

**TRADITIONS IN A COLONIZED WORLD:
TWO REALITIES OF A FIRST NATION**

by

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ABSTRACT

Set on the rugged south shore of the Island of Newfoundland against a backdrop of ongoing colonial oppression by church and state and despite all odds, Miawpukek First Nation at Conne River, NF, is the only Mi'kmaq Band in the province to achieve federal Status. In less than 20 years, the Chief and Band Council have taken community life from subsistence level to a place where every member is engaged in work and living conditions that are typically mainstream Canadian. This critical ethnography traces their Mi'kmaq historical roots in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and provides a history of more than a century of life from the perspectives of the People.

This researcher spent more than a year living in the community and participating in ongoing daily activities, special celebrations and sacred ceremonies. It became profoundly evident that Miawpukek First Nation is, as are most First Nations peoples, caught between two worlds: the Eurocentric world of surviving in the 21st Century and their traditional culture which is based on a spiritual relationship with the land. The question is posed about whether Canada's religious freedoms are being denied as Aboriginal peoples' lands are systematically usurped.

Although the nature of housing, education and livelihood has changed for Miawpukek First Nation, there is a spiritual crisis – as evidenced by ongoing alcoholism, abuse, and suicide. Most have lost a traditional understanding of how their universe works and their place in it. However, there is increasing interest among some community members to regain traditional knowledge, language and practices in order to encourage sacred values.

To further this endeavour this dissertation includes a brief outline of some traditional philosophy and practices and a listing of plant and animal medicines. A discussion of healing, religion, and traditional understandings which are based on principles of balance and relationships rather than universal laws has important implications for virtually all First Nations peoples. Efforts to achieve healthy individuals in healthy communities can incorporate, but must go beyond, the 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion which does not consider the unique cosmology and needs of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

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CHAPTER 1: THE PEOPLE OF THE DAWN

Under its spell of beauty

I surrender to my dreams.
Once again I live the
 life of the Ancient Ones.
I dance freely with the
 shadows of time
Where the songs of Mother
 Earth encircle my spirit.

For I am Mi'kmaw...

Shirley Kiju Kawi ©1994 (Mother Quill of Membertou,
Mi'kmaq 420: Wi'katikn Iapjiwewey Language Program,
1990.)

The history of the Mi'kmaq is an epic of survival, endurance and determination. The People¹ have lived along the North American eastern seaboard for some 10,000 years but it took less than a hundred years after the arrival of French Breton fishermen in 1504 for their numbers to be decimated. This dissertation chronicles this early history, the struggles of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq generally, and Miawpukek First Nation at Conne River specifically. It documents how this community was forced to shift their spiritual connection to the land and ways of being in the world and integrate European belief systems in order to survive.

The history of Miawpukek First Nation is a microcosm of the national – and indeed, international – Aboriginal experience of oppression. They, as have Indigenous peoples worldwide, had to forgo their own systems of order in favour of the order embedded in colonialism. Battiste (2000) explains that these imposed beliefs ignored the order that already existed. “The totalization of the negative values associated with the state of nature ignored

¹ Lnu'k, the People, was their Mi'kmaq name for themselves. (Whitehead, 1988, p. 1)

that European intervention was burdened with the deathly disordering of a situation that already had its own subtle order” (p. 70).

The arrival of Europeans in North America and the genocide from disease and subversion by factors such as alcohol, taking children from families and ongoing criticism of their traditional beliefs have contributed to a spiritual crisis that has overtaken not only this community but Indigenous communities across North America and around the world. Battiste (2000) postulates that oppression, including colonialism, intolerance and discrimination involves a denial of the individual spirit and its quest for self-expression. “The experience of oppression is spiritual death. It is about the destruction of our inborn spiritual faith in the importance of individuality and, indeed, in the value of trying to stay alive.” (p. 5)

But it is more than just staying alive that is important, it is the desire for staying alive healthy that provides the foundation for this paper. Like the Cree perspective postulated by Adelson (2000), the health of Miawpukek First Nation “has as much to do with social relation, land, and cultural identity as it does with individual physiology.” Adelson goes on to say that from an anthropological perspective health is seen as a “complex dynamic process, not as a baseline standard of biomedical or epidemiological normalcy” and that definitions of health “are laden with ideological nuances and can never be separated from cultural norms and values.” (p. 3)

The Mi’kmaq cultural identity, based on a traditional understanding of their connection to the land, can provide a touchstone for the health and healing process of Miawpukek First Nation. The early 1980s approach to the fundamentals of health – “ecological sanity and social justice” writes Hancock in Chu (1994, p. 36) – evolved to encompass the principles of sustainability and equity. The Ottawa Charter for Health

Promotion was developed in 1986 with a mandate for “action to achieve Health for All by the year 2000” which provides the basis for well-being that goes beyond healthy lifestyles. This dissertation goes beyond the Charter and postulates that for an Indigenous community, it is also self-determination, encouraging healthy life choices and regaining spiritual practices based on a traditional relationship with the land, that will foster healthy people in a healthy community.

During these past five hundred years First Nations peoples across North America have been discriminated against, stigmatized, marginalized, pathologized, criminalized and romanticized. Battiste (2000) clarifies the contradictory views which portray Indigenous peoples as “wild, promiscuous, propertyless, and lawless” or as “the noble savage who lived with natural law but without government, husbandry, and much else” (p. 68). She states that the civilization that was fabricated by Europeans:

prevented the imaginary subjects of the state of nature from contradicting the Eurocentric universal... European thinkers simply ignored empirical evidence that did not fit with the patterns that they were imposing on the world...Colonial thought asserts that all differences are final, thus confining Indigenous peoples to alienation in perpetuity.” (p. 69)

This alienation is further perpetrated by separation from their Indigenous value system where, as Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) writes: “ They have been swept up into the games and machinations of a world they only partly understand. Divide and rule still operates as a basic strategy for dealing with indigenous peoples. It still operates because unfortunately it still works.” (p. 99) O’Neil, Reading et al. (1998) discuss the portrayal of Aboriginal existence in Canada as “an image of sick, disorganized communities [which] can be used to justify paternalism and dependency.” (p. 230) Their paper also concerns itself with constructing “an alternative discourse that challenges the legitimacy of the dominant

epidemiological discourse and contributes to the production of knowledge about Aboriginal communities that is liberating rather than repressive.” (Ibid)

This theme has been the guiding principle of my research at Conne River in order to give voice to the People because I understand that research is one of the ways in which, as Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) writes (p. 8):

the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them (including the state). It is realized in the myriad of representations and ideological constructions of the Other in scholarly and ‘popular’ works and in the principles which help to select and recontextualize those constructions in such things as the media, official histories and school curricula.

The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) – renamed the First Nations University of Canada on June 22, 2003 – sent an unsolicited brief to the Social Science and Health Research Council (SSHRC) in May of 2002 where they emphasized the need to recognize a paradigm shift in Aboriginal research. “Among the characteristics of this new research paradigm is getting away from a persistent ‘epidemiological emphasis on the negative’ in Aboriginal research.” Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) writes that this negativity was already established by the nineteenth century with:

established systems of rule and forms of social relations which were gendered, hierarchical and supported by rules, some explicit and others masked or hidden. The principle of ‘humanity’ was one way in which the implicit or hidden ruled could be shaped. To consider indigenous peoples as not fully human, or not human at all, enabled distance to be maintained and justified policies of either extermination or domestication. (p. 26)

To Indigenous peoples colonialism is synonymous with oppression and dehumanizing imperatives, writes Tuhiwai-Smith (1999, p. 26) She explicates that the effects of colonialism have alienated peoples from themselves as a result of Indigenous peoples worldwide being classified as not fully human:

[S]ome of us were not even considered partially human. Ideas about what counted as human in association with the power to define people as human or not human were already encoded in imperial and colonial discourses...Imperialism provided the means through which concepts of what counts as human could be applied systematically as forms of classification, for example through hierarchies of race and typologies of different societies. In conjunction with imperial power and with 'science', these classification systems came to shape relations between imperial powers and indigenous societies. (p. 25)

From the nineteenth century onwards the processes of dehumanization were often hidden behind justifications for imperialism and colonialism which were clothed within an ideology of humanism and liberalism and the assertion of moral claims which related to the concept of civilized 'man'. (p. 26)

There has been a shift in the discourse of colonialism by some calling it post-colonial, which implies this period of colonialism is now over. However, Tuhiwai-Smith points out that from the Indigenous perspective there is "rather compelling evidence that in fact this has not occurred. And, even when they have left formally, the institutions and legacy of colonialism have remained." (p. 98)

A BRIEF MI'KMAQ HISTORY

Although it is not clear when the Mi'kmaq first arrived on Newfoundland it seems entirely likely it was well before the Europeans, as it has been proven that a canoe crossing between Cape Breton and Newfoundland is possible and there is archaeological evidence of settlements carbon dated to thousands of years before Cabot arrived in 1497. (Discussion pp. 73-76) The early Bretons, who were quickly joined by Normans and Basques from France and fishers from England, northwest Spain and Portugal, made seasonal voyages to Labrador, Cape Breton and Newfoundland. Prins (1996, p. 44) states that these expeditions "more or less coincided with the migratory movements of Mi'kmaq family bands which returned each spring to the coast from their winter trapping grounds." Prins goes on to say that by the

1520s there were hundreds of fishers and by 1578 there were some twenty thousand fishing off the shores annually. (Ibid, p. 47)

He describes enthusiastic bartering between the Mi'kmaq, who were exchanging furs, and the fishers who had hatchets, knives and other metal tools and implements, and manufactured products. However, contact brought with it diseases for which the Indigenous peoples had no natural immunity (Ibid, p.53) and within a century there were waves of epidemics of smallpox, measles, cholera, bubonic plague and whooping cough. At least 75 percent of the some 15,000 Mi'kmaqs who inhabited the areas died. Following another epidemic wave between 1616 and 1618 only some 2,000 survived and after that were unable to withstand European colonization. Prins points out that "Recurrent epidemics made it increasingly difficult for the survivors to resist actively the intrusion on their lands by Europeans who, in the 17th Century, began an all-out colonization effort. Miraculously, the Mi'kmaq survived as a people." (Ibid, p. 54)

Until recently most of the histories of Aboriginal peoples in Canada have been written by Eurocentric authors who had little understanding or interest in traditional practices. Often they were filling a government or religion-based mandate for assimilation so Aboriginal perspectives were ignored, at best. In the worse-case scenarios traditional ways of being were totally maligned and generations lost the spiritual base that defined their understanding of their place in the world. "A great deal of Canadian Indian history depends for its reconstruction on the written records of a series of European and Canadian officials who were all very different from, and often hostile to, the natives about whom they wrote." (Porter, 1981, p. 1) Porter further explains that this problem of a Europeanized history "confronts anyone interested in examining the history of pre-literate or semi-literate

Canadian minority groups. It means that a study of Indians is bound, in many cases, to be a study of those who acted upon Indians and not a study of Indian cultural patterns.” (Ibid)

Miawpukek First Nation is located at Conne River on the east shore of Bay D’Espoir on the south coast of the Island, and until 1965 was accessible only by plane, boat or foot. (See Map - Appendix 1) A road with year-round accessibility was completed in 1998. At the beginning of the 20th Century the people lived on the land in traditional ways and spoke Mi’kmaq. Then in 1924 the Roman Catholic priest serving the area mandated that all traditional practices, including speaking the language, were forbidden and the tenets of the Church were to be exclusively followed. This was despite the Concordat Agreement negotiated between 1610 and 1635 by the Mi’kmaq Grand Chief and the Holy See which is supposed to prevent either colonialists or priests from subverting the Aboriginal religion, language or culture. (Henderson, 1997, pp. 91-93).

The Chief of the time left with other community members to live in Cape Breton and the Band had no chief for almost 50 years. The people lost most of their traditional Mi’kmaq language and healing practices and the spirituality in which they were based. As is true for many First Nations communities, traditional practices and values were eroded almost to the point of extinction but during the past three decades there has been a gradual increase in interest, awareness and participation in traditional Mi’kmaq practices. In the 1970s Conne River Reserve became politicized, the people formed an elected Band Council and within a few years the struggle for status was initiated.

