpusiagana*, like the more benevolent *Gluscap*, must retreat, even as the Micmac must become peaceable, and he seeks refuge beneath the ground just as *Gluscap* sought refuge above it.

*Kitpusiagana* knew all along that his mother was killed by the grandfather *Djenu*. When he was just a little baby he knew that. This was in the days when there were enemy Indians here who would kill women in a village. They took *Kitpusiagana* and raised him as the chief's son. He had an older [step-] brother in the family. As he grew bigger and bigger and when he hunted with his brother, he would kill a lot of moose, and bear, and deer and carry them all home, while his brother carried his special big bow-and-arrow. Finally, when *Kitpusiagnana* was grown, he killed the chief and ground his bones into round stones which he placed into the ground. Then, he came upon his grandmother and grandfather sleeping and killed them both with a sharp knife. His brother helped him in all this. Afterwards, *Kitpusiagana* had many adventures. One day he disappeared into the earth and buried himself because there was another giant bigger than him who chased him out to Cape Breton. Now he lives under the ground.

The retreat of the aggressive *Kitpusiagana* is directly connected with military defeat as, for example, when the giant who chased him to Cape Breton is described as a Mohawk. *Gluscap*'s exit is much more dignified and is based on a kind of prior knowledge of the difficulties White settlement would inflict on the Micmac.

*Gluscap* knew that the Micmac were going to have trouble with White people. He himself could not be hurt. The English tried to kidnap him and bring him to England but they could not. *Gluscap* knew that the French would lose their king many years before it happened. He knew that the hunting and fishing he taught the Micmac would not be used much today. He had a big hound of his own that would howl in the woods to tell the Micmac *Gluscap* was coming. When *Gluscap* decided to go away, he turned that hound to stone and he left.He didn't die. He was just very angry with the English.



The culture hero, in a sense, abandoned his people, leaving behind the land and his marks upon it. The people have not, however, abandoned the culture hero. The direct reliance which the Micmac once had on the land has become much more diffuse and difficult for a non-Indian to understand because it cannot be explained in pragmatic, economic terms. Micmac land, a fraction of the land of giants that it once was, has endured along with the people. Their participation in industrial economy has made hunting and fishing only occasional ventures; but the rule of the bureaucracy has not dislocated the Micmac from the fact of the land itself. Whatever legal definition can be given a reservation, an Indian cultural definition can supersede it and surpass it in power. A corporate, managerial understanding of a Micmac settlement is always an abstract projection which functions for the convenience of the corporation. A Micmac knows the reservation as an insider living the reality of that environment; it is his own turf, it is home, and historical forces have, kindly enough, left it thus far in relatively undisturbed condition. *Gluscap*, it must be noted, is not dead, only on retreat. I have been assured by a good many Micmac storytellers that when White people have gone away, *Gluscap* will return once more

and the Indians will again thrive. This prophecy never seemed to me a vainglorious fantasy of Indian resurgency. The Micmac have never really had anything more than an unassuming, even diminutive claim on survival. The return of *Gluscap* is, to my mind, a metaphor for another truly postindustrial age when, corporations having disintegrated, everyone will be required to search out human-scale solutions to existence; we shall all be Indians then.

There is in the tales of *Gluscap* and *Kitpusiagana* and sundry other giants an emphasis on physical size and strength which, tied in with spiritual gifts, reflects contemporary Micmac values. In the mythic past the enormous physical size of the heroes is underscored. When a middleground between mythology's era and the present is approached, the heroes cease to be giants and become mortals of rather ordinary human size. It is their supernatural powers, as forces which can be directed against other human beings, which are underscored. Physical strength continues to be an important corollary of psychic power but heroic dimensions are dispensed with.

The transition between the category of giant and the category of human being is expressed in the Micmac concept of a *ginap*. A *ginap* is a particularly strong person, one who lived in the past, with the power to travel quickly over many miles, to defeat enemies with a wish, a shout, or a mere raising of the arms, and sometimes the power to work magic. The knowledge that someone is a *ginap* is supposed to be suppressed during his or her lifetime; if such information were widely broadcast,



the *ginap* would fall sick and the family would suffer a great loss. *Ginap* stories reveal a concern with physical strength and the innate power of the individual to cross the boundary from merely human to "giant." The Micmac tell a story of the prototypical *Ginap* whose origin goes back to precolonial times. This figure is larger in size than most other Indians but seeks to hide the fact and even refuses the acclaim that falls to him when he performs wondrous acts.

> The first *ginap* was Micmac who lived a long time ago, before the French came. He was very big, bigger than most any other men, but he wore a special shirt that his mother made for him which kept people from seeing his size. He was so strong that he could fight the Mohawk and kill all of them that came to his band. He wasn't the chief or anything like that. He was ordinary-looking. His wife's family didn't know just who he was. They thought he was just ordinary. Then one day he went out into the forest in the winter and brought back a bear in just a few minutes. The next day, he brought back a moose. He asked his wife's people if that was enough. The next day he brought back another bear and told his wife to skin it. Then he rested because he didn't want her people to get suspicious. After that, some Mohawk came. Everyone in the village ran away. *Ginap* stayed and when the Mohawk came in, he just held up his arms in the air and they all fell down. When the people of the old village came back, they saw all the dead Mohawk lying around and they wanted to make him a chief. The old chief [his wife's father] agreed, but *Ginap* said no.

Some *ginap* tales, like giant stories, refer to the historical conflict between the Micmac and the English and imply that he not only had an ability to kill with an angry gesture, but a vision into the future and an under-

standing, like *Gluscap*'s, of the inevitability of White intrusion. As an example,

Over at Miramichi, there was a *ginap* who fought the English. He was sitting and smoking his pipe in his house [wigwam] when some French soldiers put in by boat. They said that they were getting ready to fight the English. The man's mother told him not to go. But he went anyway. He showed the French which way to go. They surprised the English as they were sleeping. The *ginap* made a wish and called out with a special cry. This made the English soldiers fall down. Then he went back to his own house. Later all his people found out that he had killed thirty English soldiers. They thought that would be enough, that the English would stay away. The *ginap* knew that they would be back. He told them that and he was right.

*Ginap* stories require some distance between the storyteller and the person with *ginap* powers. A temporal distance of one or two generations back is common. A distance of place is often interposed between the locus of the storytelling event and the reservation or settlement where the *ginap* lived. It might seem as if this distance of time and place unburdens the speaker and his audience of scientific consideration of the factual reality of magic. It does, from a Western point of view, but the issue of factual proof is not admitted and, being unadmitted, is hardly a burden. The belief in a magical realm where the normal laws of human existence do not hold is a given. A good storyteller, man or woman, postulates a certain remoteness of time and place structurally equivalent to the remoteness of a magical realm and uses recitation to effect a rapprochement between what is experientially distant—time, place, and the supernatural—and the audience.



The belief that a contemporary *ginap* can be killed by a broadcasted reputation reflects the necessity of a culturally correct and structured presentation of verbal information on the delicate and dangerous subject of man's access to the supernatural. It is as if the person who tells a tale of magic reaches up to a shelf for a mythic package, turns and presents its contents for reflection to the group, and then puts it back on the shelf where it can later be found again.

The benevolent strength of the *ginap* image is tempered by a poignant vulnerability. Often a child prodigy, the male ginap is skillful as well as strong and an asset to his family which tries to protect him from being discovered. The following story is typical in its theme of great strength toppled by general knowledge.

My grandmother told me that she almost married a *ginap*. But that she was afraid to after she found out. He lived at Burnt Church. He could pick up three or four men at the same time and spin them around. One day, two Mohawk Indians came to Burnt Church. They met this man but they didn't say they were Mohawk. He knew anyway and he put one under each arm and carried them back to Montreal and then came right back himself. He knew the trouble the Mohawk had given his people. Another time, when he was still just a boy he made his own fishing boat and brought it into the water and was gone for a whole day. No one paid him no mind at first. No one made a fuss over him. Turns out, he married another girl but he fell sick after awhile. Too many people knew about his being a *ginap*. Even when he was getting sick, he'd still be able to chop wood and all. He had a special trick of picking up a wood-burning stove. But he died when he was still right young and my grandmother wasn't sorry she hadn't married him.

The sickness which kills the *ginap* is seldom attributed to a specific cause. It is implicit that the jealousy of other families might bring about the death of the *ginap*, to equalize advantages within the community. It seems fitting, too, that an oppressed Indian group should continue to be concerned about secret strengths and the vulnerability which attaches to exposure of knowledge.

The female *ginap* is usually presented without great emphasis on physical strength; her powers always seem a bit more mysterious, though not unrelated to survival. For example,

> Fleur Martin was a Cape Breton woman who was a *ginap*. She could light a fire without any matches, just by wishing. If she wanted to have a rabbit or even a deer, she would just go into the woods and reach for one. People would come to her house for a visit and she would say, "Wait a minute." She'd go into the woods and get a rabbit and hand it to them as a present.

A woman who is a *ginap* might be benevolent but she is pictured as an isolated figure whose motivations are less than clear and who may be literally subject to flights of fancy as the following description points out:

> A woman, Mary McDonald, from Miramichi, was a *ginap*. She would be standing in the yard one minute and her family would see her disappear the next. She would be gone to Cape Breton and people would see her there, walking along the road. My uncle said he saw her once and he said, "Hello, Mary." He found out later that she had disappeared from Miramichi and traveled in just a few minutes to Pictou Landing where her family was from.

Just as the benevolent *Gluscap* has an aggressive counterpart in *Kitpusiagana*, the benevolence and vulnerability of the *ginap* finds structural opposition in the role of the *buoin*, a person with magical powers who seeks to control others. The traditional *bohinne* was described in the seventeenth century as a medicine man who also acted as a dispenser of justice and keeper of public morals for the community, using his power to punish the greedy, the proud, the unfaithful. Today's *buoin* is a much more ambiguous figure, one which operates almost totally in the area of supernatural practices. Like the stories about the *ginap*, tales relating to the *buoin* are located in a time intermediary between the mythic past and the present and usually at a spatial distance as well. The skill of the male *ginap* in manipulating the physical environment, and the unearthly and undirected gifts of the female *ginap*, contrast sharply with the wizardry of the *buoin*, whose concern with survival goes beyond craft and skill and whose strength often provokes conflict. The medicine a *buoin* deals in comprehends the human spirit and seeks to use it against the body. Jealous of the power of others, a *buoin* might take the natural form of a bear and attack someone of equal supernatural strength. In the following story, a female *buoin* transforms herself into a bear, converting some of her magical strength to physical strength, and directly encounters a male rival.



> There was a man who lived at Cape Breton who fought all night with a bear that came into his wigwam. He knew this wasn't an ordinary bear but the spirit of a *buoin* that was trying to kill him. He fought all night until he killed the bear and then it disappeared. He knew then that his power was greater than that of the other *buoin*. Whenever he had trouble before, he knew it was that woman who was trying to kill him. Finally

he made up a special medicine. He made a little birch-bark canoe and put the medicine in it and pushed it out into the water. It must have gone like a bullet through the water because that very day the other *buoin* was knocked to the floor while she was cooking and soon after she died.

A *buoin* is much more likely to be a woman than a man and to use a means of manipulation much less direct than the one above. The former *bohinne* association with medicine and morals seems to have shifted from men to women so that the latter are frequently represented as aggressive and punitive, people who can kill by wishing to kill, as this tale illustrates:

When I was a little girl [at Lennox Island], there was an old aunt of mine who used to know all about medicines and plants from the woods that would cure just about anything. She knew a lot more than that. There was one family in the village where she lived that was mean to her. One day the mother in that family came down with a terrible fever. The rest of the family ran to this old aunt and begged her to stop. She told them that she had bad feelings she wouldn't do nothing about. They brought her to where the dying woman was and begged her to cure her. But that old woman wouldn't give up and the other woman died after all. It came back on her though because no one would go near her after that, except to get a potion. One day, she said that a man she used to know had fallen into some water and drowned. A little while later, this was found out to be true. Another time, she told a woman that her child would be born with a red mark on each hand. This also happened. Still another time, she asked some men for meat after they had been hunting. They said no and while they were walking home, they saw the ghost of a man who had died the year before. They were so afraid that they dropped their guns and meat and ran away. When they came back, the meat was gone and their guns were all bent and rusted. That was what this *buoin* would do.



The punishments a *buoin* can mete out often seem quite arbitrary. It is one thing to frighten two hunters who have been ungenerous; it is quite another to let angry feelings bring on death. Yet such arbitrary intent is allowed because it is assumed that the *buoin*, like everyone else, is embroiled in interpersonal relationships and is going to feel more kindly towards some, more competitive with others. In myth as in real life, there is really no accounting for interpersonal preferences and no expectation that a figure sitting in judgment on the community's behavior should be rigorously objective.

A *buoin* is commonly involved in affairs of the heart, making love potions and working magic on unfaithful lovers and spouses. She will act quickly and competitively to defend nearest kin from unwanted intrusions on the family. This next story is typical in that respect and, in addition, implies the transmission of *buoin* powers within the extended family.

There was a woman who lived at Big Cove in my mother's time who was a famous *buoin*. Any time anyone needed a cure or a love potion, they would go to that woman. The priest used to be very angry that anyone would go to her instead of praying. But her ways were just Indian ways and she would never bother the priest. One day, her son fell in love with a girl from Pictou Landing. The old woman didn't like the girl and even though she was far away, she made the girl get sick. She took some feathers and wrapped them in a little bundle and dipped them in tar. The girl told everyone that her whole body was weighted down. The son went home and told his mother that he would marry the girl. She said, "All right." Then she took her magic off the girl. The girl's people were afraid for her because she would have a mother-in-law that could not ever be made angry. The son promised that his mother would behave. But they were also afraid that he had magic powers as

well. Anyway, they got married, but everyone said that all the children had very strong power and that if they wished a bad thing to happen to someone, why, it would happen.

The mythic association of *buoin* powers with a woman is somehow appropriate to the real-life concerns of Micmac women and the role they play in the tribal community. Much more than men, women are involved with notions of physical vulnerability, especially with childbearing and with illness (as opposed to accidents). Out of their involvement comes a concern with curative remedies and a willingness to consider other-than-scientific explanations of poor health. The Micmac as a group do believe that anger has the power to cause physical harm. They also believe that competitive individualism within the group and the ongoing conflict which comes out of it is a healthy social condition. Some expression of anger is permitted in face-to-face encounter; the residue may be transformed into another form of energy and cause illness or accident. That some individuals might have good access to the spiritual realm and easily turn their anger to that medium is a good possibility. Women take on much of the social responsibility for speculation on the causes of misfortune, on medical remedies, and on estimates of just who is angry about what and what his or her range of power is.

Compared to the men, the expression of anger by Micmac women is less direct, although relative to many other societies, Micmac women would probably seem quite aggressively demonstrative and unafraid of conflict with their peers. Perhaps verbal identification with the respectable values of the ruling society adds a taint of suspicion to a woman's role. Certainly, a woman who



acts with too much polite restraint needs to be watched as closely as any isolated hag.

The physical and supernatural powers of culture heroes, *ginaps*, and *buoins* are thematically satisfying to the Micmac because so much of their own existence is caught up with the testing of strength, with the endurance of the body and the will of the spirit. The larger society with which their community is associated is corporately and informally hostile to its survival, perhaps even more so as the expendability of unskilled labor seems imminent.[7] Micmac resources for survival lie squarely within the community, in individuals' fortitude and the human-scale organization of the group. It is no wonder then that, to stories about more remote eras, Micmac Indians add their own adventure stories which are, after all, claims to the same kinds of wonderful powers as those held by mythic personages.

To claim the special good luck of *keskamzit* is the prerogative of any Indian who overcomes the obstacles to survival which poverty inflicts. It is the most innocent boast, usually made by unassuming older people, and implies a special rapport with the dead. The following excerpt from my field notes ends with a classic evasion of the claim to more active access to the supernatural.

Noel Ginnish told me today that he's surprised he's lived as long as he has (63 years) because his "luck" was so special that he might have died just from having so much power. When he was young, he told me, he used to see ghosts. Before

[7] Sidney Wilhelm in *Who Needs the Negro* (New York, Schenkman, 1970) argues that the combination of racism and advanced technology makes Blacks as vulnerable to extinction as Indians were in the last century. My point is that American Indians participate in smaller numbers but with an equal liability in the present hostile system.

the local parish priest died, Noel saw his ghost walking down the road to the graveyard, going into it and picking out a place to lie down. Then it disappeared. Three days later the priest was dead and he was buried in that very spot, although no one knew it was going to be that spot because it was written in a letter to be opened when the priest died. Noel also saw his grandmother's ghost and he knew she was dead before the news came from Eskasoni. She was walking by the house in her nightgown and, since he was only a small child at the time and did not really understand his own power, he told her to go and get dressed. Then she disappeared and he had a very strange feeling about what had happened. Noel also was afraid of trains when he was young. His mother wanted to take him traveling on a train but he cried so much, she left him home. That train went off its tracks and people got hurt, but not Noel or his mother either. Once, when he was working in a fertilizer factory in the States, his boss told him he could go outside and smoke a cigarette for a few minutes. Noel had suddenly a terrible shaking feeling take over his body and he told the boss he would keep on working. About a minute later, a truck crashed into the wall just where Noel had the habit of taking his cigarette breaks. If he hadn't stayed in the factory, he surely would have been killed or injured. I asked Noel if he ever used his power against other people. He didn't answer. He just looked away.

Even a younger man than Noel would have evaded a direct admission of supernatural power. But he would have emphasized his own physical strength and courage more than just good luck. For men to take risks and dare to push situations to extremes is as important to Micmac survival as the women's gathering of information at the boundaries of the community. A man's physical prowess, fortitude, and even foolhardiness are appropriately extolled in storytelling sessions, whether on the reservation or off. The telling of each adventure is an education for the young into culturally approved aggression based on a spirited sense of one's individual power. There is an element of boasting involved in recounting adventures yet most of the stories are verified even before they become standard fare. Information about the exploits of men travels quickly among the Micmac so that, while a man is allowed some room for exaggeration, his audience is already acquainted with his story and only awaits being satisfied by the exciting details. Men in their prime of life are culture heroes in the sense that they live so close to the line that issues of power and vulnerability are constantly being tested. The issues and the tests are presented in contexts such as these field notes describe, at a time when a handsome young man from the city came to visit his sister's family on a reservation.



During the rainstorm this afternoon, most of the family, with the exception of Noel who was over at his grandmother's across the street, were sitting in the living room. Anne and Patrick were playing cards on the floor; Martin was out in the kitchen with his mother. I was teaching Carrie to knit while the dog kept jumping up on the couch and licking our hands. Uncle Eddie came in the back door and after talking with Louise (the mother of the household), he came in and sat down in one of the armchairs. He turned on the T.V. and then started to chat with me. As he began telling me about where he was living now in Boston, Louise drew one of the kitchen chairs up to the doorway between the kitchen and the living room to listen to what Eddie had to say. . . . In the course of his description he told this story about how he got the long scar on his scalp:

"Me and Elmer and these two girls were on a date. One of them was kind of big and heavy and dark. I didn't know her too well. This colored guy in the bar had it in for this girl. I don't know why. He said that she was a Lesbian. That made me and Elmer awfully mad. She was a White girl and we didn't know her that well but, even so, that was an insult to us. I went up to this colored guy and told him to fuck off. He was big. I'm almost six feet but he was bigger than me. He had some friends around. I just had to tell him off, no matter what. Then me and Elmer and the two girls was leaving the bar. The two girls was in front. I had the feeling they weren't so happy about the evening and were going to go home or something. Elmer was right in front of me. I was just going through the door when I got this bang on the head from behind. I didn't know what it was. I was so angry I didn't care. I turned around real quick and there was that sonofabitch colored guy with a big smile on his face. I was so angry I went for his throat with my two hands. I knocked him down and started beating his face with my fists. He was so surprised he hardly did anything. I went crazy. Elmer had to drag me off him before anything worse happened. I mean, he probably had friends all around who were going to wake up and jump on me. You know that fellow had hit me over the head with an old iron pipe. It was at least six inches around. All I knew was that I was angry. I leapt right back on that guy. You can ask Elmer. He took me over to Mass. General to get my head put back together. There was forty-two stitches. I told Elmer that if I saw that fellow again, I'd get him for good. As it was, I'm lucky to be here."

The most flamboyant stories men tell often seem related to the kinds of conflicts possible in a barroom setting or to the physical risks involved in driving a car. In the former, fights with non-Indians are most sensationally represented. In the latter, the danger shared by the group and their common Micmac *keskamzit* is given



full play. The competitive conflicts which go on among Micmac men are de-emphasized in storytelling; there is talk about enmity but no thrill in a man's giving it a dramatic presentation. The social distance between an Indian and a Black, for example, functions in the present tense in the same way that time and place can function to structure a distance between a mythic event and its recitation. The narrator works to bring issues of competition and power from the racial boundaries of the network to the rest of the community. There are stories, too, about encounters with the police and about adventures in military service which are fundamentally concerned with risk-taking and which stress a great will to transcend physical vulnerability. The messages in these are similarly related to an understanding of how strangers to the community can be counted on to react towards the Micmac and, out of that understanding, how the community must defend itself.