Their actions culminated with a hunger strike and finally the federal government relented and in 1984 recognized the Conne River Mi’kmaq as status Indians and it became law under the Indian Act in 1986. The government funding which became available was used

to create jobs and every Band member has been provided with jobs, suburban-style housing and post-secondary school education. The other 10 bands are affiliated through the Federation of Newfoundland Indians and some are still working towards federal recognition. There is a recently formed Ktaqamkuk Mi'kmaq Alliance of Newfoundland which is another possible avenue for achieving status.

Throughout this dissertation I have referred to “the community” as the people and the Reserve area and have refrained from using terms such as “in the field.” This has personalized and humanized the context of the research and has encouraged action by the People themselves. Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) comments that:

‘the Community’ is regarded as being a rather different space, in a research sense, to ‘the field’. ‘Community’ conveys a much more intimate, human and self-defined space, whereas ‘field’ assumes a space ‘out there’ where people may or may not be present. What community research relies upon and validates is that the community itself makes its own definitions...In all community approaches *process* – that is, methodology and method – is highly important. In many projects the process is far more important than the outcome. Processes are expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and to educate. They are expected to lead one small step further towards self-determination. (p. 127)

CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

One of the main assumptions of a qualitative method rather than quantitative is that such methods as survey and experimental research are an antithesis to the assumption that first-hand observation and participation in ‘natural’ settings is the only way for the nature of the social world to unfold and for research reports to, “capture the social processes observed and the social meanings that generate them. On the basis of these assumptions, ethnography is directed towards producing what our referred to as ‘theoretical’, ‘analytical’ or ‘thick’ descriptions.” (Hammersley, 1992, p. 12)

Hammersley writes that these descriptions are distinctive in that they are theoretical descriptions. He acknowledges that although descriptions are about particulars they cannot *be* (his italics) theories because theories are about universals. On the other hand:

all descriptions use concepts which refer to an infinite number of phenomena (past, present, future and possible). And *all* descriptions are structured by theoretical assumptions: what we include in descriptions is determined in part by what we think causes what. In short, descriptions can not be theories, but all descriptions are theoretical in the sense that they rely on concepts and theories. (p. 13)

Conventional ethnographers usually speak to other researchers for their subjects while critical ethnographers accept an added research task of giving more authority to the subjects' voice. Thomas (1993) writes.

Critical ethnography refers to the reflective process of choosing between conceptual alternatives and making value-laden judgments of meaning and method to challenge research, policy, and other forms of human activity. Conventional ethnography describes what is; critical ethnography asks what could be...As a consequence, critical ethnography proceeds from an explicit framework that, by modifying consciousness or invoking a call to action, attempts to use knowledge for social change. Conventional ethnographers study culture for the purpose of describing it; critical ethnographers do so to change it. (p. 4)

This critical ethnography shows how the traditional hunting lands and language were taken from the people, that their culture has been eroded and the people marginalized and that they are taking steps toward self-government. The perspectives of the lived experience of the Elders of Conne River have been included, as well as a compendium of some traditional plant and animal medicines. My experience of living within the heart of the community's daily life with its ongoing joys and sorrows, tensions and celebrations has enabled me to hear and reflect on the voices of the People. It is through this lens that suggestions are respectfully made throughout the paper and summarized in the discussion.

The research is grounded in a practical and personal participation in community life. This lived experience has provided the primary data for what Jackson (1989) calls radical empiricism which, he writes:

accommodates our shifting sense of ourselves as subjects and as objects, as acting upon and being acted upon the world, of living with and without certainty, of belonging and being estranged, *yet resists arresting any one of these modes of experience in order to make it foundational to a theory of knowledge.* [Jackson's italics]...Clearly, it must be grounded somehow in the actual events, objects, and interpersonal relationships that make up the quotidian world. But this requires apposite metaphors, particular ground rules, and discursive techniques. I want to call this rather ad hoc methodology and discursive style *radical empiricism*, a term William James coined to emphasize that experience includes 'transitive' as well as 'substantive' elements, conjunctions as well as disjunctions, and to encourage us to recover a lost sense of the immediate, active, ambiguous 'plenum of existence' in which all ideas and intellectual constructions are grounded. (p. 3)

I have been inspired by ethnographer Christine Helliwell's description of a longhouse in Kalimantan Barat (North Borneo, a region of Malaysia) when, rather than community interaction stopping at the walls, what seemed to be monologues always had an audience through the flow of sound and light. "They were a way of affirming and recreating the ties across apartments that made [the woman] a part of the longhouse as a whole rather than a member of an isolated household." (Ibid, p. 7)

In a similar way with communication at Conne River, I "came to be able to separate out the distinct strands that were individual voices" in the Newfoundland-speak of coffee breaks at the Clinic and social gatherings or voices of children playing. The lived experience of being in the centre of the community provided a context for the knowledge and understanding of another way of being in the world.

An objective of this research has been to understand life in the community well enough to make suggestions in the end discussion that can be used towards achieving healthy individuals in a healthy community. Conne River is a beautiful location and there is money,

housing, education and employment. But the crisis, which I came to understand is a spiritual crisis, has led many people onto a path of alcoholism, abuse and death by accident or suicide. This “shadow side” is kept hidden but in order to live a life in balance and harmony it must be acknowledged and the cycle of abuse and violence broken.

For most in the community, generations of assaults on their traditional practices and language by church and state has resulted in having no knowledge of a way of life that is based on a spiritual relationship with the land and their place in it. An holistic Medicine Wheel way of being in the world can incorporate traditional knowledge and philosophy with 21st Century life. (Marshall, n.d.; Knockwood, 1992) Understanding both realities can provide a powerful basis for self-determination. Krawll (1994) writes:

Aboriginal Peoples’ social identity, including their economy, social structure, political culture, and religion, is tied to the land. In this way the Aboriginal approach to living or life is a holistic process, or as it has often been described, ‘becoming one with the land.’ Aboriginal people perceive that the greatest need to improve the quality of life lies in human development. In contrast, the non-Native response to improving the quality of life is more often perceived as the development of economic standards, often through the use of natural resources. (p. 72)

It was through living in the centre of Conne River Reserve for about 1½ years that I came to understand the profound nature of the relationships of the people with each other and their connection with the land. This is an example of how fruitful explanations can be derived from chronological flow. Miles and Huberman (1994) point out that; “good qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new integrations; they help the researcher to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks.” (p. 1) I realized that being on the land is central to the Mi’kmaq way of life and is the basis of traditional spirituality and an understanding the universe and their place in it.

Previous research at Conne River Health and Social Services (CRHSS) has shown a need for more information on traditional healing practices. Confidential reports of research in which CRHSS has participated, have been denoted as CRHSS*. I was given permission from the Band to use this information when they provided the reports. The CRHSS* 1994 Executive Summary, the *Interim Evaluation of Health Transfer Agreement "Iloqaptasik Npisuney Tlsutaqn:" between the Miawpukek Band of Conne River and Health and Welfare Canada*, asks what makes CRHSS distinctive from a non-native clinic, and if there are programs, services and practices that reflect the Mi'kmaq culture from a more traditional perspective. "If CRHSS continues to access aboriginal funding sources, it may be helpful to articulate those areas that define their native identity."(p. 4)

Recommendation No. 31 of the CRHSS* 1996 Summary, *Final Evaluation - Health Transfer Agreement – Miawpukek Band of Conne River and Health and Welfare Canada*, states that the Director should make provision for a training program for CRHSS staff, in order to improve their understanding and knowledge of traditional healing. (Appendix A, p. vii) The Report notes that the focus on traditional healing appears to be driven primarily by the Chief's interest in "spiritualism"² and traditional culture, and that a healing centre was to be built in the community. (p. 55) This 1996 Final Evaluation states (p. iii) that:

CRHSS has grown into a highly regarded, highly valued, and mature agency with well developed organizational and management structures, policies and procedures, with a range of health and social services being delivered ...by well trained, qualified and professional staff who are deeply committed to the community in which nearly all are resident Band members.

² The Chief's interest is in traditional Mi'kmaq spirituality. His interest may not be Spiritualism which is, according to the Random House College Dictionary (1988, p. 1268), "the belief or doctrine that the spirits of the dead communicate with the living, esp. through mediums."

The evaluation team from the Institute for Human Resource Development noted that spiritual and holistic aspects of traditional healing are not well known and understood in the community, and that this branch of the Roman Catholic Church has been effective in “suppressing, if not entirely supplanting Micmac belief systems.” (p. 55) This is in violation of the Concordat, an agreement which was developed between 1610 and 1635 by the Mi’kmaq Grand Chief and the Holy See, which was supposed to maintain Aboriginal cultural integrity by preventing either the colonialists or the priests from subverting their religion, language or culture. (Henderson, 1997)

The 1996 Final Report stated that the CRHSS staff should be more informed about traditional healing given the level of interest of both the Chief and the community. The evaluation team said “only one or two claimed to have any depth of understanding or interest” in ceremony. (p. 55) This may be the authors’ experience, but it belied my experience and discussions with many people who participated in ceremonies such as sweat lodges, ceremonial circles, traditional drumming and dancing and the hundreds who attended the powwows. I was told in personal conversations with CRHSS staff during July, 1997, that 10 percent to 15 percent of the Band were traditionalists and interest had increased since there had been community discussions with a traditionalist who visited from Cape Breton at that time.

By the year 2000, the powwow has become an annual event and has included participants from many areas of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and from as far away as Vancouver, Alaska and Oklahoma; St. Anne’s School holds an annual mini-powwow with full regalia and ceremony; Mi’kmaq language classes are conducted in the school for both students and adults; sweat lodges are announced on community cable TV; and community

ceremonies include traditional drumming and dancing, and traditional feasts are community events.

RESEARCHER'S PATH TO MIAWPUKEK

My first contact with Miawpukek First Nation was in July 1996 when I was a presenter at the International Traditional Medicine and Healing Conference which was co-sponsored by the Band Council and the Faculty of Medicine at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) at St. John's. My presentation utilized the semi-precious gemstone rose quartz in a participatory workshop on Energy Healing. Afterwards, a Band member initiated contact by requesting a piece of rose quartz for his medicine bundle. He chose a piece and exchanged the information that the Band was building a traditional healing lodge behind the Conne River Health and Social Services clinic. I inquired about his involvement and he said he was Chief Misel Joe. Spontaneously, I gave him a very large piece of rose quartz saying "Since you're the Chief, you'll need this." The next day he gave me Holy Water from a Mi'kmaq sacred site³...and the conversation began.

A few months later Chief Misel gave me permission to return the next summer to meet with Band personnel to determine what research questions and approaches would be most beneficial for the Band. During that summer there were informal meetings with the Chief, ongoing discussions with Theresa O'Keefe, Director of Conne River Health and Social Services (CRHSS); her assistant Josephine McDonald; Terry Hickey, the former director; and other social workers and Band personnel. Band reports, statistics, the results of

³ St. George's Cross is located at Bay du Nord and is considered a holy place by the people of Miawpukek. Chief Misel told me that the Holy Water found there is healing. His examples were the same as those described about the water from Lourdes, a Roman Catholic holy site in France: Cancers disappear and crutches are thrown away. An Elder told me about a woman born blind in one eye but after a visit to the site regained her vision.

previous research and confidential reports in which CRHSS has participated (denoted in the Bibliography as CRHSS*) were made available to me.

It was through these key informants that the research topic evolved to be the Traditional Healing Practices of the Miawpukek First Nation. Chief Misel and the Band Council subsequently gave me permission to do the research there and I returned in the spring of 1999 and lived in the community until July 2000. During that time a staff apartment and an office became available to me through the kind generosity of Conne River Health and Social Services (CRHSS). The people who were interviewed were mainly Elders and those who have some knowledge of traditional practices from other Bands. There were 15 formal interviews and daily journal notes of my life in the community that were used as raw data. I did not use people's names except to acknowledge information from key players as specified in the research proposal.