The most dramatic claims to power a Micmac woman is likely to make have little to do with physical strength. Instead, unusual knowledge and power in the crucial areas of childbirth, disease, death, and ghosts makes up the content of a good contemporary tale. Ghost stories, like claims to good luck, allow the narrator a passive and innocent association with the supernatural. A ghost or *skadegamutc* will give direction for some action or by its appearance signify a coming event. Older men as well as women can easily get an audience for stories of their personal encounters with spirits. When it comes directly to the subject of physical vulnerability, claims to power have to be made with some

subtlety, for the ability to do harm to others is implied in too much knowledge of how the human body is affected by spiritual energy. Nonetheless, the subject is approached. A benevolent competence is the easiest to claim, for example, that by a special combination of traditional herbs and aspirin, one has cured a boy of tuberculosis or stopped the prolonged bleeding of a woman after childbirth. Claim to an aggressive and punitive use of special knowledge is usually reserved for tales of conflict with non-Indians, in much the same way that the most dramatic physical competition occurs between a Micmac and a stranger. The following account from field notes has to do with a stormy relationship between a Micmac woman, Belinda, and a White man:

> While Belinda and I were having coffee in the kitchen, before the children came home from school, she told me about how she "scared" her most recent boyfriend. She had a feeling that he was cheating on her, so she told him that if he went around balling anyone but her, he was going to come down with something terrible "right where it would hurt the most." Sure enough, before the week was up, he broke out with a terrible rash on his prick and balls. He went right away to the doctor who couldn't recognize it as any disease he knew. He gave him some penicillin that did no good at all. Then the boyfriend came to Belinda and begged for forgiveness. Belinda made him swear to be faithful but she wouldn't cure him right away. The rash was really painful but she wanted to make sure he knew who he was dealing with, "not just any bitch off the street." Then she told him a number of things to do to make the rash go away. He had to change the kind of shorts he was wearing (which were of all different colors) and wear only white ones, he had to take a bath every night for three nights in Ivory Snow and he had to put on plaster of wet leaves which Belinda gave him for the infected area. In three days, he was all cured. Frannie Harper came in as Belinda was finishing this tale. I asked her if this really happened. At first she said she didn't know anything about those things and gave Belinda a most reproving glance. Belinda countered that Frannie had powers of her own. Frannie, having fixed her own cup of coffee, admitted that she knew that if she wished evil on people, it often happened. In addition, she and Belinda both can tell when "a girl, any girl, is pregnant, even if it's only a few hours old."



All women have to live with their physical vulnerability, their embodiment, as it were, and the Micmac women directly approach this fact, embellish it with special knowledge, and dramatically present it to others. This is in contrast to the incidents men describe, which represent a searching after their own physical limits, which limits almost always are extraordinary. Perhaps women live with an immediate understanding of those limits and men must seek the contexts which will communicate their physicality back to them. In any case, images of power, interwoven with themes of conflict and cooperation, are perhaps the best visions for a Micmac man or woman to have in beginning the adult life of an urban Indian. Through a whole range of images, from traditional myths to contemporary accounts, the Micmac educate their own in a defensive set of values, one which emphasizes individual physical and spiritual strength within the context of the community. The actual testing of that strength and endurance starts in adolescence, in those first forays away from the family, and takes a lifetime to prove.

# Mikmaq Women

## *Their Special Dialogue*

BY DR. MARIE ANNE BATTISTE

There is a fragility in making broad generalizations about Mikmaq women's roles in society. Over the generations, they have done everything. In grasping their total experience, both in our language, legends and in small talk, it must be noted that there is no concern with gender. Gender being a foreign concept, brought to our land by the wood walls of Europe, is a strained thought to the Mikmaq worldview. Mikmaq concepts do not divide man from woman; the concepts only honour their ordinary efforts as mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, teachers, healers and the like. European thought calls them 'roles.' Mikmaq thought labels them extraordinary honours.

The predetermined natural fact of being created by the Holy Spirit as either a woman or man is of minor importance in the Mikmaq worldview. More important to the Mikmaq is the fate of being born into a tribal community which contributes to a shared mental experience: the sense of having a view of the world and of the good in which others participate. Over the last three generations, the Mikmaq worldview has been denied by political policies and law. These gross injustices fragmented our traditional worldview and its intense moral communion.

In the traditional Mikmaq worldview, Mikmaq "woman" and "man" are the fulfillment of each other. Most of women's undivided obligations are held in common with their male partners. But Mikmaq thought teaches of special obligations which "women" have to the Holy Spirit. Mikmaq "women" are the keepers of the unknown. They have the ability to see the ordinary with amazement and to create the future. Each Mikmaq woman is the primal path that forces man beyond knowing to the unknowable future. In women, man finds what is beyond the daily struggle.

Mother Annie Battiste with granddaughter Anne Wintersong

Mikmaq women are the keepers of change. They are the confirmation of the small and great rhythms of each generation to whom all return for comfort and release. They are the visible manifestation of continuity in change. Both continuity and change occur within a community in dialogue; thus the daily dialogues which occur in every facet of Mikmaq life essentially hold all visions of the future and the beauty of the past. Mikmaq women provide a special dialogue which is at the centre of the worldview. Knowing that all of nature is continually changing, the special dialogue of Mikmaq women conditions change so it may be received within the worldview.

Mikmaq women begin the dialogue with the future. They are the first teachers who transmit knowledge of the past and present to the future. They create an extensive, coherent, concrete tribal bond with the future through an easy silence and caring. The tribal bond arises from the rhythm of the daily event. Togetherness comes quietly in the shared trust inherent in family life. Later, they continue the teaching of the tribal bond: the beauty and force of the Mikmaq language; a code of cultural respect; the joy in fulfillment of family obligations.

While Mikmaq women are fulfilling their special obligations, they have also fulfilled the common obligations with the men. Each struggle over time mandates adaptations to survive to give the future a better chance. When European racism attempted to enslave Mikmaq males, the Mikmaq family became the last resort of pride and respect. When European authorities sought to force "individualism" on tribal society through formal education, the

Mikmaq families moderated the continuity. When Mikmaqs accepted European values and vices as superior to tribal values, the Mikmaq families had to face the terrors of alcoholism and substance abuse, the fact of broken families, and the confusions of values. In each of these struggles, the women resiliently weathered the times and mastered them.

There is a family story that illustrates some of these points. When my mother was a young woman, she played a game with her girlfriends which prophesied her life in an extraordinary way. It was said that a dream could predict one's partner and the life you would have, so she and her friends gave it a try. After a friend's wedding, she and her girlfriends ate salt fish and then before bedtime put the wedding cake they had gotten at the wedding under their pillows. It was said that in the dream when thirst took hold, the man who gave you a drink would become your husband. More importantly, would be the kind of container from which she would drink as it would indicate the kind of life she would lead. If the container was a fine bone china or fine glass, she would lead a life of prosperity. If received in a broken cup, she could expect a life of turmoil and hardships.

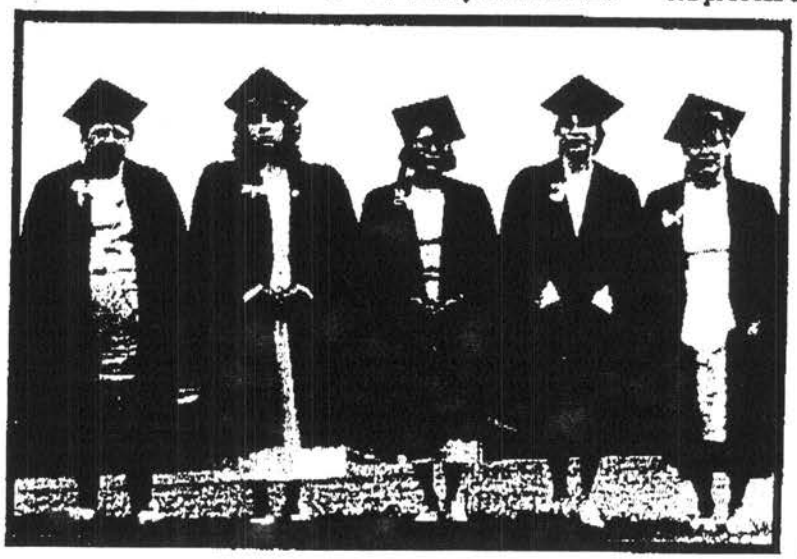
In my mother's dream, a young man (her brother's best friend, a man much younger than she) gave her a drink from a birchbark cup. After the dream my mother laughed with her girlfriends at the prospect of marriage to her brother's friend. Many years later this man would eventually take her hand in marriage and together they would lead a long traditional Mikmaq life together. The birchbark cup was significant, as my mother's life was one not of leisure and prosperity, not fraught with turmoil and hardships, but one typical of the traditional women on the reserve today. It has been a traditional life of hard work with Mikmaq dignity, a trying life with many rewards of children, grandchildren, and a life among Mikmaqs.

Mikmaq women represent a resiliency, so ill-defined by modern thought, but so well known in the hearts of Mikmaqs. Throughout tribal and modern changes, from reserve life to modern life, and back to reserve life, Mikmaq grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and aunts typify a spirit of commitment, dedication, and physical and mental hardiness that allow the people as a whole to withstand economic hardships and social changes. Perhaps it is for this reason that Mikmaq people have weathered the contact with Europeans for so long. Over 350 years of contact have passed to which Mikmaqs have had to adapt and accommodate, yielding to the changing world in their own way to suit their own needs within their own worldview.

Many people in the history of the world have lost their culture under such oppression. Some families have fallen under the bondage of alcohol and drug abuse, but within the extended family network are hands that help, share, and guide so that all children can survive within the family. As their reward, the nation is assured continuity in their language and worldview, and thus stability within unsettled times. The fact that the Mikmaq did not succumb totally, as some disappeared tribes had done is a tribute to the strength of the Mikmaq family and a tribute to Mikmaq women and men who foresaw the necessity of Mikmaq thought.

Today's generation of Mikmaq women socialized to this resiliency and dynamism are prepared for the new expectations in higher education and professional careers. Marked growth of Mikmaqs in higher education shows that Mikmaq adaptations and resiliency take on a new form. The professional sectors of teaching, social work, and administration carry an easy transition of thought for women, illustrating Mikmaq's commitment to the nation's children and families.

In 1984 of the 30 Native graduates at the University of New Brunswick teacher training program, 27 graduates were Mikmaq, and 21 of these were women. It was a fortuitous occasion, marking a change globally among Mikmaqs in their vision of the future through education. Some of us have entered local band-operated schools and administration, but all of us have had an impact on the changing times by uniting higher education and tribal thought into a new worldview. An old process but a new vision. It is a reality that can be shared among all Mikmaqs — men and women, youth and elders. Our history of meeting high expectations and adapting within our traditional milieu is the enabler that survives. Mikmaq thought has empowered a generation of sons and daughters.



It was not the successes of the formal educational institutions of Canada and their European foundations that created the people who stood up for tribal values and still stand up for them.

(top) Marie Battiste with daughter Anne Wintersong
(bottom) 1989 graduates of McGill University Teacher Education Program at Wagmatcook

It was the Mikmaq family who believed in their ancestors and their culture. While Mikmaq women could take the credit for the Nation's cultural integrity, such credit is buttressed by tribal values which foster family coherence over individual effort.

There would be no "Indian movement" in Canada or in the United Nations, if the aboriginal families did not teach the ancient lessons of life and love. In the Mikmaq struggle for human dignity and self determination, there was no one dominant leader. Instead there were many men and women standing up for their received tribal values as was needed. Ideal overpowered personality. This is very different from the European and Canadian tradition of the leader. This is an extraordinary difference. It is another tribute to Mikmaq knowledge and the value of family life. Indirectly, it's a monument for the continued role of the Mikmaq "women" as the keepers of the changing future.

In the restoration of this shared worldview in the hearts of all the Mikmaq people for the future generation, gender will not be as important as it is in Canadian society. In the restless individualist society of Canada, the equalization of gender is a necessary task in creating a better society. In the restoration of Mikmaq thought, an unreflective notion of gender could be merely another means of dividing our tribal society. The task of removing prejudices and obstacles which prevent the coherent sharing of our common beliefs or ideas with modern ideas is the task of every Mikmaq family. This crucial task cannot be accomplished by individualized Mikmaq nor by reliance on European assumptions or knowledge.

Ending the trivial artificial divisions created by European ideas and languages among Mikmaq people is a difficult task. Yet, the problems which European ideas have created between woman and man in the modern age demonstrate the validity of Mikmaq thought and language. Ending our unreflective use of gender classification and sexism acquired from Europeans is as important as ridding ourselves of European stereotypes of Mikmaq society, and of its men and women. It is only through empowering Mikmaq knowledge through its genderless language that the transformation of Mikmaq society can occur. It is only through understanding Mikmaq wisdom that family unity can continue to be an empowering experience.

### MONICA MCKAY

**Journey**

Each time I close my eyes, I journey
within,
... to the strains of the drum.
The harmony, the melody,
my soul dances.
To a song that neither begins or ends.

The heaviness upon my form tries
desperately to move,
instead I stand among silhouettes,
...dark against darkness.
this song has come and gone.

My soul struggles to move but does
not know how.
... As the drum persists, I struggle to
dance without
heaviness.

### EDNA H. KING

**The Revealing**

I

Night.
Starless night.
Grandmother steps aside
as the skies speak.

A pleasant smell fills the air.
It is sweetgrass —
a smudge from the other world.

Smoke falls from a tiny circle
in the night.
as the circle widens to show
blue sky, and in the sky a
speck.

The blue sky widens, the speck
grows and begins to take shape

II

So high were you, but closer
you came,
gliding at first, in silence.

Then I saw your eyes — so round
and brave. You blinked and screeched
flapped your wings, talons spread
ready to fly inside my head.

Hawk.

### LINDA MCWATCH

**Tl ook Here**

They look here
they look there
their search is long
frustrating and hopeless

Where shall they look
to seek out
keep searching what they are looking for

Where shall they start
to find that peace
peace which is made of
body, mind and soul

Spirit who knows the way
smothered by lust
smothered by greed
smothered by corruption
envious of things not worth much

Spirit of soul searches long
Spirit travels many roads
spirit still searches

Where shall it look
where shall it start
seek and still seek

Start at the heart

### CAROLE ROSE

**The Candle**

At dusk, as night would search the
tiny home time,
A candle would be lit,
Hour by hour it would burn,
Flickering and Weaving a spell of lights.
The shadows would be cast on the walls
for hours I did watch.
And the stem would burn till end,
barely a brush of wind.
How mellow the lonely hours fell,
till no more of the flickering wax.
Slowly my eyelids would fall as I
drifted to a readying sleep. The
flame goes out and I asleep, till
morning does arise.



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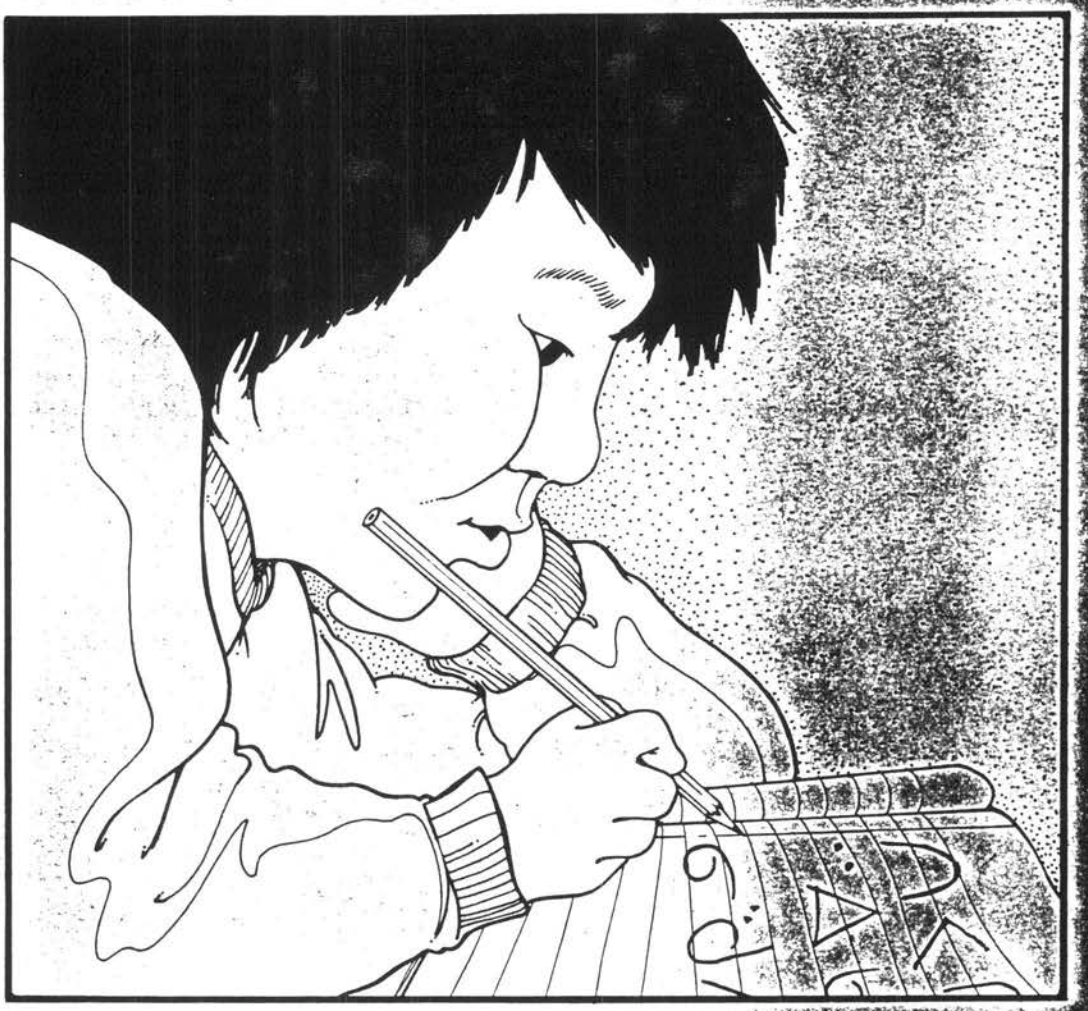
# Promoting Native Writing Systems in Canada



Barbara Burnaby
Editor

OISE Press/Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

# Promoting Native Writing Systems in Canada

Barbara Burnaby
Editor



OISE Press/The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

# Table of Contents

**Section V. British Columbia: Salishan and Wakashan**

# Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation[8]

**Marie Battiste**

## Introduction

Literacy can be an integral process of cognitive assimilation and/or cultural imperialism. When the processes of becoming literate, according to the norms of their own culture, are applied to young people, literacy is considered cultural transmission. But when a certain literacy, external to their own culture, is forced upon youths, literacy becomes cultural assimilation and cultural imperialism. These two differing functions of literacy -- as a shield in cultural transmission and as a sword of cultural assimilation -- have been hidden from modern industrialized societies and pre-industrial societies alike by the interactions of literacy's myths and modern conceptions of literacy.

Myths about the unqualified value of literacy have disguised the true functions and value of literacy in society.[9] Viewed by many as the benign liberator of the mind, literacy has come to be seen as a modernizing agent of society, an economic commodity necessary for national development.[10] Guided by these mistaken assumptions, tribal states and underdeveloped nations have instituted policies which have imposed modern industrial values on tribal, pre-industrial societies without regard for their language and culture, in the hopes of being able to overcome their own social, economic, and political impotence, and even the racism of dominant world societies.

Modern optimistic conceptions of literacy have further disguised the real processes of literacy because such processes are fragmented and limited: fragmented by western scholars' ineffectual proposals of normative standards which can be universally applied; limited by modern industrial society's and western school practices' bias toward instrumental objectives. Literacy is, however, not an all or none proposition[11], nor can its elements be universally applied.[12] Rather, literacy is a relative social concept more reflective of culture and context than of the levels of formal instruction by which it is usually measured.

Despite the search for universal normative standards, little is known about the role and functions of literacy within various cultural contexts and about how these contexts affect attitudes and values toward literacy. Still less is known of children's pre-school literacy experiences in their homes and communities. Recent studies of literacy have shown, however, that literacy has not been used in the same way in all cultures, nor have its results been the same.[13] Yet modern studies have not inquired how literacy functions outside of western institutions and, more importantly, what factors govern literacy acceptance, rejection, and diffusion. The consistent failure of schools to promote universal literacy within their jurisdiction in the last two decades suggests that much more is involved

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[8]This paper is a revised version of one presented at the First Mokakit Indian Education Research Conference, London, Ontario, July, 1984

[9]Harvey Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

[10]John Oxenham, *Literacy: Writing, Reading and Social Organization* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

[11]Sam Dauzat and Joann Dauzat, "Literacy: In quest of a definition." *Convergence* 10:1 (1977).

[12]Shirley Brice Heath, "The functions and uses of literacy." *Journal of Communications* 30 (Winter 1980) pp. 123-133.

[13]Michael Cole and Sylvia Scribner, "Literacy without schooling: Testing for intellectual effects," *Harvard Educational Review* 40:4 (1978) pp. 448-461, and

J.R. Clammer, *Literacy and Social Change* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976).

than the formal processes taught in schools.[14]

Recent historical comparative studies of literacy[15] and ethnographic studies in different communities[16] reveal that the acquisition and diffusion of literacy are related to a society's perception of literacy's value and function. Thus, any attempt to define literacy must include a specification of context[17] and an examination of that society's experiences with literacy.