I participated in staff activities at the CRHSS clinic, in community events, celebrations and sacred ceremonies, played weekly cards and bingo with the Elder's Group, travelled with the Traditional Drummers to an Assembly of First Nations meeting in St. John's and studied Mi'kmaq language through an Adult Education program for community members. As Goulet (1984) says, spending time participating with community is to: "engage jointly in social activities, to share a meal, to dance together, to participate in a healing ceremony and so on... When people are known as individuals in their day to day activities, ethnographic data can be placed in the proper context." (p. xvii)

Traditional knowledge cannot be fragmented and categorized as being a certain thing or a certain way. For example, in my experience at Conne River, when I mentioned that I was looking at traditional healing practices, people inevitably responded by

mentioning plants or animal parts used for specific conditions. This information is contained in Chapter 8, Table 2, p. 214. However, few people mentioned gathering techniques or seasonal variations in efficacy and use of medicines. This exemplifies the situation where some of the knowledge has survived the Catholicizing of the community, but daily life no longer contains a traditional cosmology or worldview. As Boldt (1994, p. 184) argues:

Because participants in a culture generally are not aware of the basic premises embodied in their cultural heritage, Indians will need to identify and study in depth the fundamental philosophies and to develop new knowledge (i.e., ethics, morality, norms, customs) within the framework of those philosophies and principles. This must be their first priority of cultural adaptation and development: to derive a framework of traditional fundamental philosophies and principles that will serve as a guide in adapting and developing their cultures for surviving and living in the contemporary world.

There is not a medicine person/shaman who maintains traditional Mi'kmaq practices living at Miawpukek at this time. However, Chief Misel is knowledgeable about local herbal medicines, some traditional healing techniques and various ceremonies. He travels to Nova Scotia to receive traditional teachings and to participate in ceremony, and traditional teachers and elders go to Miawpukek. Chief Misel is a Saqamaw, which is a traditional permanent position of spiritual leadership. He is also an elected chief and he is presently serving his fifth two-year term in the elected office.

Because they still have a connection to some of their traditional lands and because of their remote location, people have maintained a sense of themselves as Mi'kmaq, though the acknowledged religion of most in the community is Roman Catholic. However, they have essentially lost the traditional spiritual foundation which is based on their connection to the land and the cycles of seasons and expressed in their language. As Leavitt (1996, p. 121) explains:

Language and spirituality express the Micmacs' special relationship with the land. In this relationship, which has existed since the beginnings of time, the land is not simply a territory where people live; it includes all aspects of community. And community means both a society of persons and a network of intimate relationships with the environment. People's knowledge of the world around them, their religious practices, the organizations of their society and families and government, their ways of making a living, the way they use the land and make their home in it – everything is interconnected.

Battiste (2001) states six concepts that outline Indigenous ways of knowing that

“lead to freedom of consciousness and solidarity with the natural world,” (p. 42):

- 1) knowledge of and belief in unseen powers in the ecosystem;
- 2) knowledge that all things in the ecosystem are dependent on each other;
- 3) knowledge that reality is structured according to most of the linguistic concepts by which Indigenous describe it;
- 4) knowledge that personal relationships reinforce the bond between persons, communities, and ecosystems;
- 5) knowledge that sacred traditions and persons who know these traditions are responsible for teaching ‘morals’ and ‘ethics’ to practitioners who are then given responsibility for this specialized knowledge and its dissemination; and
- 6) knowledge that an extended kinship passes on teachings and social practices from generation to generation.

These First Nations Definitions are from the Department of Indian Affairs and

Northern Development (www.inac.gc.ca).

TABLE 1 – FIRST NATIONS DEFINITIONS

FIRST NATION	A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word 'Indian,' which many people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term 'First Nations Peoples' refers to the Indian people in Canada, both Status and Non-Status. Many Indian people have also adopted the term 'First Nation' to replace the word 'band' in the name of their community.
BAND	A group of First Nations people for whom lands have been set apart and money is held by the Crown. Each band has its own governing band council, usually consisting of one or more chiefs and several councillors. Community members choose the chief and councillors by election, or sometimes through traditional custom. The members of a band generally share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their ancestral heritage. Today, many bands prefer to be known as First Nation.
INDIAN	A term that describes all the Aboriginal people in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. Indian peoples are one of three groups of people recognized as Aboriginal in the Constitution Act, 1982. The act specifies that Aboriginal people in Canada consist of Indians, Inuit and Métis people. In addition, there are three legal definitions that apply to Indians in Canada: Status Indians, Non-Status Indians and Treaty Indians.
INDIAN ACT	This is the Canadian federal legislation, first passed in 1876, that sets out certain federal government obligations, and regulates the management of Indian reserve lands. The act has been amended several times, most recently in 1985. Among its many provisions, the act requires the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to manage certain moneys belonging to First Nations and Indian lands, and to approve or disallow First Nations by-laws.
NON-STATUS INDIAN	An Indian person who is not registered as an Indian under the Indian Act. This may be because his or her ancestors were never registered, or because he or she lost Indian status under former provisions of the Indian Act.
RESERVE	Land set aside by the federal government for the use and occupancy of an Indian group or band.

NOTE: USE OF MICMAC, MI'KMAW, OR MI'KMAQ

The term Micmac or MicMac is used in this paper only if quoted from a text. There has been a concerted effort of many Mi'kmaq educators and linguists in the Atlantic provinces to develop a living language reflecting traditional culture and beliefs. The terms Mi'kmaq and Mi'kmaw are derived from the Francis-Smith writing system which is the basis of language instruction at Conne River. Mi'kmaw is used when referring to the Mi'kmaw people collectively. This term is also used when describing something, for example, a Mi'kmaw canoe. Mi'kmaq is used when referring to the Mi'kmaw people in a distributive sense, for example "the Mi'kmaq Nation". "Mi'kmaw" can be singular or plural depending on the context, while "Mi'kmaq" is always a plural, but only used when speaking in a distributive sense. (Wetzel, 1995, p. xii; personal conversation with Dr. Marie Battiste)

Conne River First Nation is now called Miawpukek First Nation but the people generally refer to themselves as being residents of Conne River or Conne. However, in the spirit of this document, which is to assist in the inclusion of traditional practices in their ongoing health care and to encourage use of Mi'kmaq language, Miawpukek First Nation is used when referring to the people except in direct quotes or references. The location is still Conne River.

CHAPTER CONTENTS

Chapter 1: The People of the Dawn – provides a brief history of the Mi'kmaq people and outlines the purpose of this critical ethnography. This chapter also describes Chapter contents and provides a Table of First Nation Definitions.

Chapter 2: Research Methods – outlines the purpose as delineated in the research proposal; discusses the research methods; the researcher, her social location and bias are

identified and ethical considerations described. The research is situated within a qualitative paradigm and utilizes an emergent design. (Creswell, 1998, p. 61; 1994, p. 11)

Chapter 3: Community Interactions – describes my interactions with people while living at Conne River and what cultural experiences led to my understanding of the spiritual nature of the crisis in Indigenous communities generally. There is a discussion of ethnocentrism, the shadow side that plagues.

Chapter 4: Early Mi'kmaq History – is a descriptive history of the Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland and includes a discussion on the question of whether or not they were there before European contact, as well as their relationship with the Beothuk. Their historical roots in Nova Scotia and the early actions of churches in Newfoundland are documented.

Chapter 5: 20th Century Life at Conne River – includes descriptions of how the People lived in the early 20th Century and provides examples of how Band members survived and maintained a community without a Chief for fifty years. There is an analysis of what adversity was faced, Eurocentricism, and the demise of traditional practices. The chronology of Conne River Health and Social Services is documented.

Chapter 6: Governance – includes a detailed description of the chronology of the Chiefs of Conne River, the issue and deconstruction of achieving status as a Band, and a historical analysis of one woman's ongoing struggle to gain status. There is a discussion on how the community has evolved since gaining status in 1987 and the subsequent effects on community members, identifying key players.

Chapter 7: Contemporary Mi'kmaq Spirituality – discusses the perspectives which underlie the assumptions of this work. The compiled information on basic traditional Mi'kmaq philosophy has been geared to fulfill a need and desire of the Chief and Band

Council of Miawpukek First Nation for the inclusion of an holistic traditional approach to their ongoing health care as well as a traditional component to community life. There is a discussion of ethnographic considerations and the spiritual focus that is integral to the traditional worldview.

Chapter 8: Medicines, Healing and Spirituality –includes descriptions of ceremonies, taken from written and verbal teachings mainly by Elders from Cape Breton, NS, where there is an historical connection. Table 2 is a compilation of ailments and the traditional Mi'kmaq medicines used by the Miawpukek First Nation people in Newfoundland.

Discussion: The Discussion at the end of the paper includes suggestions for encouraging healthy life choices and for regaining traditional healing and spiritual practices in a 21st Century context. Thomas says that critical ethnography attempts to provide clearer images of the larger picture: “Once the picture takes on sharper detail, opportunities for revising it take shape.” (Ibid, p. 61) This dissertation advances knowledge in the area of Aboriginal health and healing particularly acknowledging the integral component of traditionally-based spirituality. As Krawll acknowledged in 1994 (p. 29), “For Aboriginal communities, as for many other cultures around the world, spirituality is the very foundation of their society and the relationships they have with each other. Spirituality concepts, however, are not easily transcribed to paper.”

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODS

There were eight main objectives of this research as outlined in the proposal:

- 1) to provide a sketch of the history of traditional Micmac healing practices and determine what information is available now;
- 2) to examine how the Band survived and maintained itself as a community without a Chief for fifty years, identifying key players;
- 3) to analyse what adversity was faced and how traditional practices survived;
- 4) to identify what constitutes traditional healing practices, and examine how they are differentially conceptualized and perceived;
- 5) to identify if any of these traditional practices are being observed at Conne River, and to explicate what they are;
- 6) to examine perceptions and memories of changes in the use of traditional medicine or healing practices;
- 7) to determine if people feel there is a place or a desire for traditional healing practices in their lives now;
- 8) to determine the implications of incorporating aspects of a traditional worldview into what has become a secular way of life for most residents.

It is important to acknowledge that it is a difficult task to attempt to write about a culture other than one's own. There are subtleties and nuances that are indistinguishable to an outsider. However, because of the time I spent in the community these borders blurred and it became easier to differentiate meanings, be aware of non-verbal clues and understand the patterns of communication and social interactions. Whitehead (1988) elucidates the difficulty of comprehending another world view.

While the available historical documents do give us flesh on the archaeological bones, such records and reports were largely compiled by Europeans, most of whom knew relatively little about the people whom they were describing. Few of these 'outsiders' spoke Micmac to begin with, and even with some knowledge of the language, their understanding was limited to concepts which were readily demonstrable and common to both cultures – cooking and eating, for example. Any deeper understanding of the Micmac world was slow in coming, for when ideas and

world-view radically diverge, the differences may be so great that neither side is even aware that there is anything to misunderstand. Comprehending the way another culture looks at the world is probably one of the most difficult intellectual and spiritual exercises, even without the language barrier. (p. 2)

THE HOPI CONNECTION

My first connection with Native people was with the Hopi in Arizona in 1977. It was a traditional Medicine Man whom I met in a brief encounter in the Cultural Center in Second Mesa, who changed my life and my understanding of the nature of the universe. We shook hands and chatted about the weather as he searched my eyes and within a couple of months I was seeing energy fields around people. It took about a year to gain some perspective about the incident with the Elder. I understood that I could return to see him because he gifted me with a book and asked me to stay. Such an idea was beyond anything I could negotiate at the time so I declined his invitation. Prior to that encounter I had no experience with Indigenous people. The following description of my Hopi encounters are included as a juxtaposition to the Mi'kmaq struggle for reclaiming traditional knowledge as the Hopi are struggling to retain theirs.

My second visit to Second Mesa was a year later. When I arrived the Elder recognized me and this time told me he had wanted to marry me when he met me the year before. He explained that my spirit would not interfere with the spirit of his wife who had passed over the year before that. During this visit he invited me to dinner at his home. Dinner was served by a woman I believed to be his new wife and daughter of the Chief who also lived there. I also was invited to an underground kiva giveaway ceremony which took place throughout the night with the entire village participating. My third visit was a couple of years later and the Elder then spoke to me of turquoise and other gemstones being used by the medicine people for healing, and he told me that traditional practices were permitted in local

hospitals. This time I was invited to a rain dance which was held in the village square because there had not been any precipitation for six months. Huge clouds appeared out of a clear blue sky and it started to rain within hours.

During the next decade-and-a-half my travels across North America continued, as did my encounters with Elders and Native medicine people. I learned something of traditional teachings and medicines from various tribes including Navajo, Crow, Lakota, Cree, Ojibwa and Algonquin. I was honored to participate in numerous sweat lodges including many with an Elder who was recognized by his Lakota people as a shaman when he was a young child in the 1920s. It was in those lodges that I met the spirits and learned to pray, despite many years of attending services in various synagogues and temples. Hammerschlag (1988) writes about his similar experiences about learning to pray.

In time, however, I found organized Jewish worship a difficult place to feel the spirit. The synagogue was the least spiritual place I knew. On the holiest days, great throngs and multiple distractions made it hard to be serious about prayer. It was in the tipi or the sweat lodge that I was best able to see the face of Abraham, to huddle with Jacob in the desert, to feel the presence of a spirit in the coals of a fire. (p. 147)

My fourth visit to Second Mesa and my Elder was in 1997. It took some time, many explanations of my reason for wanting to find him, and instructions from many wary adults and exuberant children to find him living with his daughter and son-in-law in a nearby traditional village. I explained that I was there to pay my respects to this Elder as he had changed my life and awareness so many years ago. When his son-in-law realized it was my fourth visit to Hopi land he explained it was auspicious because of the significance of the number four, such as the four directions and the four seasons. He welcomed me into his home and proceeded to make a cup of tea while waiting for the family to return from shopping in Flagstaff. I told him how his father-in-law had changed my life and he said

others had come to pay their respects during the past year. He also said the Elder had never married after his Hopi wife died. The woman who served dinner so many years ago was not his wife but was the Chief's daughter.

The son-in-law spoke candidly of his own beliefs and travels as a traditional dancer and explained that the Elder was a powerful Medicine Man still highly regarded by the people in his community, and despite being somewhat disabled from a stroke was still an active participant in family and village life. He lived with his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the traditional ways – except for the huge TV dominating the central living space which was crowded with rattles, masks and various ceremonial regalia. When the Elder arrived home we spent some time talking, though it was difficult for him because of the stroke. When I told him about his offer to marry me many years ago, he asked if I was ready to stay with him now! When he hugged me goodbye the next day, it felt like he jolted me to the core of my being with a blessing of energy. He died a year later. I still communicate with the family and send feathers.

This researcher is not Aboriginal so cannot claim to completely comprehend a First Nation way of understanding the world. My observations of, and participation in, life at Conne River have been tempered by my life experience as a mother and grandmother in a middle-class, urban lifestyle. The past 30 years have been spent in a rural location living close to the land and participating in activities such as keeping bees and gardens. This has given me an appreciation of how cycles of seasons can be integral to life processes.

My background of growing up in a Jewish family in the anti-Semitism of 1950s Toronto gives me an innate empathy for some First Nation struggles, some paralleling my experiences of persecution, ethnocentrism and discrimination. Despite all this, I can not

definitively comprehend an Indigenous way of being in the world. However, I have attempted to present a perspective that is more Mi'kmaq oriented than Eurocentric so that this work can be utilized as was intended, by Band members of Miawpukek First Nation.

RESEARCH STRATEGIES

This research is set within a qualitative paradigm with the inherent ambiguities of the emerging design of an ethnography. I gained access to the Miawpukek First Nation community through Chief Misel Joe, the main gatekeeper as well as a key informant throughout the process of this research. As an ethnography, this work provides a cultural portrait that incorporates both the views of the people (emic) and my interpretation (etic). In the same way that Cresswell (1998, p. 60) refers to a holistic study, this dissertation also attempts to describe as much as possible about the history, religion, politics, economy and environment of Conne River.

Cresswell (1994, p. 12) describes other qualitative paradigms which were not appropriate for this study. They include Grounded Theory, which attempts to derive theory with constant data comparison and theoretical samplings; a Case Study detailing information using various data collection procedures over time, or a Phenomenological Study involving small numbers of subjects to develop patterns and relationship of meanings.

A first step in this research was to gain an understanding of the history of Miawpukek and the roots of the People. Some of this was gleaned from Eurocentric histories found in public libraries, from museums including the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto (ROM) and the Museum of Civilization in Hull. History from an Aboriginal perspective was available from curriculum books at St. Anne's School at Conne River, from histories compiled on behalf of Conne River Band Council obtained from the Chief's office, and from documentation and research provided by Conne River Health and Social Services. This

includes historical information, comprehensive reports and proposals from the early 1980s when Social Services was established, and evaluations and research results since then. The Community Cable TV channel proved to be a valuable resource as its Bulletin Board advertises upcoming community events and celebrations, often with historical information. The World Wide Web provided sites for Aboriginal perspectives as well as peer-reviewed academic and medical journal sites.

Valuable insights into traditional Mi'kmaq culture were provided by Saqamaw Misel Joe, Chief of Conne River, the people of Miawpukek First Nation, from talks and papers provided by Nish Paul, Chief of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians, including valuable data from Prof. Murdena Marshall who is from Eskasoni Reserve in Cape Breton, and from lawyer and Miawpukek resident Michael G. Wetzel. Also, there is a growing number of critical Aboriginal perspectives, notably, for purposes of this research, the work of Dr. Marie Battiste, a Mi'kmaq originally from Eskasoni Reserve, and Native lawyer James Youngblood Henderson.

FOUR SEASONS FOR FIELDWORK

The strategy with the most implications for this research was being able to live in the community for more than a year. Silverman (1993) elucidates: "Anthropologists argue that, if one is really to understand a group of people, one must engage in an extended period of observation. Anthropological fieldwork routinely involves immersion in a culture over a period of years, based on learning the language and participating in social events with them." (p. 31)

Living through more than one cycle of four seasons allowed time to begin to know and be known by some of the people as we shared life in the community. I was able to

experience events as they unfolded in their natural cycles and this time allowed me to experience the diversity within the community and to assimilate information. This allowed for spontaneous insights and understandings of this unique population.

Validity, reliability and rigour have been maintained throughout this research through reflexivity and triangulation. As a critical ethnography this work acknowledges the relationships among traditional knowledge, society and political action. There has been a qualitative interpretation of the data and all situations and ideas included herein have been mentioned by several people. There was time for reflection during my lengthy stay which allowed me time to clarify and reflect, and strengthened my ability to make choices rather than jump to conclusions in my observations and suggestions. "Critical ethnographers... accept an added research task of raising their voice to speak to an audience on behalf of their subjects as a means of empowering them by giving more authority to the subjects' voice." (Thomas, 1993, p. 4.) I have included examples of interactions with community residents in order to give an idea of daily life and interests throughout the century.

The fieldwork began with my arrival at Conne River at the end of May, 1999. That was the beginning of my third visit which lasted until the end of July, 2000. The interviews in this dissertation are those collected mainly during that time. However, there are references to material gathered during the first two visits in 1996 and particularly 1997. It was during that summer that the research subject, Traditional Healing Practices of Miawpukek First Nation, was determined in consultation with Chief Misel Joe and Theresa O'Keefe, Director of Conne River Health and Social Services (CRHSS).

I did not leave the Reserve from May 1999 when I arrived until the following February. Many community members asked if I was leaving before that time, especially

when winter weather prevailed, so it proved to be important to have my presence consistently evident. I participated in community events and celebrations as well as weekly meetings of the Elder's Group, Mi'kmaq language classes, and Powwow and Healing Conference planning meetings. A sister of the Chief taught me to do beadwork, a traditional art form of the Mi'kmaq. An office was generously given to me in the CRHSS Clinic building so I was able to participate in meetings, coffee breaks and staff gatherings, as well as use the office resources. All data were strictly confidential and were kept in a locked filing cabinet. Both the room and the building were locked after Clinic hours. I used my own notebook computer so there was no access to my files through the Clinic computer networking system.

For the most part people were friendly – as in any community, some more than others. The residents seemed to know about every event and the history and family connections of every person, so it was important for my presence to be explained when I moved into the community. There was an announcement on the Community Cable channel explaining that I was researching traditional healing practices. I was introduced personally to all the staff in the Health and Social Services building, the Band Administration building and to teachers and staff at St. Anne's School. There was some immediate positive response as people approached me and offered information about healing plants and medicines that they or someone in their family were familiar with. Others were hesitant to speak with me, but any skepticism about my presence was dissipated when the Chief honored me by presenting me with an eagle feather in a community ceremony several months after my arrival.

After I received the eagle feather, a few people began acknowledging me a little more. It was very subtle, but there was a shift. It could have been in a look, or how someone said "g'day" or that they acknowledged me at all. By the end of my time there, interactions

and visits with people both in public and in their homes were becoming easier and more frequent. People were starting to tell me their personal stories and there were many with whom I had regular conversations about their lives and their families. I went on walks with people and others overcame their shyness and became friendly. As one Elder said with an air of wistfulness, "Just when we get to know you, you're leaving us."

RESEARCH RELEVANT TO COMMUNITY

During the summer of 1997, Theresa O'Keefe and I discussed several research possibilities. We settled on the idea of documenting information about traditional healing practices as the basis of my research with personal experiences of Conne River residents to provide a local historical context. Many of the old people have died but there are family members still alive who remember various techniques or medicinal plants, so she thought it was a worthwhile project at this time. The Band office has a display of herbs with Mi'kmaq and English names, and CRHSS staff is becoming more aware of traditional medicines.

However, they have voiced concerns such as the legal ramifications of suggesting remedies to their patients. They are working at the staff level to become more culturally aware but leave it up to patients to make their own choice. Theresa said she is looking to see if spirituality and traditional medicines have a potential role at the Clinic and the possible impact of integrating traditional practices into the ongoing care provided by CRHSS. There was no further information available from her at the time.

There is an increasing awareness and participation by community members in various traditional practices. This is particularly evident with the annual Powwow which started in 1996 and is usually held the first weekend of July. It is now a major community event with traditional regalia increasingly being worn by both Elders and young people. A

mini-powwow is now celebrated annually each spring at St. Anne's School, with full community participation.

Donna Augustine, a traditionalist from Eskasoni, came to Conne River several years ago and spoke about traditional spiritual beliefs. One CRHSS staff member said that the rhetoric and ideas about acting and being Native changed after she explained that using herbs and traditional medicines is an individual choice and has to come from within, and that people should not be forced to think they had to act in a certain way. The staff member said people were afraid that there would be too many rules and it would be too hard to be traditional, but Donna assured them that there were ways to honour the traditional ways yet live in modern times. One way this is happening at Conne River is that Elders are consulted on many community matters.

The term Elder is not a chronological designation but is traditionally given to individuals, "who possess intelligence, knowledge and wisdom on the history, culture, language, beliefs and customs. They are the educators, healers, advisors, consultants, spiritualists, herbalists, mediums, psychics, and some are parallel to doctors and psychologists." (Knockwood, 1992, p. 2) The Elders at Conne River are so designated at age 55 without any consideration or expectation of traditional knowledge. Therefore, in addition to this research, it is important for people from within the community to conduct interviews with their Elders. There is undoubtedly traditional knowledge that Elders may not realize they have, or have kept to themselves because nobody asked them.

While I was at Conne River my long-term residence was located across the road from where high tide came into Bay d'Espoir. I walked the shore at least twice a day with my dog, and it was on these informal occasions that I met and regularly had conversations with

various residents. On one occasion I met a man in his early 70s who told me he remembered his grandfather speaking Mi'kmaq and knowing remedies and traditions. The Elder did not speak Mi'kmaq but he maintained a close connection with the sea and the land. He went out daily on his boat with fishing gear or occasionally a gun through the year.

Working in a First Nations context brings concerns about discussing Indigenous knowledge including rituals and sacred ceremonies. Battiste states that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples views Indigenous knowledge “as a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and their environment.” (Ibid, p. 42) Although I participated in a number of sacred ceremonies and rituals including sweat lodges and a flesh offering, personal information about others will not be discussed in this paper in order to respect the sanctity of the ceremonies and the people involved. Any relevant traditional information in this research has been approved by the Elders who provided knowledge through personal conversations or written material.

The 1993 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, with the advice of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers, formulated a set of ethical guidelines to guide its research. (Battiste, 2001, pp. 136-7)

These guidelines emphasized that Aboriginal peoples have distinctive perspectives and understandings which are derived from their knowledge, culture and history and which are embodied in Aboriginal languages. Those researching Aboriginal experiences must respect those perspectives and understandings. They must also observe appropriate protocol when communicating with Aboriginal communities. The oral traditions and teachings of Aboriginal peoples must be viewed by researchers as valuable research resources along with documentary and other sources. Proficiency in Aboriginal languages should always be an issue in Aboriginal research projects...The commission's ethical guidelines stated that reviews of research results were to be solicited both in the Aboriginal community and in the scholarly community prior to any publication.