The hidden bias of the myths and concepts of literacy became apparent to this writer in 1975 when my people, the Micmac communities of eastern Canada, had to choose an orthography for use in reserve schools. A new writing system, purported to be practical and efficient and to reflect clearly the phonemic system of the Micmac language, was introduced but met with initial resistance from the community. Reasons for this resistance lay in the socio-cultural factors associated with earlier scripts. This paper seeks to describe the historical continuity and development of literacy among the Micmac Indians and to disclose how literacy can be used as a tool for cognitive assimilation to another powerful culture rather than as a benign liberator of the mind.

My people, the Micmac Indians, are an Algonquian-speaking tribe of northeastern North America who, for over three hundred years, have had several different kinds of literacy which have served the social, cultural, and spiritual needs of the tribal society. The traditional processes of Algonquian literacy remain deep in the structure of the Micmac mind and provide the context specification for all other kinds of literacies. Pictographs, petroglyphs, notched sticks, and wampum were the primary Native texts of Algonquian ideographic literacy for the Micmac. Europeans adapted aboriginal symbols and designs found in earlier Native texts and developed hieroglyphic characters which were used for teaching Christian prayers. These modified Algonquian hieroglyphics have maintained the essence of Micmac literacy despite the competition provided by four roman scripts developed to serve different purposes of European missionaries, Canadian governments, and Native groups over the last 250 years.

## Aboriginal Literacy

Through the use of pictographs, petroglyphs, notched sticks, and wampum, early North American Indians achieved a form of written communication and recording of information which served the social, political, cultural, and spiritual needs of the pre-contact period. Only remnants of this period of literacy remain for most examples have perished or were not recorded accurately by European travelers and missionaries in their written observations of the New World. In 1497 John

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[14]Paul Copperman, *The Literacy Hoax* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978).

[15]Bernard Spolsky, Guillermina Englebrecht, and Leroy Ortiz, *The Sociolinguistics of Literacy: An Historical and Comparative Study of Five Cases*, Final Report on Grant #NIE-G-79-0179. (Washington: National Institute of Education, 1982).

Willard Walker, "Notes on native writing systems and the design of native literacy programs," *Anthropological Linguistics* 2:5 (1969) pp. 148-166.

_____, "Native American writing systems" in *Language in the USA* (Charles Ferguson and Shirley Brice Heath, eds.) (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1981).

[16]Shirley Brice Heath, "Protean shapes in literacy events: An ever-shifting oral and literate tradition," in *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy* (Deborah Tannen, ed.) (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex, 1982) pp. 91-118.

Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole, *The Psychology of Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1981).

[17]Harvey Graff, "Literacy and social structure in the nineteenth century" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1975).

Cabot's exploration uncovered "fallen trees bearing marks"[18] which caught his attention. In 1652 Gabriel Druilletes reported the Algonquian Indians using coal for pen, bark for paper, and writing with new and peculiar characters. He wrote:

> They use certain marks, according to their ideas as a local memory to recollect the points, articles, and maxims which they heard.[19]

In 1653 Father Bressani reported Indians of New France using

> little sticks instead of books, which they sometimes mark with certain signs... By the aid of these they can repeat the names of a hundred or more presents, the decisions adopted in councils and a thousand other particulars.[20]

Aboriginal literacy embodied tribal epistemology in Native texts which interacted with and depended upon the oral tradition. Ancient oral Indian tradition is and was dependent upon the oral skills of its tribal men and women of knowledge, skills highly prized in tribal society. Using ideographic symbolization of concepts and ideas, Algonquian Indians supplemented the oral traditions with ideological catalogues which helped to preserve and store valued knowledge, information, and records on natural materials available to them, such as birchbark, rocks, and shells.

The various Native texts in tribal North America represented the world view of tribal people, in particular, their ideas, beliefs, and thoughts about knowledge, power, and medicine. These Native texts represented another way of knowing, the existence of which has since been threatened by western thought with the rise of "modern man". The fundamentals of tribal epistemology lay in two traditional knowledge sources:

1. the immediate world of personal and tribal experiences; that is, one's perceptions, thoughts, and memory which included one's shared experiences with others;
2. the spiritual world, evidenced through dreams, visions, and signs which were often interpreted with the aid of medicine men or elders.

Native texts thus catalogued essential knowledge of the two worlds in holistic, meaningful ideographs which were transmitted to succeeding generations through oral traditions and appropriate rituals. Religious traditions and rituals, in effect, provided access to a storehouse of knowledge, and provided harmony for all life, including that of plants and animals.

Native texts appear to have served both a public and a private function. Wampum was the public record, maintained by a wampum keeper or tribal historian. Political records of treaties and presents, represented through conventional symbols, were woven with shells into strings or belts. The arrangement of shells by color could indicate an attitude, such as peace and friendship or war and death. Regularly the wampum was brought forward at ceremonial gatherings to announce new events and recall past events of interest to all.

Pictographs, petroglyphs, and notched sticks served more diversified uses, although these appear to have been principally personal, aimed at practical and spiritual functions. For practical functions, Algonquian Indians used petroglyphs, pictographs, and notched sticks to communicate information and messages to friends and relatives of one's whereabouts or of routes and directions taken or to be taken, to relate stories of the hunt, of battle or of individuals or heroes of ancient times, to enlist warriors into battle, or to record historical events.

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[18] Maine Historical Society, "Collections and proceedings," Second Series VIII (Portland, Maine: Maine Historical Society, 1897) p. 347.

[19] William Ganong (trans. and ed.), *New Relations of Gaspasia* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1910) p. 22.

[20] Ibid, p. 23

Algonquian Indians were known to have used pictographs and petroglyphs for communicating with the spirit world or for conveying individual visions and experiences with the spirit world. In effect, the Native texts represented a Native theory of knowledge, predicated on the existence of spirits, power, or medicine. Plants, animals, humans, and spirits of the universe communicated in the spirit world as one. Thus many Micmac petroglyphs illustrate the journeys of Micmacs to the world beyond.

### European Adaptations of Aboriginal Literacy

In 1610 Chief Membertou and 140 Micmacs confirmed their spiritual and political alliance with France in a ceremony which included their baptism and a gift of wampum. From that time to the French and English uprising in 1744, French Catholic missionaries lived and worked among Micmacs of eastern Canada, converting them to Catholicism, a faith which blended well with their own tribal spiritual rituals. The missionaries' continued presence among the Micmacs also assured the King of France of the Micmacs' continued political and trade alliances. Missionaries learned the language of the Native people, preaching to them about the road to salvation and teaching them ritualistic prayers which were to pave that road. According to tradition, the first missionary to use ideographic symbolization for literacy purposes was Father Christian Le Clerq who, in 1677, discovered a new method of teaching Micmacs how to pray. He wrote in his journal:

> Our Lord inspired me with the idea of [characters] the second year of my mission, when being much embarrassed as to the method by which I should teach the Micmac Indians to pray to God, I noticed some children were making marks with charcoal upon birchbark, and were counting these with the fingers very accurately at each word of prayers which they pronounced. This made me believe that by giving them some formulary, which would aid their memory by definite characters, I should advance much more quickly than by teaching them through the method of making them repeat a number of times that which I said to them.[21]

Le Clerq reported being very surprised with Micmacs' facility with the system. He wrote that Micmacs have:

> much readiness in understanding this kind of writing that they learn in a single day what they would never have been able to grasp in an entire week without the aid of these leaflets.[22]

The system involved a design for each word or word phrase recorded with charcoal on birchbark leaflets which each family preserved in birchbark boxes bedecked with wampum and porcupine quills.[23] Micmac families rapidly diffused this system throughout the nation within traditional social and cultural contexts. Father taught son, mother taught daughter, and children taught each other.

Although Le Clerq reported success in using the characters for the remaining ten years of his

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[21] Ganong, op. cit., p. 131.

[22] Ganong, op. cit., p. 126.

[23] Frank Speck, "The double curve motive in northeastern Algonkian art", Memoir 42 (Ottawa: Government Printing Office, 1914),

_____, *Beothuck and Micmac*, Indian Notes and Monographs, Miscellaneous series 22 (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1922).

_____, *The Nanticoke and Conoy Indians. With a Review of Linguistic Material from Manuscript and Living Sources: An Historical Study*. Historical Society of Deleware Papers, 58:1 (Wilmington, Deleware, 1927).

mission, little remains recorded of them. Ganong concluded, however, in his search for the origin of the characters, that Le Clerq used all the aboriginal designs he found, most having the typical double scroll patterns characteristic of the Wabanaki tribes of the northeast, and developed new character designs for the new words of prayers.[24]

## Literacy Transformations from Hieroglyphic to Roman Scripts

In 1735 Father Pierre Antoine Maillard began a twenty-seven year mission among the Micmacs of Cape Breton Island, during which he expanded hieoglyphic literacy and contributed to the transition from the use of ideographic literacy to roman script among the Micmacs. In the second year of his mission, he reported having discovered an innovative method of using hieroglyphics to teach Micmacs how to pray.[25] Subsequent scholars investigating the origin of Maillard's hieroglyphics have concluded that he was the beneficiary of Le Clerq's work, although the new prayers, chants, and instructions which he composed must have required almost all new characters.[26]

Unlike Le Clerq, who frequently characterized Micmacs as savages and barbarians incapable of advancing to letter literacy, Maillard, who lived and traveled among Micmacs, perceived them as curious and intelligent people, capable of learning anything they wanted to learn. He was frequently challenged by their inquiring minds. He astutely realized that, if they learned the manner of writing of the French, Micmacs would have access to sensitive political and religious literature. Maillard, a political activist in the French and English war, feared that if Micmacs knew how to read and write roman letters, they would be better able to incite each other through their correspondence, to the detriment of French Catholic interests. Thus, despite the fact that he had developed a roman script for the Micmac language, which he used for his own language improvement, he chose to teach Micmacs only the hieroglyphics. He restricted literacy among Micmacs by preparing only hieroglyphic prayers, chants, and instructions and then appointing catechists among the tribal hierarchy and elders whose duty it was:

> to see to the religious instruction of children, preside at public prayers on Sundays, administer baptism, receive matrimonial promises, and officiate at funerals.[27]

At the close of the French and English war in 1749, the English banned French missionaries from Nova Scotia. For over a hundred years Micmacs were without resident Catholic priests. However, they sustained their Catholic spiritual rituals and traditions through the catechists and hieroglyphic literature developed by Maillard. Their continued insistence on having a Catholic priest, and the English fear of reprisal against English settlements, eventually convinced the English to allow them to have a Catholic priest, thus restoring Catholicism to the eastern part of the province.

Micmac ingenuity prevailed, and soon Micmacs acquainted themselves with yet another mode of communicating with one another, roman scripts. Despite Maillard's and earlier missionaries' attempts to restrict Micmacs to hieroglyphic literacy, Micmacs had many opportunities to witness new functions and uses of the roman system. As early as 1675, Le Clerq reported using the Natives as

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[24] Ganong, op. cit.

[25] Antoine Pierre Maillard, "Lettre de M. l'Abbé Maillard sur les Missions de l'Acadie et Particulièrement sur les Missions Micmaques", *Soirées Canadiennes* 3 (1863) p. 355.

[26] Ganong, op. cit.

John Hewson, "Micmac hieroglyphics in Newfoundland", in *Language in Newfoundland and Labrador*, Preliminary Version (St. John's, Newfoundland: Memorial University, 1977).

[27] A.A. Johnston, *A History of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nova Scotia* II (Antigonish, Nova Scotia: Francis Xavier University Press, 1960).

couriers of letters to other priests.[28] Similarly, Maillard reported using Micmacs to deliver his letters to military officials. In another context, Maillard prepared transcriptions for the tribal government in his role as interpreter for the English. Aiding the European powers in the pacification of the Micmacs after 1749, he transcribed the Treaty of 1752 into his Micmac roman script and sought Micmac approval of the peace plan. As a trusted friend of the Micmac *Santeoi Maiaumi*, the Grand Council, Maillard presided at the peacemaking ceremony and read the treaty to the assembled Indians. Through these exchanges, Micmacs discovered the political significance of expanding their literacy repertoire. Furthermore, they were reportedly very impressed with the new mode of writing that enabled one to record exactly the words and thoughts of the writer.[29] Yet Maillard refused to teach them roman script writing and also forbade them to go to local English public schools.[30]

The English government in its turn sought literacy and education for Micmacs as the sword of assimilation. In 1842 the Nova Scotian government passed an act which provided free tuition for Micmacs attending English schools. However, Micmacs were not interested in learning English literacy skills. Government reports beginning in 1843 indicate Micmacs' growing interest in learning to read English, although they were adamant that they wanted education specifically to transmit their own culture through literacy in Micmac. Their migratory habits prevented them from spending much time in school;[31] literacy was taught at home by parents.

### Reverend Silas Tertius Rand

By the time Reverend Silas Tertius Rand arrived in 1845, Micmacs had learned the fundamentals of how to read and write Micmac in the French roman script. In 1850 Rand reported that Micmacs were in the habit of writing to one another in a script resembling English but sounding like French. Their only literature that survived was written in hieroglyphic characters.[32] Rand, master of a dozen languages, believed in the power of reason achieved through literacy and Bible rading. He frequently criticized the French priests who, in seeking to prevent Micmacs from learning how to read and write roman letters, forbade them from going to school.[33] He wrote:

> Had their language been reduced to writing in the ordinary way, the Indians would have learned the use of writing and reading, and would have advanced in knowledge so as to be able to cope with their more enlightened invaders; and it would have been more difficult matter for the latter to cheat them out of their lands and other rightful possessions.[34]

Rand's goals were to teach all Micmacs how to read and write in a new script of his devising and to develop literature for them to read. Finding no Micmacs willing to work with a Protestant minister, he relied upon a Frenchman, Joe Ruisseaux, who had lived among Micmacs most of his life and thus was fluent in Micmac as well as English and French. Rand's new Micmac roman script was

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[28] Ganong, op. cit.

[29] Maillard, op. cit.

[30] Henry Koren, *Knaves and Knights: A History of the Spiritan Missionaries in Acadia and North America 1732 - 1839* (Pittsburg, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 1962).

[31] Canada, Administration of Indian Affairs, *Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports (1843 - 1873)* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1843-1873).

[32] Rev. Silas Tertius Rand, *Micmac Tribes of Indians* (Halifax, N.S.: James Bowes and Son, 1850) p. 42.

[33] Koren, op. cit.

[34] Rand, *Legends of the Micmacs* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894) p. 226.

based on English script and phonemes but used several diacritics to represent unique Micmac sounds.

Hoping to show Micmacs the contradictions in Catholic dogma, he translated several sections from the Bible into Micmac, and developed a Micmac dictionary and a Micmac reading book. However, despite the courtesy Micmacs extended to Rand, neither Rand nor the Canadian government were able to dissuade them from their traditional habits and Catholic beliefs. Repeated government attempts to introduce Protestantism, Bible reading, and formal schooling into Micmac tribal society failed. But, despite their refusal to accept the Protestant literature, Micmacs' literacy skills continued to grow through Rand's influence. Rand reported being pleased with the scores of Micmacs who had learned to read.[35]

### Father Pacifique Buisson

The appearance in 1894 of Father Pacifique Buisson, better known as Father Pacifique, revived among Micmacs the religious rituals and traditions earlier established by Father Maillard. These religious rituals fostered the continued development of literacy using the hieroglyphic literature of Father Maillard and promoted the growth of letter literacy using Pacifique's new Catholic literature.

Pacifique studied the various available Micmac publications and manuscripts, such as those of Maillard and Rand, before preparing this own script. Finding Maillard's script deficient in some respects, he modified it, adding capitals and punctuation and simplifying the script to 13 letters. Then he prepared a reading literature for it. Some modern commentators have maintained that Pacifique was responsible for spreading roman alphabet literacy among Micmacs;[36] however, Pacifique acknowledged that roman literacy was commonplace among Micmacs prior to his mission. He wrote:

> They almost all know how to read and write in their own fashion. They teach each other from father to son long before they had schools.[37]

As mission priest for the annual Chapel Island mission, a tradition Maillard adapted to Catholic rituals, Father Pacifique noted the reverence and commitment of Micmacs to Maillard's literature and to his reinforcement of the already existing literacy traditions. In 1913, he published a catechism in his own modified roman script. In 1920 he had reprinted the hieroglyphic prayers that had been printed in Vienna through the efforts of Father Kauder in 1866. The successes of Christian literature among Micmacs suggested the need for missionaries to learn Micmac language and grammar. Thus, in 1939 Father Pacifique had a Micmac grammar book published. Micmac literacy continued to be diffused directly through families as it had been in the past, although, in some communities, religious orders introduced Micmac literacy in the band schools, teaching pupils the fundamentals of Catholic doctrines.[38]

Micmac literacy was thus at its height in 1920 when Canadian governmental policy instituted compulsory schooling for all Indian children from the ages of 6 to 16 and English as the medium of instruction in all Indian day schools. Both the Nova Scotia government and the federal government had found that their efforts from 1800 to 1920 to attract Micmacs to white man's habits and domesticated farming had been repeatedly rejected for traditional migration and hunting pursuits.

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[35] Rand, *A Short Statement of the Lord's Work among the Micmac Indians* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: W. MacNab, 1873).

[36] Vivane Gray. "A visit with Mildred Milliea of Big Cove, New Brunswick: Her research and developments in teaching the Micmac languages." *Tawow* 5:2 (1976) pp. 47-49.

[37] Rev. R.P. Buisson, *Quelque Traits Characteristiques de la Tribu des Micmacs* (Quebéc: Congres International des Américanistes, 1907) p. 39.

[38] Phillip Bock, *The Micmac Indians of Restigouche*, Bulletin No. 213, Anthropological Series 77 (Ottawa: The National Museum of Man, 1966).

Through the Indian Act of 1920, the Parliament of Canada expanded its control over Indian lands and people by legislating regulatory provisions for administering Indian affairs. The responsibility for administration of all schools for Indians was assumed by the federal government although the schools continued to be staffed by religious orders. In 1930, the opening of a boarding school and the increased age for compulsory schooling to 18 years brought about the gradual decline in Micmac literacy. The disruption of family socialization patterns, along with the loss of traditional land bases with the government's centralization policy, signalled the near demise of Micmac literacy until the '70s.

### Contemporary Reconstruction of Micmac Literacy

In 1969 the federal government proposed a plan for Indian assimilation and the termination of legal Indian identity and of federal responsibility for the administration of Indian affairs. The proposal, which came to be known as the White Paper, was overwhelmingly rejected by Indian people throughout Canada. An alternate proposal, created by Indian leaders, insisted upon the government's making a more positive and central role for language and culture development in federal Indian programs. The federal government responded by withholding the White Paper and entering into consultations with Indian bands and other tribal leaders. Native cultural centres were funded to support the development of culturally responsive educational materials. Eleven Micmac cultural centres were thus funded, each having its own priorities, needs, and resources, but all interested in preserving some aspects of the Micmac language and culture.

Research on the Micmac language occupied many of the cultural centres' initial efforts to find, collect, and adapt available materials. The existence of several writing systems, each considered linguistically deficient, led to debates in Micmac settlements and among language specialists as to the best writing script in which to prepare culturally responsive educational materials. The major issue was whether it was better to promote literacy in what was considered by some to be the traditional orthography of Father Pacifique, despite its limitations, or to develop a fundamentally new writing script founded on current knowledge of linguistic principles.

In 1974 the Micmac Association of Cultural Studies, serving the Nova Scotia Micmac communities, developed its own script with the help of Native and non-Native linguists. The system initially met resistance. Many elders feared the loss of the literacy traditions established by Pacifique, and thus the loss of important cultural and spiritual traditions. When the Association finally brought the script to the Grand Council, explaining the merits of their system and seeking their acceptance, some Micmac communities adopted the script for their centres.

In some Micmac communities, where loyalty to the Pacifique script was strong, modifications to the script were required. Mildred Millea, an energetic mother of eleven children and fluent Native speaker, began her linguistic and educational work without materials other than a language master machine and the prayer book from which her mother had taught her to read. Without formal linguistic training, she launched a new, modified Pacifique script and prepared Micmac language materials for the classroom. With as many conflicting views as there were linguists working on Micmac writing, Millea resolved to continue modifications of the Pacifique orthography until the issues were resolved. Millea's work and her popularity as a teacher became well known among Micmac communities in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. She was frequently recruited to conduct workshops and courses to teach others her new modified script.

In other Micmac communities in Newfoundland and Quebec, more modifications of existing scripts prevailed. However, with most of the communities' efforts put into teaching new script usages, little progress was made in materials development. By the beginning of the '80s, four different roman scripts existed, each having its proponents and some introductory literature devised for it. But each program had its script preference and operated independently; duplication of efforts and lack of resource sharing resulted. Generally, the programs produced neither sequential literacy materials nor consensus over which script to use for educational purposes.

## Conclusion

Although the forms of Micmac literacy have differed, the functions of writing have remained strikingly similar over time. Literacy has served the spiritual, cultural, and social needs of Micmacs, being maintained by tribal families for spiritual, secular public, and personal needs. Informal, supportive, but rigorous instructional contexts have characterized the modes of transmission of Micmac literacy. However, since colonial contact with Europeans, Micmac literacy has been manipulated for governmental and missionary interests, often to the detriment of Micmac language and culture.