CONSENT AND APPROVAL

The research proposal was sent to Theresa O’Keefe and Chief Misel and the Band Council. When I asked for a letter supporting my project, the assistant director of CRHSS sent back a letter saying the Band decided not to pursue the project. I intuitively realized that there was a problem with the word “support” and it had been construed to mean financial support. I then phoned the Chief, explained the situation to him and about two months later got another letter from the Band Council stating that they did support the research being conducted at Conne River Reserve.

Then Ethics approval was given by University of Toronto. The ethics format of the University of Toronto was followed regarding information and consent forms. (Appendix 14 – Ethics Protocols) The package to be given to participants included a Letter of Introduction, an Information Sheet and a Consent Form that was meant to be signed. Theresa explained to me that once a researcher gets permission to do the work staff wants them to go ahead and do what they need to do. “Okay” means whatever path you choose, “the Chief and Council and Clinic staff just want you to go ahead and do it. If they can help let them know – otherwise just do it and leave them alone.”

Theresa made the first introductions to the Elders. We went to five homes and she explained who I am and why I was there and that we needed to get permission to speak with them. We discussed the letter and information sheet before using them, and she suggested simplifying the wording to “Anything I say, Eleanor can use in the research” instead of the lengthy explanations. We discussed with each participant the use of a tape recorder. Some agreed to its use and others did not. She witnessed their signatures on the Agreement Form and we scheduled the interviews. During the interviews I took copious notes at all times including during taped interviews.

After the first three interviews I evaluated the responses in order to assess the appropriateness of my questions. I also needed to know if I was understood and if I understood them. I also noted my response to each interview. After the first interviews, Theresa's assistant Josephine McDonald, advised me that there was a problem asking Elders to sign the Consent Form. She said that they give their permission when they invite me into their homes and as some people can't read or write it was proving to be an embarrassment to sign an X.

There was another situation that illustrates some of the challenges encountered in the field. A respected Elder, was ever so polite and cordial when Theresa took me to her home and she graciously gave me her phone number. When I called at the appointed time I was told it was the wrong number as the last two numbers were transposed. When I finally spoke with the Elder she said her house was being painted and she would speak with me in six months. Then at that time she said her house was being cleaned and she'd be busy for the next three months. In the meantime, we played cards and bingo together every week. I felt that if she didn't want to see me I couldn't force myself on her.

Several months later I asked again if she would speak with me. She asked what I wanted to know. I said nothing specific, I was just trying to get information to put a picture together about Conne River. She said if I'm being paid she wanted to be paid too. I laughed and said I wasn't being paid and so far it's cost me about \$60,000. She asked "Why are you wasting your money on us Micmacs?" I said, "that's a good question. I'll tell you about it when I see you."

I never did meet with her for a formal interview. However, we sat together at the Elder's Christmas Dinner and spontaneously exchanged gifts.⁴ We flew to Heart Hill together in the Band's floatplane and she called me her "flying buddy" and while at the Elder's Retreat I found her constantly watching me. So although there was never a formal interview, there were more encounters with her than with almost anyone else.

It is no easy task as a white person to write about Aboriginal matters. It has taken about 25 years after my first contact with a Native Elder in Arizona for me to have some comprehension of a First Nations ways of being. The experience of living at Conne River not only opened the doors to understanding Aboriginal community life, it gave me a new understanding of my own roots in Judaism. I believe these roots have allowed me an innate understanding and comprehension of the Aboriginal struggle as well as a willingness to explore the subject. My understanding of traditional Native spiritual teachings derived from field experience and life.

...At the very least, then, this places a necessity on anyone writing about such matters to state clearly and accurately the kinds of experience, collaboration, and authorization upon which statements are based. Interpretations of, say, Iroquois spirituality, produced by other than duly recognized representatives of Iroquois communities, need to be identified as such, and the relationship between such interpreters and those communities specified. It is even more important for publishers, both academic and popular, to adhere to standards along these lines in evaluating submissions, and to refuse to publish work that violates them.

None of this should be construed as if to suggest a 'party line' of Indian political (or spiritual) correctness, however, in which only those with the most complete or pedigreed knowledge have any right to speak. Such authoritarianism is completely antithetical to all the North American traditions I know of. Sit around Indian campfires or kitchen stoves very long and one is bound to hear differences of opinion, of interpretation, even on spiritual matters, enjoyed and passed around, chewed over and disputed, once the anthropologists have gone home and the tape recorders are

⁴ At one point during the dinner, she reached into her pocket and handed me a brooch made of rhodochrosite, which she said reminded her of a ring I wore. I had a wrapped piece of Brazilian amethyst with me and was spontaneously able to respond to her generosity.

turned off – at least among those interested in such things. In fact it would be yet another mark of ethnocentrism, smacking of nineteenth-century stereotypes of communal ‘primitive mentality’ to expect drab uniformity or inarticulateness of belief around these fires.

We simply need to demand that those who put forth their interpretive opinions in public fora, printed and otherwise, stand up and tell their stories fully – put their belly out before us,’ in Frank Waters’ memorable phrase – and not hide behind cloaks of holier-than-thou, or more-learned-than-thou, arrogance. (Irwin, 2000, p. 67)

RESEARCH FINANCES

I did not receive any funding for this research so finances became an issue for me. Both the director of CRHSS and her assistant submitted many applications for support for this project. Several of the applications did not fulfill funding parameters and others were refused because I am not Aboriginal. Theresa had advised me that funding might be withheld because I am not Mi’kmaq though funding agencies were advised the work was being done for CRHSS. However one Federal government grant of \$3,000 was received and I was given two-thirds of the amount. The other \$1000 was taken by CRHSS to cover the cost of my house rent. When I first arrived at Conne River I was told that I was to pay the hydro bills and the amount would be reimbursed. These hydro costs of about \$80 a month were never refunded to me. I was also responsible for half of the phone and cable bills which averaged \$125 a month.

A limited selection of fresh food was available at Miawpukek markets and most shopping was done in St. Alban’s where some fresh produce was available at exorbitant prices. Fortunately I brought with me the basic staples of organic rice, cereals and grains, honey and teas which were not available on the south coast. A lot of food is imported to the Island adding transportation and shipping costs. There is not a variety of fresh produce available anywhere in the area and most people at Conne River ate pre-packaged, processed frozen foods. However all members of the community received wild game, lobsters and fish

from the fishery. I did not have access to any of this food. The weekly trip to St. Alban's involved travelling about 60 kms around the Bay with the price of gasoline more than 80 cents a litre. Gasoline, van repairs and travelling expenses to and from Conne River were about \$4,000 each trip. I estimate that the three trips and years of writing involved in this research at Conne River cost me about \$80,000.

Before leaving in 1997, I gave pieces of rose quartz to many of the staff at CRHSS. A nurse commented that she had done the rose quartz meditation with the Chief during the conference the year before and it really gave them something to think about. She said that she was very happy to have the gemstone. Then I went to another staff member's house and did a massage table treatment on her. She said it was very good and she suggested that when I returned I could use the treatment rooms in the Clinic. She said she wanted regular treatments and others she knows would do likewise. Because I had no funding for this research, I was expecting that this could be very helpful as she suggested that I could charge the going rate for massage in St. John's. She reiterated that she was sorry there hadn't been any space in her house for me that year, but she hoped it would be possible for me to stay there for some time next year. She explained that her brother was building a house nearby and her niece is staying with her until the house is built. This is an example of the close relationships and proximity of family housing prevalent in the community and the spontaneous generosity of the people.

However, when I returned to Conne River in 1999 I saw very little of the staff person and she avoided any suggestion of a treatment for herself or anyone she knew, except to say I could advertise on the TV. My personal policy is to not advertise so I chose not to do that. But there were others from the community who experienced the work at no charge in

both scheduled sessions and emergency assistance. One man said he felt relaxed following a session, another said the pain in his back disappeared and did not return during my stay there, another community member appeared after-hours at the Clinic in great pain because of his hand being cut by a table saw. He searched me out a few days later to say his hand totally stopped hurting immediately and he never experienced any more pain despite the severity of the cut. These are a few examples of how I did my healing work and participated with spontaneity in community life.

In my attempt to raise some funding for this research I contacted Harold Hiscock at Newfoundland Culture and Tourism.⁵ After several discussions during the fall of 1999, we met in St. John's when I was there to attend an Assembly of First Nations meeting in February, 2000. Hiscock suggested we pursue funding by suggesting the development of a Medicine Walk at Conne River. He proposed that I be engaged as a consultant to prepare a plan modeled after the Aboriginal Gardens Project being done by Eel River Bar First Nation in northern New Brunswick. Although the project was not pursued I did visit the Eel River Bar site.⁶

The objective of the project being developed with Hiscock was to work with the Band to explore the traditional Mi'kmaq healing practices based on plant medicines. A model was developed to describe the use of plants, the relationship between health and spirituality and well-being and how physical health relates to wholeness in the community. The plan was to develop a trail through the bush near the powwow grounds identifying medicine plants and

⁵ Ingeborg Marshall, author of *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk*, suggested Hiscock as a possible funding source during a meeting at her home near St. John's in the fall of 1999.

⁶ I was welcomed by the Eel River Bar community and given a tour of the 110 acre Aboriginal Gardens Project site that is being developed with some 10 million dollars in partnership with the U.S. Smithsonian Institute. I conducted the first Healing Workshop as well as a Full Moon ceremony at the site.

how they were used. This was to convey the Mi'kmaq perception of their place in the world and how health was achieved. Hiscock said he discussed this with the Band lawyer who gave his assurances that approval was given for me to do this work in conjunction with the Band. I spoke with Chief Misel about this plan and he also approved my involvement.

I subsequently presented the suggestion with a timeline and budget to a Tourist Management Board meeting. I encouraged community consultation as not doing so could create problems.⁷ They were to discuss it with Band Council who needed to approve the project after reading the Band's tourism plan. The leader of the management team sent me a letter stating that the proposal did not fit into their immediate plans though my work could contribute to future plans of the Band. (Appendix 4)

Miles and Huberman (1994) write that: "A role is a complex of expectations and behaviors that make up what you do, and should do, as a certain type of actor in a setting – a family, a classroom, committee...etc." (p. 122) My role at Conne River for this qualitative study was to be a participant-observer and take part in community activities and events. This allowed me to experience the context and setting of the history of the people and witness its impact on their lives. I am not a "wannabe"⁸ and the search for traditional healing practices was a suggestion of Band personnel and this work has been done for them. Irwin (2000) emphasizes the importance of respect for the teachings:

For Indians, these ceremonies and the knowledge they express are like our skin. That's how close to us they are. When people we don't know, or people we do, pretend to use these ceremonies away from their proper setting, it really is like stealing the 'skin off our backs.' (p. 66)

⁷ Protecting Indigenous Culture and Land Through Tourism, *Cultural Survival*, Summer 1999.

⁸ A term coined for seekers who want to adopt some generally romanticized version of Native spirituality.

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS

Miawpukek First Nation is located at Conne River on the remote south shore of Newfoundland. Driving from Ontario also included the six hour marine crossing from North Sydney, NS, to Port aux Basques on the southwest corner of Newfoundland, followed by an eight hour drive along the Trans Canada Highway. The new road into Conne River, which was completed in 1998, is a spur off the Bay d'Espoir Highway leading to Harbour Breton and other communities about 80 kilometers further south. There are about 150 kilometers that traverse the interior bush and bog leading to the rocky hills surrounding the community. There are limited visitor accommodations in the villages on the other side of the Bay and none on the Reserve, so finding a place to live on site is not an easy task for anyone.

Chief Misel invited me to stay at his home during the summer of 1997 but the space was not available when I arrived. One community member said she felt terrible that I was told there was a place for me when there wasn't. "I'd hate to be in downtown Toronto and that happened," she said. It was not unusual for visitors to come from long distances and stay for extended periods of time in the community which added to the scarcity of accommodation. That summer the Chief had recently returned from England where he invited people to experience the powwow. Three women and a child unexpectedly came and my accommodation was usurped. At one point there was a trailer that was or was not available to me, depending on the day. Ultimately the trailer went to the park run by the Band and I had to live at Head of Bay d'Espoir. It cost about \$2,500 in rent and travel costs that I had not anticipated. However it was the only way to participate in community activities, get to know people and formulate a proposal idea. It gave me the opportunity to learn patience though sometimes impatience slipped in and my mouth left my heart in the backstretch.