Coercive methods of cultural assimilation through education and literacy must now be replaced with Micmac-directed education for cultural transmission and development of adaptive strategies founded upon a choice of systems and knowledge. Culturally sensitive education must be the foundation upon which different knowledge bases and cultural processes are met with respect and chosen. Early Algonquian literacy processes have demonstrated that any system can work as long as the people value it and have use for it. Pre-contact forms of literacy served a function for Algonquian society: universal symbols represented concepts and ideas, not sounds of language, and their legitimacy for contemporary tribal society has not been replaced. Euro-Canadian missionaries and government education have attempted to assimilate Micmacs to the functions of European literacy rather than to foster the transmision and adaption of true Micmac culture. Contemporary assessment of Micmac education suggests the need for the continued development of traditional and contemporary functions of literacy and knowledge through adaptation of traditional, historical forms.

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*In a few minutes, the harvesters' vehicles were stopped and searched. A government helicopter circled the area, reporters and film media mingled between officers and harvesters. The line of vehicles with harvesters stretched as far back as the eye could see down the mountain road. The day would be a long one. One by one the cars were searched and weapons seized. The officers even seized the harvesters' identification and sanction cards issued by the Grand Council.*

*Six of our harvesters were charged under a provincial law. Despite the tension, the armed confrontation provoked no retaliation, and was peaceful.*

*This day marked the beginning of another long struggle for the Mi'kmaq to exercise a right. But the story does not begin with that day; the story goes back far into our history — a time when a chain of covenants was made.*

B Richardson ed., Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country (1989, Summerhill Press)

# The Covenant Chain

*Grand Chief Donald Marshall, Sr.,*
*Grand Captain Alexander Denny,*
*Putus Simon Marshall,*
*of the Executive of the Grand Council of the*
*Mi'kmaw Nation*

> Protection and allegiance are fastened together by links, if a link is broken the chain will be loose. You must preserve this chain entire on your part by fidelity and obedience to the great King George the Third, and then you will have the security of this royal arm to defend you.
>
> I meet you now as His Majesty's graciously honoured servant in government and in his royal name to receive at this pillar, your public vows of obedience to build a covenant of peace with you, as upon the immovable rock of sincerity and truth, to free you from the chains of bondage, and to place you in the wide and fruitful field of English liberty.
>
> The laws will be like a great hedge about your rights and properties. If any break this hedge to hurt or injure you, the heavy weight of the laws will fall upon them and punish their disobedience.
>
> — Nova Scotia Governor Jonathan Belcher addressing the Mi'kmaq at Halifax, 1761, at ceremonies renewing the Treaty of 1752.

Freedom and liberty...confrontation...subjugation...resistance — all of these words describe the current situation in Nova Scotia

as it relates to relations between the Mi'kmaq people and our settler neighbours. Despite protections afforded by international and domestic law, a people are forcibly dispossessed of their land and resources, their governmental institutions are intentionally destabilized, their children condemned to a bleak future based on poverty and dependency—all so that others can reap a profit. Some backwater Third World dictatorship? No, Canada (Nova Scotia). Such has been the history of the Mi'kmaq people.

A youth is convicted of murder and sent to prison. After serving eleven years of his term, it is found that he has been wrongly convicted. Could this have anything to do with the fact that he was a Mi'kmaq?

It took this event to spark the public outcry that led to the establishment of a royal commission to study the Nova Scotia justice system. Although at time of writing, the Royal Commission's final conclusions have not been made public, much of the testimony given during the course of the proceedings pointed to consistent and racist discrimination against Mi'kmaq citizens on the part of the state's police forces, provincial politicians, and the judiciary.

Solemn and binding treaties are signed between nations. These treaties are recognized and affirmed in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Constitution Act, 1982, and upheld in a landmark 1985 Supreme Court of Canada judgment. But when the citizens of one of those nations attempt to exercise their rights according to the terms of the treaties, they are arrested and harassed. Could this have anything to do with the fact that they are Mi'kmaqs?

The treatment of the Mi'kmaq has only recently been the subject of media and public scrutiny, but that is not to say that previously all was well. It just goes to show how little Canadians



know about what actually goes on in their own country. It also explains why Canadians have traditionally let their politicians and governments get away with so much. In this chapter, we intend to introduce you to our history and to our current struggles, as a way of shedding some light on this dark corner of the public's consciousness. To understand how things got to be this way, we will have to take you back a few hundred years, to the times when there were no great numbers of non-Mi'kmaq in our traditional territories. It is only by taking the journey back that one can really get a balanced understanding of what is happening now and where things are going.

**Self-Reliance and Self-Determination**

The Mi'kmaq are used to dealing with other peoples. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, we carried on relations with other indigenous peoples throughout North America, among other things for the purposes of trade, alliance, and friendship. All such dealings were based on mutual respect and co-operation, and formalized through the treaty-making process. The Mi'kmaq called this international law, the law of Nikamanen. Treaties are spiritual as well as political compacts that confer solemn and binding obligations on the signatories. The spiritual basis of the treaties is crucial to an understanding of their meaning, since it represents an effort to elevate the treaties, and relations among peoples, beyond the vagaries of political opportunism and expediency. They are intended to develop through time to keep pace with events, while still preserving the original intentions and rights of the parties.

About six hundred years ago, the Mi'kmaq people were invaded from the west by the Haudenosaunee (the Iroquois). After a number of fierce battles, the invaders were beaten back, and a treaty of peace was concluded. With peace restored, the nation reorganized itself: all of Mikmakik, our traditional lands, was divided into seven sakamowti (districts), and each of these in turn was subdivided among many wikamow (clans). Each clan

was led by a sakamow (chief); a sa'ya (spiritual leader); and a keptin (war chief). [see map]

Together, the sakamow and keptin from each district formed one national council, the Sante' Mawi'omi (grand council or "holy gathering"), whose purpose was to advise the people and defend the country. This national confederation was first created in the tenth century. It was called Awitkativitik ("many families in one house"). The ancient symbol of this union, which can still be seen carved into the rocks around Kejimikujik Lake, is a ring of seven hills (the seven districts) and seven crosses (the seven chiefs), surrounding the sun and the moon (who together represent Niskam, the Creator).

The Mikmaw Nation is an alliance of many aboriginal peoples who inhabited Mikmakik. The meaning of *"Mi'kmaq"* is "the allied people"; "Mikmaw" is singular. "Mikmakik" means "the land of friendship," and covers present-day Newfoundland, St. Pierre et Miquelon, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the Magdalen archipelago, and the Gaspé peninsula of Quebec.

The leadership of the Grand Council is made up of three positions: the Kjisakamow (grand chief) is the ceremonial head of state; the Kjikeptin (grand captain) is the executive of the council; and the Putus (wisdom) is the keeper of the constitution and the rememberer of the treaties.

Mi'kmaq economy was based upon hunting, fishing, gathering, and farming, as well as trading surplus resources with other nations. This economic regime was founded upon the overriding principle of sustainable, responsible development to ensure long-term self-reliance and prosperity for our people. Through economic self-reliance we were assured social and political self-determination: the freedom and liberty to decide for ourselves the future of our people. We were also great travellers, having learned the art of sailing centuries before the arrival of the Europeans. In our boats we explored the North American seacoast from the frozen ocean beyond Newfoundland down to the Gulf of Mexico and what is now known as Florida.



The Norsemen may have ventured onto Mi'kmaq lands a millennium ago, but it was not until the 1600s that we experienced any sustained contact with European peoples. This was when the French established tiny settlements within our territories to engage us in the fur trade.

The relationship that developed between our people and the French was based on mutual co-operation and respect, and we had no reason to perceive any threat to our lands or our sovereignty. However, there was one very serious consequence of this contact: disease. It is estimated that at our peak, there were 100,000 Mi'kmaq. Once the new diseases and sickness brought to North America by the Europeans took their toll, however, our numbers on the coast were substantially reduced, and we began to move inland.

One other important change that came out of our contact with the French was in the spiritual realm. On June 24, 1610, our Kjisakamow, Membertou, was baptized as a Catholic, and a covenant was made to protect the priests of the church and the Frenchmen who brought the priests among us. A great wampum belt 2 metres (2 yards) in length records this concordat. On the left are the symbols of Catholicism: the crossed keys of the Holy See, a church, and a line of text from the gospels written in our own language. On the right are symbols of the power of the Grand Council: crossed lances, an armed keptin, a pipe and arrow, and seven hills representing the seven districts. At the centre, a priest and a chief hold a cross, and in the hand of the chief is the holy book. Over the course of the seventeenth century, the whole of the Mi'kmaq people became Catholics, and took St. Ann as their patron.

Perhaps it was inevitable that we would be drawn into the imperial competition between the English and the French that took place throughout Europe and North America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In any event, the Mi'kmaq did become key players in this struggle as it affected our territories: because of our strength, we could not be ignored.

In their haste to destroy French settlements, British forces crossed and devastated our country, and the lands of our allies of the Wabanaki Confederacy (the Penobscots and Passamaquoddies of what is now northern New England, and the Malecites of the St. John River valley in New Brunswick were the core of this confederacy; from time to time the Mi'kmaq Nation co-ordinated foreign policy with its members). As a response, we permitted the King of France to erect fortifications on our soil, and for a number of years we harassed British shipping from north of Casco Bay to the Grand Banks.

The tug of war began as early as 1621, when King James I of England "granted" part of the eastern seaboard to a Scotsman, Sir William Alexander, and it was dubbed "Nova Scotia." However, this action met with stiff resistance from the Mi'kmaq: we refused to enter into any treaty relationship through Alexander. The French convinced England to relinquish its claim soon afterward. In 1689, war was declared between Great Britain and France, and the following year the French at Port Royal in Mikmakik surrendered to English forces.

Neither the Mi'kmaq nor France's other indigenous allies recognized British sovereignty, however, and we continued the war until 1699. We believed that it was a matter of religious as well as political freedom, because at that time we were of the understanding that the English were "pagans." It was many years later, in 1761, that Kjisakamow Toma Denny told the British: "I long doubted whether you was of this [Christian] faith....I declare moreover that I did not believe you was baptized; but at present I know you much better than I did formerly."

By 1713, with the Treaty of Utrecht, France was compelled to give up its claims to the Acadian peninsula in favour of the British, but it retained claims over Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland until 1763. Despite a drastic decline in our population during the previous century, the Mi'kmaq still had superior numbers to the Europeans that were present in our territories in 1713. At that time, there were maybe three thou-



sand Acadians, a few hundred British and French soldiers, and almost no British settlers in Mikmakik. As a result, our loyalty was sought by the French, who depended on our help to harass the British, and by the British, who needed our co-operation to protect themselves from French attacks.

### The Treaties: Formalizing the Relationship

Because Anglo settlement began in earnest on the eastern seaboard of what is now the United States, relations between the British and the Mi'kmaq were profoundly affected by earlier developments in New England. Around 1640, the Massachusetts Bay settlers, who perhaps numbered in the thousands, began to expand into present-day New Hampshire and Maine. These lands were the traditional homeland of the Wabanaki Confederacy and the Mi'kmaq Nation.

Britain's professed policy was that it had to formally purchase tribal lands before settlers could take up legal estates. But repeated encroachments by growing numbers of settlers disrupted tribal land-use patterns, ownership, and economies.

It appeared that the colonists and the colonial governments were attempting to ignore the imperial instructions relating to the protection of indigenous land and resource rights. As a result, hostilities broke out during the 1670s. The Imperial Crown was forced to step in and provide assurances to the affected indigenous nations that their rights, under the stated imperial policy, would be respected. These assurances were formalized in treaties of peace, eleven of which were concluded with the southeastern Wabanaki tribes by 1717.

These arrangements, however, did not bind the Mi'kmaq, or respond to their concerns regarding their territories in Mikmakik. In 1719, Great Britain appointed a governor for Acadia ("Nova Scotia"), and instructed him to engage our "friendship and good correspondence" through treaty. He was governor in name only, though, since he kept his office in Boston, 100 km (600 miles)

away. In any event, at this time, the Grand Council refused to enter into any treaties with the Crown.

But the ongoing problem still existed: the Imperial government and its laws could not maintain discipline among the land-hungry colonies. By 1722, armed confrontation once again flared up with the Wabanaki Confederacy. The Mi'kmaq joined in the battle and, in that year alone, our warriors took twenty-two British ships. England clearly had to focus its efforts on securing a more lasting arrangement. This was accomplished in 1725, when the leaders of the Wabanaki Confederacy, the Penobscots, Malecites, and Passamaquoddies, signed a treaty of peace with the British in Boston.

While they accepted nominal British sovereignty, they refused to surrender any more of their lands, and only agreed to cease and desist from disturbing "existing" Anglo settlements that had been created in the 1690s. Subsequently, the members of the confederacy ratified this compact, including a distinct treaty of the Mi'kmaq district, Gespogoitg (identified in the 1725 Treaty as the "Cape Sable Indians"). However, having made no former treaties with Britain, and wishing to remain non-aligned, the Grand Council of the Mi'kmaq Nation did not formally adhere to the Treaty of 1725.

The terms of the Treaty of 1725 conform to a pattern that had been established earlier. It was built on the law of Nikamanen. But it was the first formal treaty between the Wabanaki and the British Crown. For us, it served as a fundamental agreement on the nature of our relations, and it was to be renewed at appropriate intervals.

Parallel to this development, we continued to maintain our relationship with the French. Annual meetings with their representatives took place on Ile St. Jean (now Prince Edward Island), and France retained its naval base at Louisbourg, in Cape Breton, which had been constructed after the "loss" of Acadia in 1713. In 1743, hostilities were renewed between the imperial powers once again, ending with the defeat of the French at



Louisbourg two years later. By that time, Louisbourg had become a vital French military and commercial base, with a population of about 3,000 souls. With the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, England was required to return Louisbourg to France, and, as a result, the British began to build Halifax at Chebucto Bay on the Atlantic coast.

The Crown appointed Lord Cornwallis to "govern" Nova Scotia in 1749, and directed him to make peace with us. That same year, a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the legal rights of the indigenous nations in North America established the legal principle that the "Indians, though living amongst the King's subjects in these countries, are a separate and distinct people from them, they are treated as such, they have a policy of their own, [and] they make peace and war with any nations of Indians when they think fit, without control from the English."

Apart from the stationing of a few hundred soldiers at Annapolis Royal and Canso, almost no British settlement had occurred in Atlantic Canada prior to the establishment of Halifax. But this initiative, as well as British designs on other Nova Scotia locations, made it clear that they were intending to do in Mikmakik what they had already done in Maine and New Hampshire. On September 24, 1749, the Grand Chief of the Mi'kmaq declared war on the British, stating: "It is God who has given me my country in perpetuity."

By October of that same year, repeated attacks on British ships led Governor Cornwallis to issue a general order to "annoy, distress, take or destroy the Savages commonly called Micmacks, wherever they are found." But the Lords of Trade, Cornwallis's bosses, thought "gentler Methods and Offers of Peace" held greater promise, providing that "the Sword is held over their Heads." In August 1751, Malecite, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot representatives met with British commissioners at Fort St. George, objecting to unlawful settlements on their lands. The commissioners stated that the governor's "intention" all along had been to renew the Treaty of 1725, and went on to invite the tribes to meet in Halifax with Cornwallis.

Grand Chief Jean Baptiste Cope and his delegation came to Halifax in November 1752 to meet with Governor Cornwallis's replacement, Peregrine Thomas Hopson. After long discussion, it was agreed that the Treaty of 1725 would be renewed. Grand Chief Cope also said that he desired a new compact between England and the Mi'kmaq Nation. Hopson agreed. The Elikawake ("in the King's house") Treaty acknowledges the Mi'kmaq as British subjects, and confirms their separate national identity within the United Kingdom. It also guarantees the Mi'kmaq the freedom and liberty to hunt, fish, and trade under the explicit protection of His Majesty's Civil Courts.

The Mi'kmaq agreed not to "molest" any existing British settlements, but did not consent to any new ones. The symbol of this treaty, in our traditions, is an eight-pointed star representing the original seven sakamowti and the British Crown, with the Union Jack at its centre.

In the Mi'kmaq view, the Mi'kmaq Compact, 1752, affirmed Mikmakik and Britain as two states sharing one Crown — the Crown pledging to preserve and defend Mi'kmaq rights against settlers as much as against foreign nations.

During the course of the next few years, various of the districts in Mikmakik ratified the treaty of peace, but things were far from over. The French continued to be in conflict with the English over commerce and settlement in North America, and Halifax was under siege by the Mi'kmaq and Wabanaki. Fort Beausejour, a French fortress on the Chignecto isthmus, was taken by the British in 1755. At the same time, French Acadians who did not swear allegiance to the English Queen were deported, and many Mi'kmaq rose up in arms to protect the rights of their francophone neighbours. As a result, in 1756, Lieutenant-Governor Lawrence offered rewards for Indian scalps and prisoners.

The imperialist struggle between France and England over North America, however, was in its last phase. The French fort at Louisbourg fell to the British in 1758. The capture of Quebec



in 1759, and Montreal in 1760, put an end to France's designs in North America. With a view to consolidating their "winnings," the British acknowledged that relations with the indigenous peoples would have to be normalized. In Article 40 of the French Capitulation, Britain formally promised to protect the Indian property and rights in the New Prerogative Order. The Lords of Trade in London were keenly aware that the safety and future of English settlement in North America depended on the friendly disposition of the Indians. In 1760 they stated that settlement must "be done with a proper regard to our engagements with the Indians" (i.e., the treaties).

With European tensions resolved, the accessions to the Mi'kmaq Compact, 1752, began. Many of the Mi'kmaq districts again reconfirmed their commitment to the 1725 and 1752 treaties. By royal instructions issued to colonial governors in December 1761, British settlers were required by the Crown to remove themselves from any and all lands not lawfully obtained.

The new governor of Nova Scotia, Jonathan Belcher, announced in a 1762 accession meeting with the Mi'kmaq district chiefs who resided in areas that had been occupied by France that the King was determined "to support and protect Indians in their just Rights and Possessions and to keep inviolable the treaties and Compacts which have been entered into with them." Belcher's proclamation explicitly identified and reserved the territories still occupied and claimed by the Mi'kmaq, including the sea-coasts of the Unamaki, Epikoitik, Piktokiok, Sikiniktiok, and Gaspekiok sakamowti — altogether about two-thirds of the province as it was at that time.

Through the Royal Proclamation of 1763, King George III consolidated all previous policies related to the settling of Indian lands and settler conduct with the Indian Nations. The proclamation stated unequivocally that the tribes were not to be disturbed in their use and possession of their traditional lands, and that the only way in which such lands could be acquired was through treaty with the Crown. This statement was an early

articulation of the Crown's trust responsibility to ensure that the Indian Nations' rights and interests were safeguarded in the face of increasing settlement and competition for lands and resources.

Despite all of these commitments and guarantees, the settlers did not necessarily possess the willingness or the ability to ensure that the New Prerogative Order was implemented by the colonial governments and settlers. The reality that Britain was intent on settling North America, and reaping profits from its resources, undermined its stated policy of protecting the integrity of our nation. To this day we have been faced with the same schizophrenic approach to our rights as a people: in law, and at the level of rhetoric, our rights are recognized and protected; but in practice, because of immigrant self-interest, we are treated as if we do not even possess the most basic of human rights.

### Treaties Broken: Distorting the Relationship

The appropriation of our land and resources continued. While France had come among us primarily to trade, the British planned colonization. There were no permanent French settlements in Mikmakik before 1605, and as late as 1686 the European population of Acadia was scarcely 900. Britain established its first major colony in our territory in 1749, and within a century Europeans outnumbered us in Nova Scotia. Many Mi'kmaq migrated to their ancient islands of Cape Breton, St. Pierre, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland to maintain their way of life. France had been, to a large degree, a guest who had never asserted any overt control over our affairs; Britain at once set about seizing our lands.

The commitment to let us retain the Catholic religion was also broken. All of our priests were expelled, and we were forced to rely on the French at the island of St. Pierre, off Newfoundland, for religious books. Our own keptins assumed the role of priests for many years after.



At the outbreak of hostilities between the American colonies and Great Britain, General George Washington, commander-in-chief of the revolutionary army, wrote to the chiefs and captains of Mi'kmaq Nation requesting military assistance.

On July 17, 1776, a mutual defence treaty was concluded at Watertown, and the Mi'kmaq became the first nation to formally recognize the United States, which had proclaimed its independence just two weeks earlier at Philadelphia. By 1779, relations with Britain were restored and reaffirmed with the Crown at a meeting of the Grand Council that took place at Piktokiok.

But the peace between America and Britain left the English with only one naval base in North America, Halifax. To strengthen their strategic position, and to accommodate the many loyalists who moved north from the thirteen colonies, the British intensified their colonization of Mikmakik. This activity disrupted our economies, and began to severely restrict our people's access to the land and resources that were so essential to their survival. By the 1790s, many of our communities were starving, and the commitments made by the Imperial Crown that settlement would only take place after lands had been formally surrendered by us seemed to be forgotten by the settlers.

At the same time, however, both Britain and the United States continued to recognize the special status of the indigenous nations, including Mikmakik. The first commercial treaty between the two states, known today as the Jay Treaty (1794), guaranteed our continuing rights to pass across the new border and engage in trade, as we had always done. This element was of particular relevance to us and to other nations such as the Haudenosaunee, whose traditional territories were split by the imposition of the international border.

Again, in 1814, when Britain and the United States concluded a treaty of peace to end the War of 1812, they guaranteed the restoration of all the rights and privileges previously enjoyed

In the nineteenth century, the confiscation of protected Mi'kmaq hunting grounds began in earnest. Squatters, tolerated if not actively aided and abetted by local authorities, took up large tracts of our traditional territories without our consent or any form of compensation. Repeated representations to the Crown regarding these ongoing breaches of the terms of our treaties were either stalled or ignored.

Finally, in 1841, Kjisakamow Peminawit submitted a petition to the Colonial Office in London, and as a result, they reminded provincial officials that the Mi'kmaq had "an undeniable claim to the Protection of the Government as British subjects," and that we should be compensated for any losses. The province of Nova Scotia responded by agreeing to set aside 50,000 hectares (125,000 acres) of land as "Indian Reservations" for our use in 1842. Most of these lands were already recognized Mi'kmaq family estates.

We are still uncertain as to how this amount of land was decided upon, but it is clear that it had little to do with the actual areas of land that we were using and occupying at that time, and nothing to do with our economic and social needs as a people. In any event, well aware that it had no authority to force us into abandoning our existing settlements, the province told London that it would "invite" the Mi'kmaq chiefs "to cooperate in the permanent resettlement and instruction of their people." We continued to live where we had resided and where we could, refusing to be confined to areas that we had not participated in selecting.

Soon it became clear that even this attempt at fulfilling the Crown's obligations of political and legal protection was inadequate. Only half of the 50,000 hectares were ever set aside and, by the 1850s, even this small remainder of our homeland was being settled illegally by Europeans. This had a catastrophic effect on our economies, since without adequate access to land and resources, there was little chance of putting food on the table or of generating surplus with which to trade.



Instead of expelling the squatters, as was required by the 1762 and 1763 proclamations, and by its own 1842 legislation, the province in 1859 required some of them to pay for the land they had illegally taken up. Few ever did. The Grand Council of the Mi'kmaq Nation wrote to the governor in Nova Scotia, challenging the constitutionality of "this extraordinary proposal to deprive them of th[eir] rights by entering into compromise with the violators of them," but it was not heard.

The wildlife resources that were the basis of our economy were hunted and fished out by settlers, our few farms were stolen, and we were reduced to living as itinerant woodcutters and peddlars of handicrafts. We suffered the same fate in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, which became separate provinces in 1769 and 1784, respectively, and in Newfoundland. New Brunswick began selling lands that we still reserved or occupied in 1844; in Prince Edward Island only one tiny island was left for our use by 1838. None of these actions was undertaken with our consent or formalized through imperial legislation, as was required by the Proclamation of October 7, 1763.

In fact, the imposition of borders and new administrative regimes had the effect of separating our people and undermining the Grand Council's ability to act as a cohesive unit. Our nation found itself confined within boundaries that had nothing to do with the way we had organized ourselves historically. But, despite the problems that this situation posed, we retained our tribal authority, and continued to maintain the political structure of the Grand Council.

We retained our language and religion in the face of an overwhelming Anglo-Protestant majority, and continued to meet as a whole people at Potoloteq (Chapel Island on Cape Breton) on St. Ann's day each year. On the whole, we maintained our traditional communities, although their number decreased as our lands were seized by settlers or sold outright by local government officials.

The British North America Act, 1867, united most of Britain's North American provinces under a single federal government,

and entrusted Canada with responsibility for "Indians, and land reserved for Indians," as well as "treaty obligations." However, it also appeared to give the provinces authority over the lands and resources within their boundaries that had been properly ceded by the relevant tribes.

In our case, this had a prejudicial effect on the matter of our traditional territories, since, from that time onwards, although Canada had the responsibility for upholding the treaties and protecting our rights and interests, it was the provinces (the successors to the land-grabbing colonies) who asserted that they held "title" to the land. To this day, the division of powers established by the BNA Act has been used as an excuse for non-fulfillment of the Crown's treaty commitments and as a pretext for preventing serious discussion on the land question.

### Political Repression

The remainder of the nineteenth century was a very difficult period for the Mi'kmaq people. Our collective attention was focused on day-to-day survival, with little time for anything else. During this time, the federal government began using its "powers" under the BNA Act not to protect our rights and interests, but to destabilize our nation and to make it over in the image of the European. The twentieth century has proven to be a continuation of this trend, at least in terms of federal government policy.

"Elected councils" were introduced, in spite of the authority and jurisdiction of the Grand Council in New Brunswick, PEI, Quebec, and Newfoundland, and a host of administrative procedures, which were intended to complete the destabilization program, were imposed. Although the government intended to undermine the Grand Council's authority with this initiative, we have adapted and developed a co-operative approach along with the elected councils. However, interference by outside agencies in Mi'kmaq internal affairs became even more pronounced than it once was, particularly on the part of the federal Department of Indian Affairs. Bureaucrats at the local, regional, and



headquarters levels took it upon themselves to determine who was and who was not a Mi'kmaq; when houses would be built; how meagre reserve resources were to be utilized; how elections would be conducted.

This attempt at imposing an irresponsible and irrelevant form of indirect rule upon our people has proven to be an unmitigated disaster, made the worse because the unelected bureaucrats who continue to wield these powers are not accountable either to the Mi'kmaq or to the Canadian people.

At the same time, outside enforcement agencies began aggressively to restrict Mi'kmaq citizens in the exercise of their economic rights, particularly as they related to hunting, fishing, and commerce. We were told that any treaty rights we "may have had" were extinguished, and that we had no legal basis on which to pin them. No recognition was given to the many and positive assurances we had received from the Crown regarding our rights, or even to our economic needs as a society.

From 1941 until 1953, a "centralization" program was initiated in which our citizens were coerced into moving onto two "recognized" reserves in Nova Scotia: Eskasoni and Shubenacadie. The intent of this program was ostensibly to make "administration" easier for the non-Mi'kmaq bureaucracy, but its effect was to take more Mi'kmaq citizens off the land, and to further undermine their self-sufficiency. The school at Wycocomagh and many Mi'kmaq farms were burned down by Indian Affairs as a means of ensuring that our people would relocate to Eskasoni. In the end, over 1,000 Mi'kmaq were displaced from their farms in various parts of the province, and compelled to reside on what had become two acutely overcrowded containment centres.

Our youth were taken away from their families and forced to attend residential schools, where they were beaten to prevent them from speaking their own languages or practising their culture. The aim of the residential school system was to wipe out any sense of national identity on the part of youth, and replace it with European values and culture. It did not succeed in

completely fulfilling these objectives, but it did serve to disorient and demoralize three generations of our people.

These efforts at dismantling our nation accelerated in 1960 when the federal cabinet decreed that the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia were to be divided into twelve separate "Indian Bands," to be dealt with as individual entities instead of a collectivity.

The ill-conceived and unconscionable strategy to destabilize our traditional forms of government, eliminate our culture, and ravage our economies has clearly been intended to terminate our rights, and our existence, as a people. But it has been met with ongoing resistance on the part of the Mi'kmaq. We have, of necessity, adapted to the new forces with which we must contend in our traditional territories, but always within the context of our collective aboriginal and treaty rights. Beginning in the mid-1960s, our people began to mobilize in new ways to defend the nation.

The unilateral imposition of policies and legislation affecting our people had to be dealt with. They needed assistance in coping with the morass of bureaucratic procedures and policies that were being spawned by the federal and provincial governments. In 1969, the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (UNSI) was formed to do just this. Since its inception, UNSI has worked closely with the Grand Council, the Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia, and with other Mi'kmaq institutions to preserve and enhance our collective rights.

Six years later, in 1975, the Native Council of Nova Scotia was established to represent the specific interests of those Mi'kmaq citizens who are not recognized as "Indians" by the federal government. It has always been the position of the Mi'kmaq that we know who we are. However, successive federal governments have seen fit to decide for us who is, and who is not, a Mi'kmaq, and this has had the effect of dividing our communities and creating a "second class" of Mi'kmaq citizens. The Native Council was formed to address the special needs of these people.

The Grand Council, UNSI, and the Native Council of Nova Scotia have developed a close working relationship with the



objective of revitalizing the Mi'kmaq Nation and undoing the damage that has resulted from hundreds of years of outside interference and discrimination. It is only by building a strong institutional base that we can hope to renew the prosperity and self-sufficiency that our people once enjoyed.

However, the struggle has also been taken up on a number of other fronts. One of the most important of these is the exercise of our political rights as a people. The United Nations international covenants on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and on Civil and Political Rights, both state very clearly that "in no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence." Yet this is precisely what has been done to us.

### Hunting and Fishing Rights

The protection of our rights to engage in hunting, fishing, and commerce as embodied in the Treaty of 1752 is entirely consistent with the intent and the letter of these covenants, and yet, over the years, federal and provincial governments have made a conscious effort to deprive our people of their means of subsistence. The effects of these efforts are visible in all of our communities, where one of the primary sources of income is now welfare, and where many of our citizens continue to be arrested and convicted for engaging in traditional economic pursuits and commerce.

The Treaty of 1752 is unequivocal when it speaks of hunting and fishing: "It is agreed that the said Tribe of Indians shall not be hindered from, but have free liberty of hunting and fishing as usual." We sought protections for our traditional economies so that we could provide for our children as we had always done. Today, we do not hunt and fish for sport; we engage in these activities to put food on the table and to generate revenue for our people. The recurring problem was that federal and provincial legislation was being used to prevent us from exercising our rights, and to wantonly harass the breadwinners of our communities.

Repeated efforts at negotiating this issue with the federal government had failed, and so a decision was taken by our leadership to pursue the matter through the courts. The case that was chosen involved James Matthew Simon, a Mi'kmaq citizen resident at Shubenacadie. In September 1980 he was stopped by members of the federal police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and searched. Mr. Simon had in his possession a type of shotgun and shells that were not "permitted" under the Nova Scotia Lands & Forests Act, and was charged with offences under that legislation. In defence of these charges, Mr. Simon cited the Treaty of 1752, and its hunting provisions.

The attorney-general of Nova Scotia argued that whatever treaty rights "may have" existed had been extinguished. Since settler governments had succeeded in ignoring their treaty obligations to the Mi'kmaq for almost two hundred years, we assume he considered those treaties to be irrelevant. The Nova Scotia provincial court apparently agreed with the attorney-general for the province, since they convicted Mr. Simon. His appeal was dismissed by the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. Ultimately, he sought, and was granted, leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

On April 17, 1982, Section 35 of the Constitution Act came into force. It states that "existing aboriginal and treaty rights" are "recognized and affirmed." Although generally the constitutional-amendment process was not satisfactory to the Mi'kmaq, it is acknowledged by us that constitutional recognition of the treaties was a positive step. In fact, it did have a bearing on the outcome of the *Simon* case.

On November 21, 1985, the Supreme Court rendered judgment, and acquitted Mr. Simon on all of the charges laid against him. For the province, it was a significant defeat. For us, it was a vindication of many of the things we had been saying all along. The court found that the Treaty of 1752 is still a binding and enforceable agreement between the Crown and the Mi'kmaq people, and that its protections regarding Mi'kmaq hunting



rights override provincial legislation that interferes with these rights.

As important, the court ruled that the treaties must be interpreted in a flexible manner that takes into account changes in technology and practice. For instance, Mi'kmaq hunters could not be limited to using spears and handmade knives, as they once did, and as the attorney-general of Nova Scotia had argued. It was also made clear that this right extended not only to subsistence hunting, but also to hunting for commercial purposes.

As a result of this decision, we knew that we were in a much stronger position to proceed with formalizing the exercise of our rights to the hunt. On Mi'kmaq Treaty Day, October 1, 1986, the majority of our leadership in Nova Scotia ratified a set of interim hunting guidelines as a first step towards this end.

The basis of these guidelines is a Mi'kmaq concept, Netukulimk, which includes the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community at large. The guidelines covered safety and conservation considerations, as well as stating clearly that the treaty rights of Mi'kmaq citizens to hunt overrode existing provincial restrictions related to seasons, quotas, licences, and tagging and hunting gear and methods. At the same time, it was made clear that only those Mi'kmaq who followed the guidelines would be protected by the terms of the 1752 treaty.

As a result of these events, attempts were made to negotiate a more formal arrangement with the other levels of government. However, they did not bear fruit, and today, the Mi'kmaq hunting guidelines are still in effect. Recent actions by the province of Nova Scotia do not lead us to believe that they are committed to dealing with this issue in good faith, and recent inaction on the part of the federal government to ensure that our rights are protected leads us to the same conclusion. In 1987,

six Mi'kmaq citizens were charged with fishing "violations"; twenty-three were charged for hunting deer and moose; and three were charged in connection with commerce and taxation matters.

In the spring of 1988, Nova Scotia announced that the annual moose hunt would be taking place from October 3 to 7. Licences were to be granted to two hundred hunters by lottery. The Mi'kmaq were excluded from having any input into the development of this approach to the harvest. It totally ignored Mi'kmaq rights to the resource, and in fact, only two Mi'kmaq citizens won the "privilege" to hunt moose under the lottery system.

After much thought and discussion, our leadership decided to stage a separate Mi'kmaq moose harvest, to ensure that our communities had adequate access to the resource, and that the harvest would be carried out according to the interim guidelines that had been developed.

Our moose harvest took place from September 17 to 30, 1988, in Victoria and Inverness counties. It was supervised by the Mi'kmaq, and its focus was to provide Mi'kmaq citizens with the opportunity to harvest the resource for subsistence use.

The government of Nova Scotia took the position that this harvest was "illegal", and promptly initiated a propaganda campaign to discredit and intimidate our citizens. The harvest did proceed, but a total of fourteen Mi'kmaq hunters were charged with violations of the provincial Wildlife Act. Their cases are now before the courts. Subsequently, the province escalated its provocation by unilaterally announcing that *any* Mi'kmaq engaged in hunting anything pursuant to the 1752 treaty would be prosecuted.

This experience calls into question the ability of the courts and the present political system to address the matter of our rights in a meaningful and lasting way. Despite the protections afforded to our treaties as a result of Section 35 of the Canada Act, 1982, and despite the enormous degree of effort that went



into vindicating our rights at the Supreme Court level, we still find ourselves confronted by settler governments that refuse to recognize their own laws and their own courts.

The situation raises the question: if they don't play by their own rules, then should we? Although Canada prides itself on being one of the world's leading "democracies" and an advocate of human rights, we do not find much evidence of these things in our dealings with federal and provincial governments. Beyond this, it is clear to us that the problem is far more complex than court decisions or political will. It has to do with systemic discrimination and racism that are deeply rooted in the consciousness of the Canadian public and their institutions.

### Justice for Who?

One important element of the 1752 treaty had to do with the matter of justice. We knew that something had to be done to regulate relations between our citizens and settlers, but we also knew that the traditional Mi'kmaq justice system had to play a continued role in our own internal affairs. This called for a "two-legged" justice system based on the concept of co-habitation.

For incidents involving Mi'kmaq citizens on Mi'kmaq territory, the traditional Mi'kmaq justice system would apply. For situations involving settlers, the English justice system would be used. And finally, for matters that involved both Mi'kmaq citizens and settlers, the English civil-justice system, with input from the Mi'kmaq, would come into play.

The Mi'kmaq refused to be administered under the political authority of the local settlers or under criminal law in connection with the administration of justice. Instead, the Civil Law of England — the fundamental principles of contract, property, and torts — was understood to be the appropriate basis on which to measure the conduct between Mi'kmaq and British people in Nova Scotia. This understanding is reflected in the relevant section of the 1752 compact and in the accession treaties that were ratified by the various districts of Mikmakik.

As with other understandings reached that had been confirmed by the terms of the treaty, this arrangement was implemented, but proved ineffective. In fact, with centralization in the 1940s, our traditional justice system was usurped by outside institutions and law-enforcement agencies, and even in the settler courts we found that we were not permitted to enjoy "the same benefits, advantages, and privileges" as others, even though they had been guaranteed in the 1752 treaty. This situation is most graphically illustrated by the experience of Donald Marshall, Jr., at the hands of the Nova Scotia "justice" system.

Late one evening in 1971, in a Sydney, Nova Scotia, park, Sandy Seale, a black youth, was fatally stabbed. At the time, the incident aroused emotions throughout the local Mi'kmaq, black, and white communities. But it was only much later that the real implications of what followed would come to light.

Donald Marshall, Jr., was eventually charged in connection with Sandy Seale's death. But, from the beginning, the conduct of the investigation into the killing was questionable. The two "eyewitnesses" to the crime gave testimony that appeared to be *too* consistent, and questions were raised about whether or not they had been coached on what to say. After the "eyewitnesses" had testified, other individuals came forward to the authorities, stating that one of them, John Pratico, was nowhere near the scene of the crime on the evening it occurred. These concerns were dismissed, not only by the Sydney police department, but even by one of Donald Marshall's own defence lawyers. However, in the end it was indeed confirmed that both of the "eyewitnesses" had been coached by the Sydney police, and that they had given false testimony.

It later turned out that the two lawyers initially engaged in Marshall's defence did not make all reasonable efforts to fully investigate the possibility of his innocence: they did not carry out their own investigation, and did not even conduct interviews with the alleged witnesses. No one seemed to doubt the fact that, since Donald Marshall was an "Indian," it was probable that he



had committed the crime. He was finally convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Despite his insistence, even after his conviction, that he was innocent, no appeal was allowed, because of the two "eyewitness" accounts.

Meanwhile, there were some people who were not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation or the trial. For instance, there were many unanswered questions about one Roy Ebsary, an old, eccentric character known to many residents of Sydney and its environs. He had been in the vicinity of the crime the night it occurred, and had told then chief detective John McIntyre not only that he had been with Sandy Seale and Donald Marshall night of the incident, but that he had taken a swipe at Seale with a knife. John McIntyre did nothing to follow up on this admission.

Three years later, in 1974, Donna Ebsary, the old man's daughter, approached Sydney police with information that her father had indeed killed Sandy Seale. She spoke to McIntyre, who refused to even listen. The same information was provided to the RCMP, who, apparently, did not follow up either.

The attitude of many of the officials who were handling this case is perhaps most succinctly illustrated by comments that were made by Robert Anderson, who was the director of criminal matters in the Nova Scotia Attorney General's department at the time of Marshall's trial. Eleven or twelve years after the conviction, and after being appointed a county court judge, he was approached by Felix Cacchione, who at the time was working as Marshall's lawyer.

Cacchione was concerned about some aspects of the investigation, and was seeking information from Judge Robertson concerning the 1971 investigation. His response to Cacchione's presentation was: "Don't put your balls in a vise over an Indian." The implication was that Cacchione stood to compromise his future career prospects in Nova Scotia if he became known as an advocate of Indian rights and interests (Mr. Cacchione is himself now a judge in the province).

Ironically, Cacchione's experience and Robertson's comments were consistent with a pattern that had been observed way back in 1849. At that time, the Indian commissioner reported to the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly that the justice system and the political process in the province could not be counted on to "protect" Indian interests and rights: "Under present circumstances, no adequate protection can be obtained for Indian property. It would be vain to seek a verdict from any jury in this island against the trespassers on the reserves; nor perhaps would a member of the Bar be found willingly and effectually to advocate the cause of the Indians, inasmuch as he would thereby injure his own prospect, by damaging his popularity."

The striking similarity between these events, separated as they are by over a century, demonstrates a certain insidious continuity in settler culture and attitudes, and the degree to which discrimination and racism are part and parcel of the day-to-day reality in this province.

The criminal-justice system is made up of a number of institutions and players, each a part of a system of checks and balances that is supposed to ensure that justice is served. All of these checks and balances failed Donald Marshall, Jr. Some of this malfunctioning might be seen to be bad luck, but the consistent failure of the system in this case cannot be dismissed as merely coincidence. The fact that the system performed so miserably in this instance stems from one common thread: Donald Marshall, Jr., was an Indian.

It was not until eleven years after Donald Marshall's incarceration that things began to change. At that time, Steven Aronson, Jim Carroll, and Harry Wheaton became involved in the case on his behalf, and began uncovering the evidence that finally led to his release and to Roy Ebsary's arrest and conviction.

Even with this turn of events, the system still did not serve Marshall well. Compensation for the eleven years spent behind bars on a wrongful conviction was, at first, refused, then later



granted after public opinion was brought to bear on the Nova Scotia government. Early calls for a royal commission into the whole matter were at first rebuffed as well, until finally the public outcry was so great, among Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq alike, that the province had to comply.

The evidence that came out during the course of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr., prosecution damned not only the individuals involved in the case at all levels, but the Nova Scotia "justice" system generally. It appeared that latently racist sentiments among the principals involved in the investigation and the prosecution played a large part in Marshall's wrongful conviction.

It also appeared that no one cared whether he was guilty or not, because he was a Mi'kmaq: certainly the evidence showed that many officials did not take the care in his case that they normally did in the course of their duties. The fact that he was an "Indian" made it easy for all to accept the likelihood of guilt, and to slough off his personal situation as if it was of little importance, since after all, in the scheme of things, he was "just another Indian."

In effect, the cumulative body of evidence presented to the Royal Commission became an indictment of the whole Nova Scotia justice system. This is borne out by much of what emerged during the course of the commission's work, but in particular by the statements made by Judge Felix Cacchione.

He testified that the province did not display a sense of sympathy or responsiveness to Donald Marshall's plight, but instead, played "hard ball." No one involved in the administration of justice came to his assistance. Cacchione testified that one of the factors that led to this malaise on the part of the system was Marshall's race. He said that if Donald Marshall had been a prominent non-Mi'kmaq Nova Scotian, he would have been treated differently, and the whole matter would have been handled differently.

Eleven years after Donald Marshall, Jr., had been convicted of manslaughter in the death of Sandy Seale, authorities were

forced to admit what many had known and stated from the beginning: that he was innocent, and moreover, that he had been cruelly victimized. The so-called justice system failed him miserably, and his experience typifies what we, as a people, have been subjected to over the past few generations.