When I went to do the field work in 1999 I was prepared to live in my van, which I did for the first month. Within nanoseconds of my arrival I was greeted noisily by a group of girls on bicycles. They were all excited and shouting each other and had no hesitancy about my presence. They announced that there were boys in the trailer and they shouldn't be there so I needed to go and do something about it. I didn't know what they were talking about and didn't think I could do anything. When I expressed my hesitancy they told me I was the adult and it was up to me to solve the problem. But then the girls roused out the boys, who came out talking fast and moving to match as they tried to figure out how to get their bikes, which were parked beside my van. The girls rushed in to "make sure they didn't do any damage" they claimed.

The boys finally stopped running and asked about the van. This was the first of daily encounters with this group of a dozen or more youngsters who visited daily with bags of junk food such as candy, chips and pop. This was a concern as eating such quantities of sugar is a great risk for developing diabetes or candidiasis and yeast overgrowths in the gut. During my time there the most frequent visitors to my house were children though adults stopped by occasionally after the first few months. While I was living alone at the van site there were many more visitors than when I had a room mate later in the year.

On one occasion the group of youngsters swore me to secrecy then showed me a window that one of the others had thrown a rock through. It was supposed to be kept secret, but CRHSS staff assured me that they previously told the children that there were some things that couldn't be kept secret, and this, they said, was one of them. So the broken window was reported to the Band office. It was not turned into a big deal but the children were told to stay out of the trailer. I explained to them, as had been explained to me earlier,

that this incident was not something that could be kept secret. They did not hold this against me because they still came around in droves right after school until sunset virtually every day. I found them straightforward, inquisitive, sensitive, curious, hungry and generally related to each other.

The first episode with the children at the van took about five minutes then Rembert Jeddore, Band liaison and Vice-Chief, pulled up in his car and hooked up the electricity. He said someone would be by in a few days to hook up the water and sewage. At 10 o'clock the next morning measurements were taken by Band construction personnel and within the hour the van utilities were fully operational. I was given a key to the trailer and invited to use the kitchen and bathroom but it was not available for me to move into as the Band had plans for it. At the end of the St. Anne's school year, which was about a month after my arrival, a staff apartment became available and I lived there for more than a year. My first housemate was a nurse from Grand Falls/Windsor who eventually left the clinic and my second housemate was a Band member doing temporary computer work for CRHSS.

During the first few days of being on the van site I had conversations with my neighbours, got my van in order, went to the CRHSS and met briefly with Josephine McDonald, CRHSS assistant director, had coffee with a social worker and met the day care staff. I was formally introduced to all the staff at CRHSS, to Band Administrative and craft shop personnel and all teachers at St. Anne's School. I discussed my project at a CRHSS staff meeting so there was a clear understanding about my presence in the community. The director suggested I join a women's group, but the assistant director said it was for Native women only so I was not able to participate.

A MOTHER'S DISTRESS

After a couple of weeks one day started with my breaking a favorite plate. Then a young boy about nine came to visit. I was busy and he sat outside patting my cat for a very long time. I was making a cup of coffee (he had never seen coffee beans before) so I invited him to a cup of hot chocolate after ascertaining that his mother knew where he was. A few minutes later his mother came by – visibly upset. I explained that her son had told me that he informed her that he was coming to visit me. However, she had been searching for him for an hour and was extremely upset and projecting fear. I apologized but she was so vastly relieved to see her son that she left without comment.

By that time I had established a routine of attending at my assigned office at the CRHSS Clinic, so upon my arrival that day was informed that the Director wanted to see me. Theresa said the mother had phoned her and was very upset, so she suggested that I go to see her so the Clinic dental technician, Richard, drove me to her house. The mother appeared upset yet she said she was glad that I had come by because she wanted me to understand how she felt. I explained that I was a mother and grandmother and regretted having caused her any pain. We shook hands and I told her how sorry I was then returned to the Clinic and told Theresa what happened. Later, I explained to the young lad how important it is to tell his Mother where he is going every time so she wouldn't worry about him. I told Theresa that he had been hanging out with the kids at the van on numerous occasions and told me that he had told his mother all about me. Richard just laughed it off and said don't worry about it. Her son rarely spoke to me again.

Then Theresa asked me to write a little blurb about myself to run on the community television channel for a couple of weeks in order to explain my presence in the community. Several people responded by offering information about plant medicines. It took most of a

year for me to feel comfortable within the community and for most community members to be relaxed in my presence. By that time I had participated in Mi'kmaq language classes, sweat lodges, community gatherings and celebrations, played weekly cards and bingo with the Elders, learned to do some beading, and had given workshops in various healing techniques through CRHSS programs. For example, one evening I led a foot massage experience with a social worker's sewing group. I displayed crystals and gemstones at the Clinic 2000 Open House in May and received a staff T-shirt. I helped in emergency situations and volunteered for the Powwow and Healing Conference planning committees.

In September 1999 I participated in the AIDS walk with about 12 to 15 Band personnel. We raised \$711. It took me a lot longer to do the walk than the others – an hour for six kilometers. Everyone was in clusters and my black Labrador Molly and I brought up the rear. No one talked to me or slowed or invited me to join their group, so we just set our own pace and did what we could. Everyone was friendly at the barbeque after the walk. It was quite windy and spitting rain but was nothing like the windstorm two nights before that was the tail end of a hurricane and it just about dragged the door out of my hands when I went to pull it shut. The weather provided grist for many coffee break discussions and community greetings.

I regularly spent time with staff at the Clinic during daily coffee breaks, and this gave me many opportunities to participate in discussions, share ideas and get to know people from the community. One of the social workers told me about child welfare work at Conne River. She said whatever goes on everywhere else goes on there. One problem she cited is lack of supervision of children – even the very young ones. She said parents claimed “We did that so they should too.” Family abuse also happens – mainly within certain families, which

she did not disclose. She finished her contract after eight years when a Band member became available to do the job after completing her education.

One Sunday instead of the usual Elders' cards there was a fundraising card game going on at the school. There were about a dozen tables of card players going all afternoon, with family groupings, students, grandbabies and Elders. There was much emphasizing a winning hand with loud slamming-the-cards-on-the-table and laughing family support. They were playing "45" which was a series of trumps played with partners. Everyone played at different tables and with different partners. There were score cards for grand prize winners and everything was well organized. Turkeys, hams and many other prizes were raffled all afternoon.

One spring day I called a community member to go for a walk but she was out. Then I passed her on the road so I parked and visited with her mother who was sitting in the car while the others were fishing. The Elder broke her femur near her hip in January. She looked well and said she was now walking with a cane though she used a walker for awhile. We had an opportunity to discuss her childhood and she explained that she was born in Conne River then left for 10 years to go to school in St. Albans, across the Bay. Then she returned to teach Grades 1 to 4 with another teacher when there was just a two-room school.

Then her daughter and friend came back because there were no fish biting so they were going to drive somewhere else. I continued my walk along the shore and discovered a piece of hose coming out of a rock. There was beautiful clear water flowing from it. A few minutes later a truck drove along the beach as the tide was out. He filled some buckets at the spring and drove back around the shore. The tide was coming in quickly and we had to leave

the beach. This was one of several sources of fresh water which was preferred by many rather than drinking the treated tap water.

There were some private social occasions I was invited to, including several candle parties in private homes. These gatherings were mainly for women to view candles and their accessories and to have snacks. These parties seemed to happen on family lines so at every party there is some overlap of people and some new ones. Everyone was usually friendly and there was lots of laughing and planning of future activities for community or family events. This is an example of the family-oriented nature of the community.

On another evening, shortly after moving into my room in the house at Conne River, I suddenly heard screaming. "Help! Help! My baby's not breathing. Oh my God! My baby's not breathing." I jumped up and ran out to see my neighbour screaming hysterically. I ran into her house and her friend was holding a 16-month-old boy who looked pale and bewildered. Three little girls were not sure what to think with the mother screaming Oh my God! Oh my God! Oh my God! She grabbed the baby and clutched him – all the time shaking and crying but the baby was breathing okay. I put my arms around the other young woman and she broke down and cried. She said when the mother ran out of the room the baby was purple/blue and his eyes rolled back and his teeth were clenched shut and the only thing she could think of to do was pry his mouth open and breathe into it. Then he revived. I phoned the ambulance and the on-call nurse called right back. She asked me what was going on. I told her the boy was breathing and seemed pale but okay and the mother was very upset.

I realized that this was a situation that called for Bach Flower Rescue Remedy. (Bach Flower Remedies are homeopathic remedies developed in England by Dr. Edward Bach during the 1930s. Rescue Remedy is a combination of five flower essences that is used in

cases of trauma or extreme distress.) I went home and got the Rescue Remedy and both women drank some water with four drops of Remedy after I explained what it was and how to take it. They calmed down somewhat so we left the house and the Tribal Police officer took them to the Clinic to meet the nurse. I was told that the child has done this before but not quite so dramatically. After this episode, the young girls came to visit me regularly and we went for walks along the shore. Eventually their baby brother joined his sisters for neighbourly visits.

Another activity I participated in were conversational Mi'kmaq language classes which were offered for adults on Monday evenings by Rod Jeddore, Director of Language Studies and teacher at St. Anne's School. It was a beneficial experience as I gained some familiarity with Mi'kmaq language and constructs and spent time with community members. It was helpful to listen to the tapes and practice the words. There was a lot of joking in the class and people were listening and interested in the lessons. There were discussions about how some of the words and concepts were remembered from childhood. There was no language class for a few weeks when Rod was away and it seemed most people, including myself, were looking forward to his return. He contacted the Cape Breton District School Board to get permission to give us the workbook pages. The Nova Scotia system was developed by Bernie Francis of Membertou and linguist Doug Smith who have attempted to standardize Mi'kmaq language and writing.

It was noteworthy that many people in the class had some idea of Mi'kmaq words and there was usually some discussion about how certain words have been used within the family. Classes usually consisted of a lot of laughing and joking and a lot got done. Everyone participated enthusiastically and found they often got the opportunity to use the language in

their everyday lives. Certainly not all the time, they said, but they're starting to use certain phrases with each other. There were so many adults from the community interested in learning to speak the Mi'kmaq language that two classes of about 15 each were offered. Chief Joe came to some classes but travelled so much he also scheduled private instruction when he was in the area.

During my literature search I came across some comprehensive work done by Aboriginal scholar Dr. Marie Battiste. I wanted to contact her and asked Rod if he knew of her. He surprised me by stating she was his thesis supervisor when he achieved a Master's degree from the University of Saskatchewan – and he gave me her phone number. I called her and we had an informative conversation about language and its importance in traditional culture. She told me about two books she had written about traditional knowledge which were to be published in 2000 and 2001. These works subsequently provided information and insights for this research.

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

My experience with the Moccasin Telegraph happened after I left Conne River and was staying with Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall at Eskasoni Reserve in Cape Breton, NS. After a congenial afternoon and evening with the family, Albert asked me if I had heard of the Moccasin Telegraph. I said I had but wasn't sure what it meant. He replied that if it hadn't been for the Moccasin Telegraph I wouldn't be sitting in his living room. He further explained that he had heard about me and if I hadn't been okay, I would not have spent more than a year at Conne River. He was right because during my time there a physician who spent several months coming to the Clinic was asked to leave because community members complained about him because of his attitude towards the people.

The moccasin telegraph also thrives within communities, for example when workshops are offered. Participation can not be judged by the first event as explained in a personal conversation with Black Otter Woman, a workshop leader from another community. "I would arrive in a community and have two people attend the first day of my workshop. The next day I would have a full house. I would never advertise for these workshops so I knew the moccasin telegraph was working." In another community a workshop leader commented, "Just by having these workshops in the community maybe fifteen people show up the first day but then each one uses the 'moccasin telegraph' to tell another fifteen people about the workshop. So on the second day of the workshop there was at least thirty people." (Krawll, 1994, p. 64)

Traditionally, migratory patterns were crucial to both economic and cultural survival and the moccasin telegraph flourished as news of family and friends was exchanged. This resulted in social interaction beyond the local community.