We trust that the outcome of this exercise will be a complete overhaul of the Nova Scotia justice system, and a return to the arrangements originally contemplated in the Treaty of 1752. Tentative recommendations have been made to the Royal Commission regarding the ways and means of developing and implementing a Mi'kmaq justice system, and how it would interface with the non-Mi'kmaq system. Our next steps will be determined by the Royal Commission's final recommendations, which are still in the process of being completed.

### Unresolved Land Rights for Mikmakik

A final word on the deviate nature of the justice system, as it affects the Mi'kmaq, has to do with the federal and the provincial governments, and their approach to the land rights of our people. Earlier in this chapter mention was made of the guarantees that were obtained from the Crown regarding the maintenance of our land base, with particular reference to the effect of increased settlement on our territorial integrity and traditional economies.

Since almost immediately after the signing of the 1752 treaty, the Mi'kmaq have been seeking to resolve the matter of the ongoing theft of our land and resources. We met with little success, since clearly any steps that would lead to a more equitable sharing of land and resources in the Maritimes would be costly to those who now take for granted the benefits of their ill-gotten gains.

As recently as 1973, the government of then prime minister Pierre Trudeau insisted that there was no such thing as "aboriginal title" — after all, who could conceive that non-whites would have land and resource rights to the territories they had inhabited since time immemorial?



But this position changed in the wake of an aboriginal-rights case that originated in the Nass River Valley of British Columbia, with respect to the traditional territories of the Nisga'a people.

The Supreme Court of Canada considered the matter of aboriginal title in the *Calder* case, as it was called, and although the final judgment was inconclusive regarding that matter, it did become clear that the prior rights and claims of the indigenous peoples in Canada could no longer be dismissed so lightly, or in a cavalier manner. As a result, the federal government rethought its position, and, in August 1973, released a policy statement on the "claims" of Indian and Inuit people.

It now appeared that finally we had an opportunity to negotiate the issues that, for so long, no one except us had wanted to deal with. Because of the lack of treaty surrenders in Atlantic Canada and southeastern Quebec, the Mikmakik claims were considered "claims of a different nature" than the common-law aboriginal claims of British Columbia and the North.

In 1977, the Grand Council, through the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, made a formal application for land and compensation under the 1973 policy. This initial statement of claim has led to twelve years of fruitless discussions and countless pages of correspondence and documentation.

The reason is that, although all parties agree that we never surrendered title to our lands and resources, the federal government insists our rights have been somehow indirectly "superseded by law." The application of this nebulous and racist concept to the matter of our aboriginal rights can only be seen as one more example of the systemic and consistent discrimination that we, as Mi'kmaq people, have had to endure for centuries. The continued validity of the treaty and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 deny the possibility that the concept of "superseded by law" can be applied to us.

At the beginning of this chapter, we outlined how the initial relations between the Mi'kmaq and the British Crown developed and the many guarantees that we sought and obtained

from colonial authorities regarding our traditional land and resource base. There is no need to repeat them. The point is that, despite these guarantees, the dispossession of our land and resources and the marginalization of our institutions was allowed to proceed.

The province of Nova Scotia passed certain laws regarding the subdivision and sale of our lands, and indeed subdivided and sold our lands, but these actions were contrary to treaty commitments and to constitutional protections (the Royal Proclamation of 1763, for instance, has never been repealed, and is appended to the Constitution Act, 1982).

In fact, "responsible government" did not exist in Nova Scotia until 1867: until then, the province was entirely controlled by prerogative instruments of the Crown, such as letters patent, instructions, and imperial proclamations. Today, Canada tells us that, because Nova Scotia sold off our lands pursuant to various legislation, our rights have been terminated by these actions and these laws. It does not seem to matter to them that the province's actions were outside of its competence and that they were inconsistent with, and contrary to, imperial directives of the time.

The reality of the matter is that our people have been forcibly dispossessed of their land and resources, and had their economic institutions destroyed, without their consent and without any form of compensation. Meanwhile, others have benefited tremendously, and when they are called to account, they insist that because they carried out these acts, the acts themselves must be legitimate. The blatant hypocrisy evident in this kind of reasoning is astounding even to us, who have been compelled to deal with these attitudes for hundreds of years.

It should be of serious concern to Canadians that their elected representatives are so brazenly violating not only the treaty rights, but the *human rights* of the Mi'kmaq people. Canada insists that our rights can be superseded by law. If indeed this is the case, then it must be a law based on genocide and exploitation, not on justice and equity.



This reality has serious consequences, not just for the Mi'kmaq people and other First Nations, but for *all* Canadians. On the one hand, if only aboriginal peoples' rights can be superseded by law, then Canada's public posture as a champion of human rights and equality rights is an exercise in deception, and subject to a cynical and selective application based on race. On the other hand, if it has nothing to do with race, and any government of the day can reserve the right to ignore its own constitution, treaties, and courts, then sooner or later they will do it to *you*.

Either way, the implications should be shocking to any reasonable Canadian. We are glad to have the opportunity to bring these matters to the attention of the public, since, as we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, for too long the truth has been suppressed.

It is time that these matters be brought out into the open, so that Canadian citizens can gain a clearer understanding of the conduct of their government, and perhaps realize how unaccountable and arbitrary their "democratically elected" leaders really are.

There are many other issues we could mention, issues related to the fisheries, commerce, health, shelter, and education, but suffice it to say that there is much unfinished business between the Mi'kmaq Nation and Canada. After centuries of alternating neglect and oppression, we demand that our rights and interests be dealt with in the spirit of equity and justice. We aren't asking for anything unreasonable, or anything that would be unfamiliar to the average Canadian.

However, regardless of whether or not Canada is ready to deal with us, we will proceed with the renewal of our nation, and we will continue to prepare for what must be done. In March 1989, an historic summit took place between the leaders of twenty-nine Mi'kmaq communities, representing over 18,000 of our citizens in the four Atlantic provinces and Quebec. This was the first time since 1776 that so many of our communities had come together to develop a common approach to land and treaty matters.



What came out of this summit was a Declaration of Mi'kmaq Nation Rights, which reaffirms the Mi'kmaq commitment to the principles of self-determination, sovereignty, and self-government. The declaration also states that our children have the right to be brought up in the knowledge of their language, history, and culture. And finally, it points to the fact that, as Mi'kmaq people, we must have a fair share of the natural, economic, and fiscal resources of this land called Canada. We are renewing the strength of our nation, which has for so long been in bondage, and we will succeed.

What we are seeking is the freedom and liberty to contribute positively to the future of our people and to our common future as neighbours in this great continent. What we require to do this is an equitable share of our traditional lands and resources, and recognition of our inherent right to govern ourselves.

These are not alien concepts, and they are not threatening, as some would argue. They are based on the reality of the historical record, and on the prevailing norms of international law that guide the conduct of nations in their relations with one another. The facts speak for themselves. We will let you draw your own conclusions.

# AKWESASNE

## THE CONFRONTATION

*December 18, 1968, fifty Mohawks from Akwesasne were arrested for blocking the International Bridge near Cornwall, Ontario. The arrests came as a result of Canada's decision not to recognize the border-crossing rights of aboriginal people in Canada. One of the Mohawks who organized the blockade, and one of the first to be arrested, was a National Film Board student named Mike Mitchell. In the ensuing years, confrontations between the Mohawks and Customs officials repeatedly flared up.*

*In March 1988, Chief Michael Mitchell of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was arrested as he attempted to take a truckload of groceries from one part of Akwesasne to another, crossing the international border. He was exercising border-crossing rights confirmed in the Jay Treaty of 1794. He is fighting the case in the Canadian court system.*

*On October 13, 1988, 250 police officers from Ontario, Canada, and New York State invaded Akwesasne. With vehicles, helicopters, and patrol boats, they searched for duty-free cigarettes alleged to have been brought illegally across the border. It was almost certainly the biggest attack on a First Nation in Canada since the Riel uprising in 1885.*

# ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

## ELDER'S GATHERING

## BIRCH ISLAND, ONTARIO

## RAINBOW LODGE

## MAY 14 - 17, 1985

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRES WISHES TO GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE MANY PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SIGNIFICANT EVENT FOR THE FEDERATION MEMBER FRIENDSHIP CENTRES IN ONTARIO.

WE RECOGNIZE, WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION, THE PARTICIPATING ELDERS WHO SHARED THEIR GUIDANCE AND WISDOM; THE ELDERS GATHERING PLANNING COMMITTEE WHO PLANNED AND COORDINATED THE EVENT; AND THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES AND NATIVE COMMUNITY BRANCH.

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# MEEGWETCH AND NYAWEH

# DAY 1

# LI'L BEAVERS

ELI MCGREGOR

Good morning. Not everyone understands the Indian language. Not everyone understands sign language either. The purpose of these gatherings is for the Elders to give you some knowledge about this place called "Dropper's Rock" you are standing on. This is where our grandfathers used to meet, they used to stay here for days at a time until the holy spirit came to them and gave them knowledge of what they were praying for. So this kind of historical place directed by a fellow, it was for a purpose, all country has a reason and that is why it is called "Dropper's Rock". There are huge stones over there, and many years ago, found the rock. They put tobacco on that rock and they wished for whatever they wished for. You could hear them rocks as far away as Manitoulin Island. Finally, when the missionaries came over there to this country they gathered around this rock and they blasted those rocks so that they split everyone of them. Nowadays, you can't hardly, you can't. Because if you go over there, the hollow spot is there, for many years, whiteman, traditional area around here and the great lakes in quest for this country. I'll open up here with a prayer. I suppose you are all familiar with it.

JOE MORRISON

Welcomed everyone to the Gathering and explained the purpose.

ELI MCGREGOR

Most of what he's saying about this material, I hope you understands, and we thank you all and have a good time. Perhaps Elders will speak and so will I.

[illegible]

Good morning. I would like to thank the [illegible] for the invitation. Thanks to Elders for accepting [illegible] and to be here to witness the Programmers and [illegible]

ELI MCGREGOR

Good Morning. Not everyone understands the Indian language, but not everyone understands sign language either. The purpose of this meeting is for the Elders to give you some knowledge about this place, called "Dreamer's Rock" you see behind you. This is where your grandfathers used to meet, they used to stay here for ten days at a time until the holy spirit came to them and gave them knowledge of what they were seeking. So this kind of historical place was directed by a fellow, it was for a purpose, all countrysides around, and that is why it is called "Dreamer's Rock". There are huge stones over there, and many years ago, found that rock, they had put tobacco on that rock and they wished for whatever they wished for. You could hear them rocks as far away as Manitoulin Island. Finally, when the missionaries came over there to this country, they gathered around this rock and they blessed these rocks, so that they split, everyone of them split. So you can hardly hear them now. Because if you go over there now you can see the hollow spot where, for many years, whiteman, traditional area around here and the Great Lakes in quest for this country. I'll open up here with this tobacco, I suppose you are all familiar with it.

JOE MORRISON

Welcomed everyone to the Gathering and explained its purpose.

ELI MCGREGOR

Most of what he's saying about this material, I hope everyone understands, and we thank you all and have a good time. Different Elders will speak and so will I.

JEROME BERTHELETTE

Good morning. I would like to thank the Elder for his words. Meegwetch. Thanks to Elders for accepting tobacco and materials and to be here to discuss the Programmes and jobs that the Federation has to offer.

I'm looking forward to and excited by the prospect of listening to what you have to say, and the direction you have to offer. I'd like to tell you that I've spent 21 out of my 30 years in the whiteman's schools and did not have the traditional teachings. And I grew up off reserve in a town where we had no elders. I had nobody to give me direction, and help when I needed it. It was something that was missing. For me, this is an experience to be here today at "Dreamer's Rock" with the Elders and to listen to what you have to say for next few days. It was very exciting and I'm very thankful for it and I look forward to the directions you have and our future. Meegwetch.

JOE MORRISON

I guess we can get right into the meeting and I guess we can start off with regular agenda that was set for the day. And what we wanted the elders to talk about. What we have in the Centre is the Li'l Beavers Programme and the purpose of that programme was to teach the young children in the urban community or towns that do not live on reserves, the value of their culture and traditions. For them to understand who they are and for them to begin to be proud of being a Native person, whether it be Ojibway, Cree, Mohawk, Cayuga. These are the things that young people face with problems that they have. Lot of young people have negative images of themselves. And this causes alot of problems, and that is why we wanted input from the Elders as to how that Li'l Beavers Programme should work, and operate and there are alot of staff members here from the Friendship Centres that worked on this programme. (He then spoke in Indian)

One of the Elders doesn't understand english and I was trying to explain to him or trying to translate the best way I could of what I said before about the Li'l Beavers Programme, and I ask for forgiveness from the elders. I don't know if I made myself clear, I have a hard time trying to speak my own language. I have a poor command of the english language so I guess that makes for a poor Indian.

I was telling the elders to go ahead and speak as to how they feel the children should be brought up; and what they should be taught particularly in the Li'l Beavers Programme. Does everyone understand the Li'l Beavers Programme? and how it works?

FLORINA WHATMORE

I've learned alot from our Friendship Centre in London. The Beavers are pretty active and we have Li'l Beavers, but I think that parents should be more involved and grandfathers as well. I think they should make up a schedule where the parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters could be involved. The problem in N'Amerind is that they are too much by themselves. I myself go to the Centre, but I never saw what they do in the programme. I don't know what they do wnat? what it is they do? Are they teaching sports, or maybe someone knows how to sing; is that what they are trying to bring out? I really don't understand what the programme is. When we get our newsletter and on the calendar it says activities, activities, activities. But it doesn't say what activities. As far as I am concerned, I'm in the dark about what they do when they have activities; what does it involve? Is there someone here from the Programme that can explain to us what the programme is?

JOE MORRISON

We have Gertie Beaucage here. She's been with the Li'l Beavers Programme for a long time. She used to be the Li'l Beavers Coordinator in Sudbury for about seven years, and now she's working here in Toronto at the Federation office as the Li'l Beavers Programme Trainer for all Friendship Centres in Ontario. She works with the workers in the Centres.

FLORINA WHATMORE

Maybe she can explain to us what they do. What are the activities? And it is never really mentioned. I don't know about the newsletters in your Friendship Centre, but I know in ours it doesn't say - just the word activities.

JOE MORRISON

Does everybody have the same problem? The Friendship Centre you represent here today, do you have that kind of a problem of understanding of the Programme? Of understanding what the programme is all about?

NORA CHAPAIS

I don't understand the programme. It is hard for our children; we live about 24 miles from our Friendship Centre; we live in Longlac; and the Friendship Centre is in Geraldton. So I guess in Geraldton they pick up mostly white kids, so they get involved. There are a few Indian kids around I guess, but it is mostly white kids. When we went camping there were 12 white boys that showed up instead. So I don't know. If we can get one going in Longlac, or if we can get transportation for our Native kids; maybe they can get involved. We have two reserves in Longlac. There are alot of kids maybe they don't want to go, but all they do is bust windows and wreck homes. They got nothing to do just like the lady said, we get the newsletter, it says activities, there's activities alright, but we don't know what they are doing. What we know is mostly white, they learn in schools, what they learn there we want them to learn the Indian way.

JOE MORRISON

Maybe we can get Gertie to come up here and explain what the Programme is about. Most of the people that work in Friendship Centres were given packages. Paper that talks about all the different programmes that we are going to be asking about for your direction on and that was the responsibility of the Friendship Centre to explain what we are asking for out of these programmes.

when I worked in the programme, there were some non-Natives coming in, but not a whole lot, and it was because our Native children do that to anyone else.

I also believe, that if we have too many non-Native children in the programme, they would take over and we'd lose it, it is still Li'l Beavers, but it is not the same thing; and it is too bad that's why we are asking for direction from our elders. What can we do? What can we do to bring that back to our Native children? That's a concern that we see; and I know that with other Li'l Beavers Coordinators that I've worked with have the same problem/concern. They don't know what to do, some of them it is a situation that they walk into, it has always been there, and we need to know what to do about it; I don't know if that answers your question. But I believe that our children are ours and our communities have to know what we want to do with them because it is there, and we have to use it. One of the things I've been told and I think it was a Native way of speaking - that programme is there for our children and we can't waste it - does that help?

FLORINA WHATMORE

It is helping me a little bit now, but the problem is how do we get our children to come to these things? But as I said, the programme should be so that our parents come out - instead on sitting around watching the children playing around - shouldn't there be something the kids could be doing - something special - I'm not saying every time, maybe once a month - or like they do at the school - maybe at the end of the year or at the end of June. Maybe have something real special - like saying that is what they've accomplished.

GERTIE BEAUCAGE

I know that in all the years that I've been involved in that programme, the biggest problem that our Coordinators had to deal with is how do we get the parents involved? We've looked at it from so many different angles - what can we do to get these parents involved in their children's programmes?

FLORINA WHATMORE

Another thing is the person doesn't have time to get in touch with all parents, she should have volunteers to help out.

GERTIE BEAUCAGE

That is our second biggest problem, those are the things that we need direction on - how do we do it? Coordinators are always looking for volunteers. Sylvia has been working with the Li'l Beavers Programme since it began in terms of the development of the Programme - the development of the philosophy and the chapters of the programme - maybe she can help really zero in on the some of the issues.

SYLVIA MARACLE

I'm going to take a couple of minutes because I want to cover a couple of things about the Programme that Gertie has brought up, but I think are important for you to know. When making major decisions, the reasons for a children's programme in the Friendship Centre is the very reason for the Friendship Centres themselves. Some of us for alot of reasons come to the cities, to the urban centres, come from places like Moosonee and Sioux Lookout, when we get there we don't see other Indians we are too far away from home, from other people who speak our language, and get scared, we come there because they teach us in school, Dick and Jane, everything is going to be good in the city, Dick and Jane are there. Nobody fights, nobody drinks, everyone has a job, everyone has two cars, it is nice. They still teach that in school today in those books. Some of us come to the city when we were very young; I came here to go to school when I was 18; some kids are born here, very young. But the children didn't have the time, so these people came to the city in the very beginning in the 1950's and 60's, after the war; after they changed everything; they took our land; our resources; there was no where to go; we had to go to school; they passed laws; we came and we wanted to see other Natives; because we got lonely; nobody can make macaroni soup like at home; meet other people; so the people started where they met other Natives; they reached out their hands;

Bojou; sago; whatever your word is for "hello", and in extending that hand to those people became more; that is why there was those Centres in the beginning; because we got homesick. Nobody can make soup and bannock like at home; we are making them different. Nobody can speak like at home; and you wanted that brotherhood; that Friendship so they started the Indian Centres; the Centres are going along, a long time by then, we had come along way, we had gone to school, we saw the younger children; didn't have the things we had at home; they were tired; they didn't always have the time; they didn't have the time for the little ones; to do the things that we had when we were small, because our parents were right there; and so that reason for extending that hand in friendship was bringing those people in urban areas into the Friendship Centres. We thought that we'd better reach out to the children and that in reaching to the children in 1975-76, we said for whatever reasons we are going to call it the Li'l Beavers Programme; we are going to call it all kinds of things; there was a competitor and we called in the Beavers;they said okay, everything has to balance; the elders have said yes, we have to do something for the children; and that there has to be harmony in what we do with the children and that culture that's the most important thing that programme should do and that we have to balance the spiritual side of the children and the mental side of the child; that was the way that we were taught, the balance was there. There has to be balance in the programme; recreation stuff to take care of the physical needs, and that may mean softball, maybe canoeing, or trapping; or snowshoeing, that could mean all kinds of things and that we have to do some things for their mental wellbeing, so that we do edcuational support, that we do things that will teach them stuff so that they expand their minds. We have to worry about their emotional side, are they to come from a home where there is alcohol, where there is only one parent, are they living away from their parents because they are away at school; what are their emotional needs; how can we take care of those; what balance do we need. Then the last side was the side that Gertie, Joe and I think is the most important side and that's the spiritual side. How can we teach the children the way-the way of the Nishnawbe so that it is not lost; so that it does not end with this generation or the next generation, but so that those of us that are around could pass it to

the seventh generation, but so that those of us that are around could pass it to the seventh generation so that we do remember; that they have respect, so we said that's the way the programme will go so that the programme will have those four components; culture, recreation, education and social service support - supporting the child socially, so we started that we worked real hard at that for a long time, and then as Gertie said the years went by and the Freindship Centres grew - they were going on their way, they were experts in the community and so they took over the porgramme in 1980-81 and as Gertie said, that programme, what happened then, each Centre said they can go their own way, but the Centres, alot of time, they don't have the time for the children's programme; the Centres alot of times are so busy running around with money, government and doing administration, and they forget why we started, that is why we put our hands out in the beginning, for the small ones, What we are trying to do and what Gertie tries to do in training is that we try to teach the Coordinators what his primary responsibilities are is to allow the children, as Gertie said, to be proud of the fact that they are Indians. To be able to be Indian in the city and not give anything up. Ernie Benedict who will be here tomorrow, said that we can be Indian and we can survive anywhere. And that we can have the best of all worlds without giving up any of our survival instructions; any of our original teachings from the creator; and that is what we had hoped to do but was has happened. Ernie said that it is hard work looking after all those needs for the 10-20-30-40 or 50 children, and because it is hard work, some of those Coordinators take the easy way; they take them tobogganing or bowling instead of doing that hard work; howing the row, teaching the cultural stuff; what has happened is that many of our Coordinators, they're too young, they don't know that's why we bring you here, so that we can learn; they are shy and they think the elders are too busy worrying; the constitution, the aboriginal rights, the Indian Self-Government, that you don't have the time to worry about the children and we try to tell them that you are not too busy that they have to come; they have to take the children to Longlac or wherever; that is good for the children to go out and see that, but the Coordinators, because they are so busy, I guess they are tired.

The other thing that we have done and I think alot of people that know me think I'm racist, but I'm not, but I think that Indian people have to be responsible for Indian People and the Friendship Centres, maybe, they get caught up in the law, in employment standards, and hiring so that we have non-Native people work in this programme; how can they teach the culture to these children; how can they reinforce cooperation; reinforce the language; how can they open every time the children are together in a traditional manner; they don't understand those things themselves; so that takes them one step further away, and maybe those are the kinds of things we have that are problems now. But in the very beginning, where we started, we started by giving the children all of the things that we had when we were young, and maybe we have to look now again with your help, if that is where we started, in the beginning, you as Elders; another said that is good, that is balance, harmony, it isn't there now, and that is why we are asking you what should be done with these children, how should we be responsible, what can we do, what can we tell the Coordinators in the Friendship Centres about how that Programme should be, what we should look at. That is all I know about the Li'l Beavers Programme.

WILFRED PELLETIER

I don't know too much about the Programme, but I do know a little about Friendship Centres and that is not very much. I've been away from them quite awhile. I have some good new and some bad news. Bu the good news is I heard the other day was that none of the funding with all the cutbacks, nothing is going to be cut from the Friendship Centres. They are going to get their share. We don't have to worry about that. Alot of other programmes are going to be cut and soforth. But that is alright. Because I think it is time alot of us got on our own feet. The things we are supposed to do. That is knowing ourselves. The people. I was born here. I left here along time ago and I travelled across the country, and finally went to other countries - China, Japan, European Island, all of North American. Our people here always have been and grown from the land. We are the land. But our cultural background is very very important. I'm using culture loosely here.

I cannot define it as being anything specific, but except a way of life. The old Crees in the North, out in Quebec, I sat with them they talked to me, and they wanted to know what culture was; they said they hear this all the time, culture, culture, culture. What is that? A fellow who worked here in this area from Buckwheat and Wabano, was from that reserve. But these old people from Thunder Bay the crees, someone was a translator, so he would translate from bush cree into English ---- and we had another translator, who was a Sioux, that were there and the Crees and the Sioux begain to understand each other after a couple of days.

I told Buckwheat what I told them when they asked me about Culture, Buckwheat said don't tell them, it will ruin their lives. That night Buckwheat and I stayed at camp, and talked about it and they said that is who we are, a way of life. So if we are a way of life, then what the hell is culture? Is it a part of something? abstract? part of who we are supposed to be? no, we are a way of life. We are the lion. When we look out and see other people, some are black, white and us red people, the red, black, yellow and white, signify those four groups of people who live on this earth. Now our problem is if we have on in our Friendship Centre. Sylvia was talking, she was right, right on the nose, she hit it when she said they are too busy with political things; they are forgetting about our young people, they are forgetting about what is happening to us, our identity, the holy land; keep that within us, unless we pass that onto our own young people, but if our Friendship Centres and organizations we built out there came all across this land, and they want them to do the job, we want them to do the job for us with our children in urban centres, we can't do that, there is no way. If our Friendship Centres don't get off their damn asses and start taking care of our people and never mind playing these political games, and they take programmes and who gives them those programmes, that they sponsor, government, white people, and if programmes like the Li'l Beavers Programme, and any of those other programmes are instilled into those Friendship Centres it is Trudeau's government who okay it. Then it is an assimilation programme; and we don't want our Li'l Beavers to go through an assimilation and lose their identity and it is alright, it is fine, if white kids join our

Programme, because they will become Indian, more Indian if they learn, I wouldn't reject them and push them aside, I don't reject the blacks or the yellow; all on this earth and that is who we are people of this earth, and that is the difference we know, we are of the earth. They are lost people, they have built so many churches across this land. I was visiting in Quebec and there are 120 churches in that city. There running over there one day in seven. Where we celebrate our life as the sun rises each day, and as the sun sets and we ask the direction, the four directions to give us our blessings, we have our identity, and our culture. It is the white people who are lost, not us, but we are losing and because we are too busy trying, playing that goal with the government in order to get the funding and everything else. Now those are not bad people, there is nothing wrong with those people who are there, they are trying to their best, but they have been there for so long, they get caught up in that entrapment, that enslavement. They get fenced in by all those programmes that have happened to them and now are happening to their children and I think it is very important that we take a really good look at redesigning our Friendship Centres across this country. So that things can start happening with our people, our people come to Ottawa now, where I live, who meets them, a cree came there from Saskatchewan the other day. Nobody met him at the airport. I remember years ago, there was never a failure. We met every Indian that came into town, and welcomed them. And there were men and women who participated in and welcomed that man into the state or a group of them saw that they got lodging and food and took care of them, fed them, did everything for them. That is all gone. We have to start redesigning our Friendship Centres. Is there a Friendship Centre here who has an elder, not one that I know of; if they want to do something about funding, they ought to bring elders over here, whether it be for two or three months at a time, so not only can they service the people and give them guidance, guidance to young people that are working on the programme, who don't know their background or have lost it through various institutions, bring them in here for a while and they can go back home again, not only that but they would help those Indian people in the cities who have flipped out; lost their minds, their wantings to kill themselves, there getting drunk, their falling down

all over the place, those people need help, but there is no elder for them to talk to. In Ottawa everyday someone calls, "Wil, some young girl out here in trouble, can you come and talk to her?" So I go down to the Indian Centre, I don't feel that comfortable there, too many people around, so I go talk to her some place else, try to get her back together again, on the right track. Sometimes they come to my place we sit down and talk. You know the girl came the other day to talk about dreams, and I told her, while I'm up here, come up here this summer, spend some time over on the rock and dream. She said every day that has happened to her. She sits quiet and she has two children, or something, and she said she's just sitting there wondering about what is happening to her. Where are these visions coming from? So I asked her about them. She told me that some of these visions are scarey. She was scared because she doesn't understand, she dreams alot of eagles, she told me, she's not Indian. She said why do I always dream of eagles? The eagle will come and just go with that eagle, I hang onto its tail sometime, now I don't even onto its tail anymore I just fly with that eagle, and I soar to the skies, she said. Those are the kinds of dreams we used to have; our old people use to have those dreams, any tribe any place, and they still can, lot of them across this country. You can just go like that, not come home if they want. Anywhere they want to go, come from west, go east, go back there again, maybe only takes 15 seconds, half a minute, they are gone when they leave their body, and they are gone, we don't want to go. Airplanes, there are nice girls to look at on planes. Well I see that as a very important factor, the Li'l Beavers Programme. I think I will ride itself and take on its full meaning; every sense of the word, fills meaning if we bring our elederes and put them in the Friendship Centres, and bring the man and his wife, put them there and h will be the guidance counsellor to talk to everyone in town. There are alot of white people that go to--Friendship Centres to find out about Indians, while the white people most of them have been through institutions, schools, and so they think differently, they deal differently, they don't understand that well; I say just accept it; why are you digging that hole? why do you want to know? and if there's an answer to this it is because it is people, and you can go on saying because, for every "why" there is a because; I know I used to go for

walks along the road, I'd come across somebody who is digging a hole, I'd get in there and talk to him; I'd dig the hole for awhile, and then leave to go downtown. Go back down to Wikwemikong, and they would say have you seen Fred? I'd say yeah, he's up there digging a hole. What's he doing digging a hole for? I don't know, he didn't tell me, but I helped him dig it. You don't have to know just accept it and from there on if it takes 20-30 years to understand, give it time, but all those stories I've heard. You know Native People/Indian people are the best bullshitters in the world, they can tell you a story and they got you really believing it and five years later you found out they were just telling you nothing but a bunch of b.s., but in the near time, when you see them, they are laughing at you and you are laughing with them, because you believed in that story. I know I grew up there on the reserve, In Ottawa, when I was here in Toronto, alot of people up there and now from Kenora way, Longlac all down through, and I go talking to these people in my language, and they'd answer in english - all the young people now are just talking english, and if they are learning french, and they are talking french. What about their own language. They can speak that alot better than I can. Because I've lost that, haven't been that much around my own people to be able to talk it everyday, so I lose out too. We are concerned about what is happening, we have to take a good look at the kinds of programmes that will be coming out of the Friendship Centres without designing, our people either into assimilatic our people with white people, or we can run our own programmes the way we want to run them, but you are not going to do with city Indians like me. I'm in the city, so my mind half the time is there, what is happening, the other half, I get into my own Indian way and I remember that. All that is a way of life. Our People, who are totally related to the land, now there is no one else and no place on this earth, where people are as close to the land as the Native people that is why government is having such a hard time with us. Because they have no idea what we mean when we talk about land. Another thing is we are the only race on this earth that can't marry our own people. Now that is a pretty rough statement to make, white people marry us in their churches, white people bring our people, the last time I went to

Wikwemikiong, I went there for a funeral, I'm always going up there for funerals, after it was over, the church is now coming to understand the strengths we have, the people, after the priest was finished, the people came and said it is alright Wilfred,I came over took out my sweetgrass and tobacco, and I do a ceremony with the drum going behind me, they sing the songs of farewell for the one that is gone, I fill my pipe, I light it, turn it four times, I lay it on the coffin, you see sweetgrass is sacred, that is a sacred grace, no animals eat this grass, only accidently, that is a sacred grass, grass is for blessing, like our pipe, our tobacco, that you are not supposed to buy or sell, you go pick it yourself or its given to you, I have no pipes, I have never bought a pipe from anyone, all my pipes were given to me, now I only have 3 pipes left. But all those pipes were given to me. I accepted them. Sweetgrass has been given to me. Last year I went to pick sweetgrass myself, but I picked it in August right after the pow-wow so it turned brown. You are supposed to pick that in July, so I go pick and I get some medicine off the maple tree for my eyes, so I can see better, if my vision goes it goes, but if it goes I see just the same without my eyes, I can hear the man that walks, the man that talks, and I can tell you I can see right through that man or that woman right off the bat. I know how to deal with that person. I know if I should walk away and I just do that, backwards. Then turn around after and walk. So it is very important to know how I was brought up, to remember what it means as a child, growing up as a child. How I was never rejected by anyone. Because you soon learn that rejection, in the white society the kids they don't let you pick up their kids unless it face is wiped and has got a clean diaper on, and its fixed up nice, then they let you take it, but the Indian kid, there with the snotty nose, it doesn't matter, if stuff is all over its face, and body, just pick that child and hold it, it is never rejected. You cannot reject that child. I live in many homes down here, all of them were my father and mothers, oh yes, I had a father and mother, I used to stay there once in a while too. I used to go to my grandfathers and stay out there, I used to stay at different peoples homes, and I moved about. I carried water for them, I brought in wood and cut wood for them. Whatever I could do as a young man. I learned from these people, they taught me what to do, but our children in the city are not

getting any of that, the people are too busy, the parents are too busy. They don't have the time to volunteer, if they get volunteers you only get a few. Sometimes get white people coming in, but you can't reject them, but perhaps you should make it clear to them that we want our children to learn our ways, because it is important. That is what makes us who we are as a people. Our ways. Our traditional ways. So as you swing through life, remember your relationship with the earth for your identity. For the young people in American to know who we are, we are the only ones. The white people know who they are, some of them think they are doctors, engineers, they have got all kinds of names for all these other people all attempting to become somebody, or something. Indians don't have to worry about that, he is who he is, these are all categories. That is who we are. They are out there somewhere, and all of us people we are all in here inside, that is who we are. That is our relationship with the earth. One in the same. Not two just one. We are one together. So all you people I embrace you because you are all who I am, and I'm all who you are, and I'll tell you more another time. I shake all your hands. Meegwetch.

RITA MATTINAS

(taken in point form, take inaudible)
- most non-Native children in programme, children should be taught about Nature, sun, behaviour of animals.
- should be taught how to tell about the whether by the sun
- teach about winds, about dreams.

JOE MORRISON

I'm saying that when we are trying to find elders, sometimes they can't speak english too well, not to feel shy to talk their own language. By all means do that. We have translators here that can interpret the language. When the elders are talking, stop and give that person the opportunity to interpret. Because if it is way too long, he may forget some things that the elder was saying, when you are trying to translate the Indian language into the english language, sometimes you don't get the same meanings, it comes out different ways, that is why we are asking you, the elders, if they want to speak to go ahead and speak their own

language, but think about the person that has to translate for you.

You know that Centres have all kinds of problems and no community. We know that our people must work at the Centres, sometimes don't know how to deal with their work in the Centres; don't know which elders to approach in the community. And it would probably be good if you would talk in the community so elders can get together sometimes and talk about it. It is very difficult sometimes when you are trying to work in the community and you think you are always working by yourself. Because you don't seem to get the support and particularly people who work with other people. And it is not because that they are dumb or anything, you know how they feel, shy, they don't feel knowledgeable about approaching elders. It has to work both ways, the communication has to stand. You know that there are certain customs that we follow when people want to come and ask you for your knowledge. Something that you have. That you want to share. The thing that people work Centres even young people they don't know how to approach an Elder. How to ask and they always feel embarassed about asking because they are Indian people. They don't know. They think they don't have to be told, they are supposed to know about these things, half of them begin to lose their own identity, lose who they are, they try to become like whiteman too much. They forget about your relatives and the community know your starting to be yourself too much. And we ask our Elders for support in these things. To give us the direction that we need. I know there are certain customs that we have to follow, but sometimes we have to visit people in Centres and Indian organizations that are trying to make better ways for our people that are living in the cities/towns. That is why we are all here for you to give us that kind of direction and substance for programmes. I know as we talk, a few suggestions have come out already. You know the possibility of having our own elders in each Centre. A group of elders that could do right to work at the Friendship Centres, those are the kinds of direction that we need. I feel in talking about learning more in survival skills, contact with nature, beginning to go back to that, so these things that we are asking for - your direction.

LUNCH BREAK

JOE MORRISON

This afternoon, we will go back to what we were doing this morning, talking about the Li'l Beavers Programme and how that programme should run and what you would like to see happening in your own communities about that programme. We'll give everyone a chance to get up and speak about that programme. We'll give everyone a chance to get up and speak a few words and later on I want to tell you a story about an elders gathering we had one time back home. After one of the had got up to speak, he had spoken for quite awhile, and the elder next to him was his turn to speak and got up and said "I'm saying the same things as you and sat back down, we've been given direction alread this morning from some of the elders that talked about the possibility of having an elder working in our Friendship Centre, possible, but possible a couple in your own community and approaching, an another thing or teaching survival.

ELIJAH HARRIS

Spoke in own language. (Tape inaudible. Done in point form.)

- everyone makes mistakes
- culture means our beliefs, means everything what Indians should be; means what we believe in
- myself, I've been in the service for six years, never seen another Indian, went overseas, really didn't have to, man has own rights, can do what you want
- own language, never lose it
- today all younger generation can speak Indian, but they don't try
- teach our children to speak Indian
- myself, I'm a Seneca, can speak Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, never lost this
- while in service never spoke Indian, when I left the service, I could speak Indian just as good
- In my opinion, once you learn how to speak Indian, you never lose it

ARNOLD BOMBERRY

(Tape inaudible, done in point form)
More parent involvement; ensure that culture is taught as such we have today; sad to say that we are losing children of today; be proud of heritage; your culture; I speak to my children in Indian, but they don't understand; I'm sorry this has happened; my family, I used to speak in Indian language but they laughed at me; someday someone will walk up to you and speak Indian, you will not be able to respond; Li'l Beavers learn more about Indian ways; grandchild can speak Indian to he: brought up by my mother, spoke Indian; my wife never spoke; teach them at home, better chance to learn; have elder there; coach them.

JIM DUMONT

I think that the aims and objectives - you have to be there at times - has to be here right at the beginning - helping people, counselling people, making sure that people have a decent chance at life, decent chance at work, all those things are important for survival but it has to come from our ways otherwise it is not really Indian. That is what I believe it, and to me that is the most important thing that I think we have to come to and if we see that for Indian Centres, then we sit down and try to talk about it, what about various programmes, one per Centre and this is about Li'l Beavers Programme. We heard some of these old people say about what we should be teaching about the land, about Indian Culture, about the language, about how to survive out there - an even I'll have to teach them about the Indian way of life. That is the bigger thing that just surviving in the bush, the Indian way of life. Now if the Li'l Beavers Programme, let's say what it is going to be all about, that is what we want to teach the children, this includes Indian language, it includes the culture, it includes how to survive out in the bush, how to understand the trees, the wind and the animals, it includes all these little things that our way of life. Now if that is the first most important thing, that is why the Li'l Beavers Programme is going to exist. That is why the Li'l Beavers Programme is going to do that, we need somebody to coordinate that, first of all, that is our vision. You got to have a vision of what you are going to do, if you don't have the vision, you have to have a vision of what

you are going to do, all you are going to do today, well what are we going to do today? Well today, we are going to take them boating and maybe even make a schedule for the next five days and maybe bowling Tuesday night, and maybe on Wednesday night we'll take a trip out to the reserve and we'll talk to this old lady who knows about these dying fish, and maybe on Thursday night, so you are just kind of planning those things. So you exposing them to different aspects of culture and recreation. But you don't have anything in mind, they are not tied together. They are not coming to do something that you want for them. You have to have a vision of what you are doing; by the time we get to the end of a couple of years of this programme. Those kids should be taught to speak a little bit of their language. They should know stories; that is when you start saying, well this week we have to do this much, and it requires alot of dedication and it requires belief in what you are doing. And accidently they might have a chance to go out and be an elder or a fisherman. See what is happening has been good, because they are learning something which is better that anything at all. The one who is the Li'l Beaver worker is the Coordinator. Doesn't mean the Coordinator has to know everything, but the Coordinator has to know who is out there who knows about fishing, trapping, teachings about what it means to be an Indian. Nishnawbe. How he learned things. The same thing you are going to have to do when you go out in that bush and try and survive. The first man that was put on this earth had to go through that same thing. He had to learn, he had to find out from the animals around him, trees, birds, that's how he learned to survive. That is all in the teachings in those stories. But those teachers are out there. Those are the Elders. That is people who have been hunting all their lives. They are the ones who know they are the teachers. Where are all the resources, the porcupine? the power, that's your resources. You need hides, you have to know how to take care of them. That is your resources. Everything is out there, but you have to go and find those things. You have to make it available for those kids to get to those places and to those people who can teach them. If that is what we want for our children, is to teach them that way of life. And that is where the teachers are. That is where the resources are. I don't know maybe

its a different thing that other people want for their children. But for my children that is what I teach them. I want them to learn that way of life, and if they don't have much opportunity to do that, some of my neices and nephews who live in the city, the don't much opportunities to do that and we should make available programmes where they would have that opportunity to experience that. I'm just going to finish here by talking on this thing - balance - because it does that in the Li'l Beavers Programme, balance for their lives. The reason I want to talk about this is because for me Nishnawbe Life, that comes first. If you start out talking about that we have to balance all these things. We have to balance living in the city. Living the Indian Way. We have to balance Indian thinking with white-man thinking. If we are going to be able to survive in this society. I will give you an example of that, I know alot of people, one parent knows how to speak their language and the other doesn't. Alot of parents know how to talk Indian. And they try hard to speak to their children. They can't. The reason is why is they have a T.V. in their home, that T.V. does the talking to them, when they go to school they got those books, those books, that T.V. aren't Ojibway. When they go and play with their friends out there, they don't speak Ojibway. If we are going to teach them that, we are going to have to teach it and be really strong about it. We don't have to worry whether they are going to be able to learn, english or not. They are in school so much, they can't help but learn. I don't know why we worry about them so much, you say be careful about teaching them all Indian stuff. How are they going to survive when they go downtown. We live in a community where that is the way we chose to live. We built out own community. And we that Indian way of life. We have our own ceremonies. We have our own laws. We have our own schools, our children have never gone to another school. They don't learn to read or write until they are nine years old because we are busy teaching them that culture; that tradition. But my son, when he was 7-8 years old, he had to go and visit his grandmother for the weekend, 3 day long weekend. He'd come back and he could sing me every jingle and every commercial. He could tell me the latest that was happening on football. I wasn't interested but he'd tell me anyway. He could tell me what programmes were on Friday nights and all the programmes that followed it.

The ones he liked the best were on Saturday, starting with cartoons in the morning, and go through the weekend. He didn't have any problems out there in that society, he survived pretty good. So if we start talking about balance, start talking about our way of life. We don't do anything about that. And I don't think that we should be afraid to say that the Li'l Beavers Programme, Courtwork Programme, to say that it is the first and most important thing to us. We are Nishnawbe, and that is our way of life. It worked in the past and it works today. Meegwetch.