Every Mi'kmaq adult knows where to find other Mi'kmaq groups within their fragmented, far-flung nation...By means of transient relatives and friends, scattered Mi'kmaq families and communities keep abreast of each other's weals and woes. This is what they sometimes jokingly refer to as the 'moccasin telegraph.' Individuals who do not form part of this informal network of kith and kin are effectively cut off from their social identity as Mi'kmaq Indians.

It would be a mistake to think that Mi'kmaqs travel only for economic opportunity. Some hit the road simply for the sake of variety or adventure. The experiences they gather on their journeys are fine fodder for good stories, which are like meal and housing vouchers in the Mi'kmaq network. Generally gregarious, they like to visit with each other and swap stories and are willing to travel far to do so on a fairly regular basis. The debt that one incurs by accepting hospitality is an obligation to return the favor in the future. This makes social interaction as central to survival as work itself. (Prins, 1996, pp. 192-193)

LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

One day a staff member at the Clinic approached me about participating in a sweat lodge. She said she was afraid to go into a sweat lodge but she had been thinking about it. Her fear was that she wouldn't be able to pray because all she knew was the Catholic way of praying. I shared my experience of what happens in a sweat lodge including how to enter, sit and protect your face from the steam if necessary, how the sacred pipe is passed around the circle and all directions are given by the leader of the sweat.

There are usually four rounds and each round is dedicated to a particular part of the medicine wheel such as to children, self healing, planetary healing or healing the community. I explained that the prayers are totally personal and she could choose to say something aloud or not. The prayers are words spoken from the heart and they are your own words and your own truth. There is no wrong way of praying in a sweat lodge. She told me she was grateful to have it explained and she said she didn't trust anyone enough to talk to them about it. She said this spoke to how she feels about me. She participated in the next sweat lodge.

I was able to establish a daily routine after settling into the community. Each week day I walked to my office and participated in ongoing activities at the Clinic. My regular walks with the dog gave me many opportunities to meet people. After awhile conversations deepened as we shared information about our families and our lives. Every day I walked along the shore and watched the tides come in and out. There were frequently other people walking, boating in the Bay or travelling on their All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). I often saw both women and men holding infants and young children as they drove along. Every house has a view of the Bay and the water was integral to their daily lives. A staff member said she checks the water every morning to see what kind of day it will be.

One day I walked to the gas bar beside the sawmill to get some pizza. The staff person was a 21 year-old mother of 6-year-old twins and a 3-year-old. She drove me home on her “trike”, a 4-wheel ATV. The seat was wet so she unhesitatingly placed her jacket down for me to sit on. I wasn’t sure of the sitting configuration then realized I just had to straddle it. I did so, clumsily. “It takes practice getting on” she said as she matter-of-factly slid into the saddle. It was a very bumpy, bouncy ride over the driveways, up rivulets and rocks. Then she told me that she is a carrier of a blood disease that kills young people in her family. Some are hemophiliacs. Her three children were tested negative at birth. We continued to have friendly conversations during the duration of my time at Conne River.

The Dashwood Diner, located on the Bay d’Espoir highway was the closest sit-down restaurant in the vicinity of Conne River. It is owned and operated by former Chief Marilyn John. I frequented the diner on a semi-regular basis and after several months this gave me the opportunity to speak with Marilyn when she had a few free minutes. On one occasion she greeted me enthusiastically and said she had been thinking about me because she just returned from two weeks away visiting family. She had considered asking me to house-sit and care for family pets but hadn’t taken the time to phone me before she left. She said it would be possible on another occasion but the opportunity never arose. I was surprised and felt honoured that Marilyn thought about me and would trust me to take care of her home and the family pets.

While I was living in the van two young boys aged about six and eight came by to tell me they were going to catch and clean a fish for me. I was impressed that such young children knew these skills and realized the importance of the land to their lives. This was further emphasized when a community member arrived to take me on a medicine walk after

checking out my van – “nice looking rig,” many men commented. He took me to a path that led to the top of the falls I could hear from where I was parked. He showed me some medicine plants and offered to take me where the rare plant gold thread grows. I later attempted to find the route we had taken but instead found a recently brushed trail. I realized that he avoided this trail because it traversed bush and bog. Logs had been put down over the worst parts but it was quite soft and spongy and I got a soaker. This path led to an amazingly beautiful spot at the bottom of several layers of water falling over steep cliffs creating swimming holes shaded by a multitude of plants and bushes. The man left the community shortly after and there was no search for gold thread.

I have been plagued by eye problems for several years but found at Conne River that the episodes abated for the most part. There were days when I could not stay at the clinic as my office was an interior room with no natural light. Several Clinic staff said they got headaches from the lights, which were to be replaced. I was given an outside office with windows and that eliminated much of the stress on my eyes. When I arrived back in Ontario the eye problems which consisted of inflammation flare-ups with episodes of glaucoma, persisted. There has been a further deterioration which has inhibited my ability to write this thesis without disruption so the writing took an extra year.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

The traditional Christmas celebration at Conne River was a festive time for the entire community. Men who had been away for months would come in from “the country” and take care of everybody. The Chief conducted prayers and there were circle dances and visiting for

13 days. Saqamaw Misel explained that celebrations began on Winter Solstice⁹ and that night was dedicated to all the men in the community named Noel. Each night different men were honoured with celebrations and gifts on their namesake day. On John's night everyone went to the homes of men named John. "If there were a dozen Steves, there would be a dozen dances that night," one Elder reminisced. "People would bring flowers, crosses and angels made out of wood. There was no drum so they used dried skin boots and they always sang the same song – a kind of welcoming song. We don't do that any more so we need the powwow to bring people together."

One evening in early December I joined the celebrations to light the big Christmas tree outside the Band office. The parking lot was full and there were many children of all ages running around. The traditional drummers were centered in the Great Hall circled by young women dancers. I observed a teenager teaching a dance to another girl who was having difficulty with the steps. It was a beautiful dance –toe in –toe out –on one foot –flying high to the drumming. It was inspiring to see the traditions passed on in this way. The Great Hall was packed and buzzing with chatter, food being served and more kids running around.

One drummer stayed with the children for a long while changing rhythms to see if a young boy would follow his lead, but the child was only interested in keeping a steady beat. Hot dogs and hot chocolate were served to everyone. I stood at the back of the hall watching and listening, smiling and saying hello to lots of people. The young boy and his mother who was so upset during the summer were there. He hovered nearby a bit but didn't come to talk

⁹ Winter Solstice is the shortest day of the year, generally about December 22nd, when the sun is at its most southerly position and thus the greatest distance from the celestial equator. Summer Solstice is the longest day of the year, about June 21st, and the sun appears at its most northerly position.

with me. I observed him drumming then being joined by his baby brother. I don't think he was two but he kept the beat.

One evening I made a nice dinner and invited an office colleague, Jeff, a Band member. He already had his dinner partly cooked so I went to his place and we shared our food. At the time my housemate was leaving Conne River and Jeff asked if he could move in for a few months. I said it would be fine. Then after supper we picked up his mother and sister and went shopping in St. Alban's. It was very nice to be included in a family activity, especially when his mother invited me to join them for Christmas dinner. When I said that I had a previous invitation for that same time she invited me for a late supper saying they were going to eat then too. My previous invitation for Christmas dinner dated to early December when I met Chief Misel at the Band office and he invited me to his home for Christmas Day dinner. I joined the immediate family about noon bringing a jug of cranberry drink after checking that people would drink it.¹⁰

After much consideration I decided an aloe vera plant would be an appropriate family gift and they seemed pleased. They knew of the healing properties of the plant as they had some aloe around the house. I mention the following because it describes a festive celebration in this remote location. I received a gift of candlesticks with a table runner. Dinner included turkey, gravy, corned beef and cabbage, carrots, turnip and cranberry sauce, non-alcoholic beverages and a white cake with custard layer and sprinkled with coconut and a lemon pie. After dinner various extended family members came by to visit and exchange

¹⁰ On a previous occasion I gave them a gallon of maple syrup. When I asked the Chief's wife if she liked it, she jumped out of her chair and did a little dance which included spitting sounds and weird noises. I was quite taken aback but now that I know her, the memory of it makes me smile.

gifts. The Chief's sister, a gifted artist who offered to teach me traditional beading, invited me to begin this project at the beginning of January.

I stayed with that family until it was time to join Jeff's family for supper. His mother lives with her husband, two daughters and one grandson. It was a comfortable home with lots of laughing and close contact with each other. It was a wonderful opportunity to experience home life that I was missing during my time there. I was feeling very isolated as it was getting hard being there alone with few people to talk to. I was missing my friends and family – especially through the holiday season.

New Year's Eve was a special celebration featuring a well-attended community dinner that was served by Chief and Council at the Great Hall. After the feast there was drumming and dancing followed by fireworks at midnight. Some people shot guns into the air at that time from their homes, the same as in my village in Ontario. There was some concern in the community about the possibility of the Y2K electricity disruptions so contingency plans were made. People were notified on the community cable TV channel that the on-call nurse would be at the clinic in case the hydro went out at midnight. In the event hydro ever goes out, the clinic generator starts automatically so there is always electricity and phone available there. Community members who heated with wood prepared for the event by replenishing their wood piles and everyone gassed up their vehicles and stocked up on food. People were prepared for survival in case of blackouts, but they never materialized.

Saqamaw Misel was invited to participate in a Millennium sunrise ceremony at Cape Spear, the most easterly point on Newfoundland where the sun first rises on Canada. He participated in the community celebration before departing for Cape Spear where he was interested in promoting the Mi'kmaq presence outside the Miawpukek community.

One day at the Clinic I invited the Chief's wife, Colletta, home for supper. We seemed to have a pleasant time conversing though I noticed that she hadn't eaten much. After she left and I got a clear look at her leftovers, I was mortified. The rice had sucked up all the liquid and I was faced with a mushpile of soggy rice. The next day I went into her office and said I hadn't realized that the rice had gone mushy in her bowl. I apologized for not providing her with something she could eat. "But I ate the carrots and celery and chicken and soup...until the rice sucked it all up!" she exclaimed.

We laughed and I said I hoped she would come back another time so I could feed her properly. She explained that she had accepted my invitation despite her very busy schedule because she did not want to offend me by refusing to come. She acknowledged that we had a nice visit and said she'd come back when there was time to spend the evening. Our only opportunity for a lengthy visit was a Sunday afternoon when we went for a pleasant walk into Jipujij'kuei Kuespem Nature Park which is now administered by the Band.

After her invitation at Christmas, the Chief's sister, Loretta John, invited me to her home to learn the art of beading. It was always a great treat to sit around the kitchen table and chat in the midst of family life. My special project was to decorate the goose wing I found and brought from Ontario. She gave me a piece of tanned deer hide and offered a selection of coloured beads. We chose a design from traditional patterns. We measured the leather, put the design on tracing paper and attached it to the leather with sticky tape. Over several weeks Loretta guided me through the process of sewing the beads onto the paper, which was then removed. We wrapped the beaded leather around the base of the wing and finished the project with fringes.

One evening while doing beadwork Loretta explained that they used to use floral patterns but in the past year changed to traditional Mi'kmaq designs which they obtained from books and Nova Scotia friends. After a few weeks of instruction and practice she commented on her amazement that I hadn't broken any needles. She even commented about this to her colleagues at the Band Craft Shop. The next day we joked about the fact that I immediately broke two. Loretta is a gifted artist who made a bag for a ceremonial pipe from sea otter skin, which she said is very thick, as well as fringed and beaded leather jackets, bags and many other ceremonial and decorative items.

ELDERS' SPECIAL EVENTS

A group of between 10 and 18 Elders played cards and bingo on Sunday afternoons. I went to these gatherings every week and also participated in various group events including the Christmas dinner and a trip to Heart Hill. The group enjoyed each other's company and bantered about who is married to whom and commented on anyone who walked past the building, drove into the parking lot or came out of the church. There were frequent conversations about all their relations and community events.