JANE PEGAHMAGABOW

Speakers have already said what I was going to say. Well it is true. I had a big long list when I left home. And I see that they have all been eliminated, so I don't have to say that much. One thing I'm happy about is to see that Friendship Centres see now that they do need our help. A few years back when I did see that they did but they never reach out to us. So now that they do we can talk about it. I'm very proud of our staff. They are very hard workers. And I have elders go in there and they treat them real good. So I know they are ready to take advice to listen to whatever we haveto say, so I think that's where I was going to say we have to start from, the staff and board. We have to learn how to go and talk to the Elders. Make i' know that they want to come in and talk once in awhile. Or the staff will stay in their offices, how will we know we are needed. Most of these speakers have say everything. Start from staff and go from the I don't think that there is any problems with the programme, it is ju that the leaders are tired from doing all the work, she feels that she's doing it all by herself. That she doesn't have any help. Maybe the Board or whoever can come in for two hours you know and come in and talk to them. They could schedule some programme, where it can work into it. Maybe one could be dancing, maybe one could be singing, maybe one could be wildlife. But like you said, you have to have something to work with. You can't just walk in there and start talking. The children are going to sit there and not know where they are coming from. So the leaders have to sort of give them the right setting for it. Well that is what I would like to see in our Centre.

MIKE MEEKIS - Joe Meekis translator
(tape inaudible, done in point form)

I'm fron Sandy Lake; I enjoy listening to the Elders talk about the Li'l Beavers Programme in general; we have children who don't know way of life; we don't know how to deal with these children, how to approach life and not destroy life; I'd welcome ideas on how to approach these problems; these children who are being spoken to are taught, but don't listen to what Elders are telling them, only listen for a short time and that's it; we try and do things that will make them aware and understand what we are saying, like giving them things; they don't show it in a way that is lasting; it is our responsibility to try and make these children understand their role in life, it would be interesting to know what, we as a group, could come up with at the end of the discussions; that is what I wanted to say about these children; another thing, I'm going to talk about is about Indian life, the way Indians live. Sure it is well and good that we sit around and talk about Indian life, but practising it is the ultimate, for myself, I try to practise what I learned, normally I don't talk about how I live in a traditional sense, I'm going to put my two bits in; that is what I tell my people whenever you look around and see these things, you were given all these things to live and survive; if there is no trees you would have problems; you hear the wind, see the results of the wind, again you were given the wind to live off; that is how trees survive, moved by the wind and from the wind that is how the lake survive, if it doesn't move it won't survive. Sometimes when it rains, everything under the earth survives from this rain; sometimes with our own lives, we were brought down here to survie and we were given tools. Look around see all kinds of roots, grasses, herbs, we know how to survive if we have medical problems. I know what types of herbs and roots to use for medicinal purposes. People in my own community have seen the medicines I use, I don't try to hide my potions and herbs. There are certain people who don't like to use these medicines. Christians, and others who don't believe. They see me burning these medicines, I really don't care what they think, as long as there is a purpose. That is what I try to do, live in a traditional way. Don't want to say I'm living in a traditional way and not practise it, you asked me how we can that way of life.

We practise and do what we talk about, then we will know a traditional life, like I prepare one potion and give to a sick person, even though that pwerson doesn't believe or like that person; If the medicine works; practise what we preach, then we will live the life we are talking about. Again I stress it. We just talk and talk, we don't practise it.

JOE MORRISON

I know it is very difficult for people to attend, particularly people that have lived in the city most of their lives in an environment where they have not been taught traditional ways and when we have traditional people being to talk about the way of life, you being to wonder if they are really telling us things straight, and I know the way that I've learend from elders. As a matter of fact, I travelled with different elders when I strated being inovlved with Friendship Centres. But that is the way it is. I nkow that alot of young people are going back and trying to find out about their traditional ways, and a way of life we talk about. Try to find out who they are, trying to find some balance; meaning to their life, and when we get to talk about young children ages 7-14 and the problem of the age that theyare in, too young to be able to make them aware of that; there are some people that value their traditional ways. People like Mike, that they are able to come and talk Alot of us have lost our language, due to the system that we live (society). The elders have alot of good things that they would like to share, and for the benefit of young people, try to understand. To get that understanding is very difficult. Elders have lived through and have gone through that life and they want to share that with you.

LINUS DORE

(tape inaudible, done in point form)

Children should learn how to follow their grandmothers/fathers; they should learn the Indian way and not get mixed up with the white ways; grandmothers/fathers should bring them up and also teach them; Friendship Centers should welcome people.

JOE MORRISON

Indian people always laugh at each other, laugh at themselves, have fun no matter where they are; alot of white meetings than Indian, don't laugh at each other. (Joe told story while he was travelling, tape inaudible).

RON PROULX

(spoke in own language)

I'll just explain something in english. One time I was called up in a programme - Alcohol abuse. They wanted me to speak on life. So when I got there, I went and got some elder to sit around with me in case I made a mistake. I said I want you to correct me so I spoke in English first,because alot of children don't understand. It took me a day and a half in english, so I seen my elder. They were getting tired so I said I'll quit for now and I'll come back and do it again in Indian. So they asked me when, I said tomorrow. You could see the elder, a great big grin on his face. I came back the next day around 10:00 a.m., I was done in 1½ hour to speak in Indian the same thing I said before took me one and a half days. So I said, it was a great honour for me to be able to come here and listen to our elders and teachers, if in doubt of what I say, and do, that's who I go to. Because there is a saying not too long ago, they've lived a cycle of life; cycle of life saying, you go talk to an elder that is 80 years old, all the knowledge that person knows, so that is who I look for these things, and that is why I'm here today, to get teachings from our elders. A very good feeling when you come in here, grateful, I spoke on children. I talk about my own children when I talk about their schooling, the only I heard from the principal was when they were getting kicked out of school. And this has been going on and so I finally approached him and said, hey what is going on here? my daughter is sitting here, and I asked him what are you doing? When I put my children in your hands, I expect you to look after them, I said you call me here, you tell me this thing, you shouldn't do that, and in a sense, but to learn what you are teaching and try to teach. He said "no". I expected that because the only time I ever hear from you is when you are kicking them out or locking them out of school. So I told him who they were. I said they are Indians,

regardless, so I said what I am going to do is take them out of here. So I approached a different school. I spoke to the principal and I explained to him what we are and what my children are and I wanted them to be treated as such. I said they find it hard to come in here, the atmosphere itself, the feelings, that is what ruins our kids. They don't want to learn and I talk to my kids and I told them the very same thing. I said that is what you learn. What I want you to do is walk straight and tall. Keep your head up be proud of who you are. That is what I told them. If not, I'm taking you out of these schools, and I'm not putting you in another one. They said okay. I get across to them when I speak to them. I speak of myself of what I feel of what I went through. So six months in there (highschool) different high schools, they came out top students. They were goint to the other school for a year and getting kicked out. So when we speak to our children, that is what we are trying. Down home we don't have too much of it, trying to get across to other small children, not to be sarcastic about the other race. I don't like to hear that from the children. I just want them to understand who they are, once they understand who they are, then they'll get after their language. I got another girl at home, 14 years old. My wife doesn't speak Indian, my wife was raised by Toronto Indian people, real Nishnawbe. I just suppost she didn't take it, sometimes I call her down, because I got that over here. I can speak Indian, sometimes I'll just it in, like I said it is kind of hard.

When I listen to elders I know that they are talking about life. Wild ones we had. I forgot I started to tell the elders how foolish I was to laze around till I was 40, and I got into a car accident, and I died for one week - 8 days - and I was with all our people, Nishnawbe-All I could see, spirit of people, my grandfather, my dad, my mother, and all the rest of them looked at me, and they told me, I wasn't going to come here, at that time, they were going to send me back. They were going to give me a job, and they would watch me, look after me. So I was sent back. I didn't tell them of what happened to me, when I did come back. There was a doctor there, and I was watching him. I was up here, and I was watching him but I didn't know that was me there at the time. I didn't talk to him in Indian. So he made a mistake, so he went to my head here, nursed it, so when I came to he came by and said

you are finally awake. I said, yeah. I'm awake but I'm awfully tired. I want to go to sleep. I want to have a good sleep. He grabbed me and he was hanging onto me and he said, no, you can't go to sleep, I said I want to go to sleep. I'm hired, he said you've been sleeping along time. I said no, I've been watching you, he took two steps back, what did you see? There are these little people you made a mistake in my arm. Then you started tapping my head. He let me go to sleep but he made me promise I'd wake up.

JIM BOSHKAYKIN

(Tape inaudible done in point form)

Friendship Centre in Atikokan asked me a couple of months ago to work with them as their elder, so I did. I have told them things I learned from my grandfather and I'm going to help them as much as I can. He said what this white society is doing, before Native people had no problems, what is happening now? I guess that is how young people learn language and the rest of it. What I do when I'm working with Friendship Centres, I like to help them, learn the language, in order for them to understand about culture. Little kids don't actually listen to you, when you speak. I've been with National Health and welfare for the past 15 years. I've learned alot from this, I was told by a guy out west, as soon as a child is born, young mothers feed them cows milk. Before the whiteman came, all mothers breast fed them, and the children listened to the elders speak. These conferences I go to, I learn alot of things, when children don't listen, that is because we were fed cows milk. These young mothers also do this so they can go out I'll do my best to help the Atikokan Friendship Centre, they told me in five yeras time, I won't be able to work with government anymore, so I'll work with these people who don't understand the Native language/life.

BERT YERXA - Joe Morrison translating

The reason I chose not to speak English, but I've learned english when I was a young boy, we used to play on ice and when I was about six, a whiteman came, catholic priest, and he asked me why we were running around out there and he said he din't like what he heard, the way that

priest talked to them, he said Indian people that live here, their just like god, he didn't like to speak english. And I thought about tyring to learn as much as I could about the way Indians lived. And he talked about his wanting to learn from his grandfathers. Teaching him to trap, everything that Indians have done to live, to survive, with nature, that is what I wanted to learn, when he lived with this grandfather. His grandfather taught him everything he needed to know to durvive. My grandfather knew more traditional ways of medicine, taught me to doctor myself with medicines. He was up in Fort Frances on the trapline, stays in the bush, but has never missed a winter or summer going up to his trapline. He then started talking about children. Some of them are hard to handle, hard to talk to now that summer is coming. People are going into town and start stealing. They start getting into alcohol, drugs, and the people that work with don't know how to handle them; to deal with them; that's what they have to learn. The people that worked in the programme, thinking about how good it would be for somebody to take these kids out. Lot of kids go into town, where they don't learn much, feels good to have somebody take the kids out into the bush, where they would learn about nature. The Indian way of life. The way of life we were given, all life that Indian people have lived. Some of these have passed an area and they were given a vision, to make a picture on a rock. Sometimes they see a painting, a man sitting on a rock. But allthese findings that we've talked about, like everything you have to offer. Tobacco, when you go buy these rock paintings, very spiritual paintings. One time when he was paddling or gone off to th lake, he'd offer tobacco to the water. A man came again to offer mor tobacco. But these are the things that you'd like to see young peopl told about. He talked about an experience that he had , he always been out in the bush, by the elders in the community. His grandfather, his uncles, taught him all those things. Never get lost in the bush. In the winter time, snowing, fog, he never got lost, by the way the ground when he goes out in the bush, he looks at his surroundings, picks out some landmarks. He talked about an experience he had, an American came up to fish, all the time in Canada. I guess he was going out Moose hunting, or something.it must have been in the fall that they were getting ready to go out, so they went out in a plane. Until the American didn't tell him where they were going, I guess he told the

pilot before they took off, but he didn't tell him where they were going, because they were trying to get him lost. I guess when they were flying around he looked at the land they were flying over. Tried to memorize all the landmarks, so when they landed, they were there a couple of days, they got there a day before the moose season, they wanted to do something, so they can go duck hunting, he told him well go to the river in the Bay, and the guy looked at him and said you never been there before, so how are you going to know? They didn't know that the he had eyes to look around while they were flying around. And that's the thing that relays the importance of keeping your eyes open when you are going some place strange. When you go out into the bush, you can never get lost. He told them, if you take me to Chicago you'd put him in the middle of the city, it is easy for him to get lost in the city. But it is very hard to get lost in the bush. Because that is the way he was brought up, and he also said again, that is very important for the people that work in the Centres to remember and try to get the children out in the bush, for them to learn, get someone who is willing to take them out, maybe take six kids out at a time. To teach them all these things that he talked about. The way Indian people live, begin to respect Native ways, that we have in order for us to survive. He talked about at home, Friendship Centres have a lady that works and she has quite a few Li'l Beavers, but often wonder how she was able to work with the group of kids. The place was too small, sometimes have nine large groups, and it is hard to get all the kids and keep an eye on them. Very little room to work. (I guess he's trying to tell us we have to find a different place, trying to get as close to what he said in Englsih - forgive me if I missed anything.)

OLIVER WISCHEE

One thing I've really noticed in the last few years, anyway, I was talking to the Hudson's Bay Manager, of Moosonee, and he told us as the years go by there is less and less handicraft work by Native People. And it seems that it is not being passed onto the younger generation. Maybe they haven't got time to learn, I don't know. And the same old generation, they used to do a lot of handicrafts. Tobaggons, today you go the store; you pick up a snowshoe, where does it come from?

Hong Kong, Japan. So this programme that is coming up, called Li'l Beavers, I think about it alot. They should get help from the Elders, take advice on how to go about it. How to make those handicrafts. I'm not one. I sure don't know how to make them, but I sure can go and learn, ask the elders, get all the information, I can and pass it onto the younger children and we have to start somewhere. I think from there can't keep hopping from one thing to another. I was thinking about maybe get some representatives from the Li'l Beavers, get an elderly person to talk with them. Sit with them, and ask questions. How do we go about this? Some idea on how that may work with small children. I have a little boy of my own, he goes up town, I ask what he did, just kinds of mumbles. With this programme, he can learn to talk english. I'm an Indian, whatever and he'll keep that andhow him all this trapping and fishing, through this programme. He I think the programme Li'l Beavers, is a very good thing.
Meegwetch.

RILEY ROOT Joe Morrison translating

In order to gain more knowledge and for our children, go back to speaking Indian, as a reminder of the past. (Joe translating). I don't know if I can translate everything for him. He talked about his bad leg, World War I, talking about inaction. Talked about school, the children going to school, high school. Talked about reserves, some of the band councils, talked about people that aren't members of the band. Accepting those people. Native people that are not treaty. Don't have a status number. But they are still people. The children that belong to the reserve. So they go to school, not knowing where they belong. Talked about starting to accept these people in the community. He mentioned alot of education. People very important. Also important for people to retain their own language, Indian ways. How Indians live. Hope I did justice in trying to translate for him. Different dialect.

MARIUS SPENCE -Nicole Spence translating
(notes taken from staff)

It is only through the Elders' life and experience that the younger ones will learn; By learning, listening, watching, the way they give and treat others is how young people will learn. Somethings being discussed today are critical problems for the people. Everybody should be concerned with the problems we are facing, make it your business to get together and talk about these problems. Main concern is the 16-18 year olds. Should all try to look for ways to help these ones, as they are causing stress for the whole family. Alot of them are being sent away and when they come back they do the same things. Friendship Centres should develop programmes for these adolescents. Tomorrow he will present his concerns about these problems, the situations we are facing.

BARNEY BATISE

Left my Centre looking for an elder. So I sit on my desk and I'm wondering who I might have coming to this. Because of elders are appointed that way. Lou who is recovering from cancer, my staff members of the Li'l Beavers Coordinator, and some of the other people recognize me as being able to teach so they seen that. In reality, I was the first elder at the North Bay Indian Friendship Centre, so anyway hving done that, and having my tobacco there, I ran around one side of my desk put my tobacco there and I ran around to the other side, took it, and here I am. Now my mother often told me when I was very young "watch out that you don't lose the way you were taught", keep that and look after it for awhile. That is all I'm giving you. I try. It is very difficult for me, but I'm still trying. I'm trying very hard. When we talk about children, I also like to share something else with you. Years ago, my great grandfather was a medicine man. My dad was a man that they used in the ceremonies that were performed, so that some of this, I suppose was handed down and it rubs off, now my great grandmother whenever my grandfather was in the death bed, he took a handkerchief and tied her to a chair. He told her to stay and look after the children. I often think about that to this day. What's the meaning? what's that mean? Somebody was trying to tell us something.

Then sometimes I wonder, I think it is really hard, sometimes it means to me that we are tied to ajob. There is absolutely no way around it. none. There is not a person in this room that can give me an excuse of why we should not look after our children. There is no excuse. None. It is our responsibility - ours - sometimes that is the way it comes to me. That story, when she was tied down. Other times when she was tied there was because she was a mother. Grandmother. It is a very heavy responsibility for a woman. But woman must do that job. When you go down for the women to look after that job then the man must do his job, and so on. The whole thing comes as one big package. And we can't give up our responsibility. Father tied my grandmother down and say you look after the children. That is what was on his mind, and so some of that was passed onto me and I know the story very well, so I share that with you, and that is what we must do.

When I look at the Li'l Beavers Programme, the children's programme, and I know one thing for sue, pretty well everyone i-cluding ourselves, in North Bay, we are running out of room we are running out of room in two places, we are running out of room in our hearts for those people; sometimes there is only a half a tribe. So both things have to be patched up. Both things have to sorted and like I said there is no excuse. At our place, we have now 50 children, have to be looked after. And there's 58 more waiting on the waiting list. And I have no excuse but to do something to capture the others and in terms of looking at our language,our traditions, and things of that nature, also sometimes what we don't do, what we do, we got there to use. Things that we do that's right there sometimes, we pass that. I often see the Friendship Centre bring in a person from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, however, to speak at their Friendship Centre, when that person speaks at the Friendship Centre, you listen to that person. So we must use the people that are around. We must use them. So I think that is important. Very important. When we talk about our Friendship Centre we talk about life at the Friendship Centre. It is life for our people. Gives life to alot of people. Alot of good things develop. Alot of things that were started. But needs now to be looked after. Now are hard times. Believe me I'm really really gald that we are having this now, because I don't think from the things I hear and the things that I need that there will ever be

harder times coming for Native people in this country. So we are going to have to be there together. You know we hear things about us, but it is the thing that we listen to the story sounds. One time there were a couple of people on the shore line, and a fellow was looking into the lake, just looking around and he had a little dog wit him. And another Indian came along, standing side by side, looking into the lake. And the guy didn't know the other Indian person, so trying to make small talk, the little dog sitting there, and the guy asked him "what's you dogs name?" he said, "Listen", he said I don't hear anything. So the guy said come on Listen, let's go home.

The other one that I heard is translation. What's lost in translation, and what happens to our children? Courtworker in Thunder Bay, not there anymore, and she was telling me one day she had to go to the hospital to translate for a doctor. An Indian patient (old fellow), asked him when he had his last bowel movement? So she asked in Indian, simply meant what's the last time your bowels moved?", so he said whenever I walk."

But for whatever I can help out in this place, I'll be around. They have sent me here or I sent myself. However it happend, I'm here from the North Bay Friendship Centre. I still have alot to learn, but I'm here. I'm like everyone else. I've had my problems with alcohol, I've had my problems with family life, I've had my problems with children. Share with you, I have four children, 3 grandchildren, they are up in James Bay, now moose hunting. I had three boys and as they were growing up, I know for sure, they are the end of the Batise line, the other one is a Technologist. The other going to school. So I thought to myself if I didn't treach my children the Indian way, have to dig a hole, once that I'm the one who carries the ball. I was talking to to a friend of mine, this Indian woman, I was telling her my story, my problems, what I felt and in her wisdom she said you just be patient. Sure enough, my granddaughter who is six years old can speak cree and is now learning ojibway. And is just as Indian as Indian could be. Black eyes, the whole thing. The oldest grandson, is the same. You take him into the bush and you are talking to a different person. He sees things that other children don't see.

It is just amazing. So it is showing up and then my youngest grandson, Barney, he's carrying on the traditional family name. So I guess it is showing up now. If I can get young Barney looking like old Barney!

JOE MORRISON

It is just about time we break for the day, but I'd just like to reflect on the things that we've heard from the Elders that were, talking, in regards to the Li'l Beavers Programme, is that we need to change the direction or focus of activities of the Programme. They need to first of all begin teaching or showing the children the Native ways. Also in regards to the whole Friendship Centre that we need to do that. When we talk about the just one programme, very important thing that we need to do is show and teach and start following Native spirituality. Code of ethics. It is a very good thing that we are reminded again, and I heard elders talking about tht need for going back to Nature. Taking children out. Showing them how to survive in the busy. And I guess there is a reason for that. When we listen to the elders talk, they talk about coming to an end. End of age to come soon. It is not the end of the world. It is the end of an age that is coming to an end. People that belong on this island that live on this island need to go back to the ways, original teachings that we hear alot of people talking about. Teachings that help elders to help children to survive this end of age to come. Listen to alot of spiritual people that talk about the buffalo. When all the hair comes off the buffalo, that is when the the end of age comes. Listen to when elders speak. Cree elders. Ojibway Elders. Sioux elders. So it is very important that we begin to teach our young children to learn about surviving in the bush. What to do, nature, and also hear the need to begin to learn our own language; the need for having elders right at the Friendship Centre, to be right there. People have those kinds of problems. They want to learn, have some knowledge. Also hear the need to expand. The people that are working there have more than one. People that are really overworked, have large numbers of people involved in the programme, need more that one programme working there. These are things that we ask the elders to give us direction. Future directions

for the programme and that are the things that we have to focus on when we go back to our Centres. Talking about overall organization. Something to keep in mind. One thing before we go, mention to the elders to think about, tonight, the future direction of the Native Courtwork Programme, ways that we could improve our services before the court. Also the new Programme, which the Native Family Courtwork Programme, that deals with the children going to court. The new Young Offenders Act that is coming into effect. Problems with their children, problems with Children's Aid Societies, very important that these workers are given some kind of direction and how to work in that area. We shall ask the elders for direction tomorrow.