There were discussions about the next card game, who is being confirmed, tickets and money for various draws and bingo as well as people's illnesses and family celebrations. The conversations gave me insights into family connections and community history. There was constant laughing and joking and they involved me with occasional teasing as they did everyone else. There was a monthly pot luck dinner where people brought such items as spare ribs, packaged fried chicken, macaroni salads, mashed potatoes, garlic moose and desserts. On Mother's Day I was gifted with a flower along with the other women Elders. I was very touched by this gesture and by the fact that they included me in all their plans. This

is where I made connections with many of the community Elders. By the end of my stay I was being invited into their homes and felt that I had earned their trust.

Before Christmas I was contemplating returning to Ontario for the holidays. I e.mailed my committee and asked for their opinions of this plan. Although everyone replied one person said it was not a great idea to leave as it was the only opportunity to complete a full cycle of seasons there and reentry into the community would be harder. This committee member suggested that if I felt it necessary to go out of the community, I should go to St. John's or elsewhere on the Island.

This proved to be excellent advice because one elder commented that when he hadn't seen me in a couple weeks he thought I had gone home to Ontario. I got as close to a twinkle as I could muster and replied "and give up winter in Newfoundland? No way!" He laughed and we bantered pleasantries. Staying during the holiday season gave me the opportunity to participate in Christmas dinner at the Dashwood Diner with the Elders group. There was a gift exchange and I became aware of the generosity of the people which carried into the holiday season and throughout the year.

During one game a woman was complaining that one of the men was being very loud. Others at my table explained that when the woman was a teenager she took care of this man when he was about nine and that she felt free to comment on his every action. He is quite outspoken in a humourous way and was often the only man in the room. The familiarity of the group allowed everyone to participate unconditionally. I was told by a staff person that several participants were reticent to join the group but eventually participated weekly. The woman who broke her hip was missed and encouraged to come back as soon as possible. Another woman missed a few weeks following major surgery for throat cancer. She came to

the games with a trach tube and although she was unable to talk, she scurried around being her usual helpful self. We were all touched by her presence and enthusiasm despite the obstacle of the machine she carried. We played cards and bingo weekly through the winter until a break on Easter Sunday.

In the summer of 2000 the Band Council and the Faculty of Medicine of Memorial University of Newfoundland at St. John's co-sponsored another Traditional Healing Conference followed by the annual powwow. I volunteered with the planning committees for both events. In one powwow meeting I suggested that we sell plants as a fundraiser at the flea market in the Great Hall. I agreed to take responsibility for this project. The ones that sold first were the marigolds that had flowers. Many of the plants sold at the sale and the rest were sold later at the Clinic and the Band office.

HEART HILL ADVENTURES

The National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) counsellor, Howard Jeddore, led me on my first Heart Hill adventure during the summer of 1997. It is relevant to include this experience even though it happened prior to the actual research because Heart Hill is such an integral part of Miawpukek life and gave me the first clue about the importance of the land in the Peoples' lives. Howard was going to the remote location to check the progress of the trails being cleared and constructed to make the lodge more accessible by land. It was possible to fly in by float plane at the cost of several hundred dollars.

Our journey started with the forty minute drive from Conne River to the end of the drivable road. We walked for an hour to the pond, as Newfoundlanders call a lake, over soggy bog, through brooks and thick bush. Howard radioed ahead for the boat so we all

arrived at the pond at the same time. The crossing takes from twenty to forty-five minutes depending on wind and water conditions. On that occasion we traversed some very rough water until we were through the rocky narrows into the shallow part of the pond which was relatively smooth. When we landed Howard piggy-backed me onto the shore and the soggy hike continued for another hour. Howard continually drew my attention to wildlife and evidence of their proximity through moose, bear and caribou tracks and droppings. We passed a work crew constructing a path running logs both vertically and horizontally over streams and the worst boggy areas. Howard commended them for a particularly well-constructed bridge.

The first sighting of Heart Hill was the huge birchbark wigwam on the other side of the stream. A nearby newly-constructed bridge led directly to the new log lodge. A smaller building, also log, was used for storage. The lodge was a great surprise. There was a fully equipped kitchen, three bedrooms, bathrooms with sinks, toilets and showers, and a large open area overlooking the pond. This social centre was furnished with sofas, stuffed chairs, a dining room table and chairs, and a big woodstove. The lodge was also equipped with propane lights, stove, fridge, fireplace, hot water heater and deep freezer which was full of caribou and moose meat. Building supplies, furnishings and propane and were mainly transported into the site in winter by skidoo. Radio access to Miawpukek is maintained by running the generator to recharge the batteries. Television and sound system are also generator-run.

After a tour of the lodge Howard took me to the wigwam which has been there for decades. It was constructed in the traditional Mi'kmaq style of large sheets of birchbark over vertical tree saplings tied at the top to form a smoke hole. As we sat inside and talked about

Conne River I was enveloped by a sense of peace. We returned to the lodge and the crew returned from their work. They referred to me as “the woman” as in “Move your stuff out of the room so the woman can sleep there.” It was very comfortable and everyone was friendly.

I brought cookies and grapes that disappeared quickly. Howard said there would be a meal but the men worked until dark so they could get their hours in and get Friday off. They fixed snacks for themselves rather than a meal because they did not feel like cooking. However there was the remains of a noon dinner which seemed to have consisted of meat, potatoes, peas and gravy. I had a can of tuna and made sandwiches with the bread that Howard’s mother baked for our journey. The crew had been staying in the lodge and when Howard said they were to double up in one of the rooms they started kidding each other about who snored the loudest. There was a general feeling of camaraderie and laughter in their interchanges.

Next morning there was a big breakfast of bacon, eggs, bread and the inevitable cup of tea before the men started off to work at 8 a.m. Their work was to be finished that day and Howard gave instructions that the place was to be cleaned up (including the bathroom) before they headed out. They said “okay, Boss” and Howard reminded them that he still owed them two paychecks so they’d better get it right. It was all very light. Howard and I were back on the trail by 8:45. One of the crew joined us en route so he could drive the boat and bring it back so the men could return to Conne River later in the day. The trip back wasn’t quite so soggy because it had dried off but the black flies, dog (deer) flies and horse flies were just as bad as when we walked in. When we arrived at the pond for the return trip the wind direction had changed so the water wasn’t as rough and white-capped as going in. The crossing was faster because the load was lighter. Howard had carried in twenty pounds of nails for the

construction crew, food and sleeping bags. He radioed the Clinic and we were met at the end of the trail for the drive home. The entire adventure was filled with laughter and learning.

A couple of months after arriving at Conne River in 1999, I went to Heart Hill with a group of women through a CRHSS program. It took us about an hour of walking through bush and bog to arrive at the pond. Then there was a half hour boat ride followed by another 50 minute walk to the lodge. It used to be Hart Hill, named after the deer that lived in the area. Some elders said it was the heart of the country so the name was changed to Heart Hill. The lodge had been expanded since my first visit from three to eight bedrooms furnished with both single and bunk beds, and additional bathrooms. There is now accommodation for about twenty.

Small things happened to let me know the women had me sized up pretty well. When it was my turn to play pictionary and I was walking from the kitchen table someone called out "It better be two syllables." I laughed along with the others. They groaned through my music selection (my most favorite tapes) and referred to it as "nothing you'd call music." I had the opportunity to gain a new appreciation for Country and Western. I introduced the women to an experience of making bracelets with tumbled gemstones which they said they enjoyed. One woman injured her ankle and was barely able to hobble around. My massage table was there and she got on it and I did some energy work on her ankle. She walked out with everyone else the next morning and had no pain or swelling. She said her ankle was better because of the damp cloth she put on it.

It took several days to recover from the trip to Heart Hill. Not only was I tired but also thoughts keep popping into my head about what someone said or how I felt about some things that happened. I spoke with a social worker for a debriefing and found that very

helpful. For example, I filled out the evaluation form and said everything was okay, but back then didn't have the opportunity to think about appropriate feedback. For example, this was to have been a women's retreat and there was a male staff member present. A lot of time was spent in kibitzing with him. He was not an obtrusive person so it was not anything he said or did, just that he was living with the group and it wasn't a women's retreat any more.

Another observation was the amount of fish that were taken out of the lake and not shared with the group. Two women spent the first afternoon fishing and they proudly displayed their catch. My immediate thought was that we were going to have fish for supper because there was enough for everyone. But there was no fish for us! During the weekend the two women took 60-70 fish each, cleaned them and put them in the freezer so they could be taken home. I was really surprised (and disappointed) that there was no thought given to sharing the fish with the other women in the group as I expected after observing and participating in other community feasts. One staff member stated that they were depleting the fish stock, but they ignored the comment and continued their quest for more.

A special retreat to Heart Hill was planned for community Elders for a few days in June, 2000. The experience began at 8:00 a.m. with a drive to the Park where we all gathered at the float plane dock. From there some left in the truck to drive as far as possible until the road runs out and they began the walk. I chose to fly in the Band's four-seater float plane along with one Elder, the bags and food. It was an adventure from the beginning when the plane engine flooded and there was a little fire, but it was a smooth, easy ride. It took about 15 minutes from takeoff to landing. It was awesome to see the caribou trails across the bogs and the enormous expanses of uninhabitable land. We were the first ones to arrive and we were locked out for awhile.

When we got into the building I shared some turkey soup I brought with me with Elders who arrived on the second plane with the cook. The group included several women, one man, the staff person, a first aid expert, the Heart Hill director and his assistant. Those who walked took an additional 2 ½ hours so they got in about 11:30. One woman walked in the door, took her fishing rod and spent the afternoon on the dock. She is a tiny bird-like woman who spent as much time as possible out there. She looked wonderful in her rubber boots, overlong red plaid vest and henna'd perm sticking out of her black cap with the visor at the back. The group spent many hours playing cards, darts, games, scrabble and checkers. The Elders talked about everybody and everything anyone said or did. It was family kind of banter where there was concern about everything. The man was referred to as "the rooster" and he added humour whenever possible.

One afternoon the director's assistant went out on the sea-doo that throws a big plume of water behind it and really showed off by doing wheelies – much to everyone's delight. We were assured it was safe because if the bracelet connection broke, the engine shuts off. We each had the opportunity to go for a ride around the lake. We spent the day on the water and it was great fun. There were canoes, paddle boats and kayaks that we were able to use. Another day I went for a long walk along the shore when it was raining but warm. I found a beautiful heart-shaped rock which I left on the Lodge mantelpiece as I was assured it would not be thrown away. I was quite surprised that the women nodded their approval that I was leaving it there as they seemed impressed that I wasn't taking it away. I said it was the heart rock of Heart Hill.

Although the elders played cards and games the television was on all the time to the distraction of everyone except the staff who were the only ones who watched it. The women

particularly objected to the foul language and sex. This did not add anything to the experience of the Elders and with the noise going all the time, didn't provide a retreat atmosphere to allow a focus on nature or tradition. Our food included some home cooked meals of barbeque pork chops, chicken dinner and caribou stew. Lunches were the predictable ham and cheese or processed turkey roll with Miracle Whipped white bread sandwiches, processed macaroni and cheese and store bought jam-jam cookies. We all flew back except the staff. It was windy and quite bumpy so we were glad the flight was only about 10 minutes.

The following day I was asked to the Clinic to meet with the director. She heard from the Chief that one of the Elders complained about a word I had uttered during a discussion with one of the staff about a cold shower. I didn't remember much about the incident as I had apologized instantly and the situation was over. I discussed it again with the staff person and at another unrelated meeting when some profanity was expressed towards her, she treated it as a joke between us. A member of the community told me she had heard of the complaint and told the Elder she was a troublemaker. This may have been the experience that Irwin (2000) refers to as an opportunity for friendship...

They must expect the same kind of sharp, even combative, scrutiny that visitors sometimes experience when visiting Indian communities. In my experience, bearing such attacks, showing what one is made of, can be the best way to make friends. (p. 67)

ETHNOCENTRISM: THE SHADOW SIDE

The term "ethnocentrism" is used in this thesis as a way of bringing to light the imposition of constraints based on skin colour or ancestral heritage. The reality of discrimination against Indigenous peoples cannot be disputed. Boldt (1993) states that "the

fact of massive injury to Indians by persistent racism in Canadian society is undeniable” (p. xiv). Mackey (1986) confirms that the people of Conne River were not exempt from an ethnocentric reality.

Many had found that being an Indian subjected them to discrimination and it was not an identity that made them feel proud. However there were still some older people in the community who knew who they were and that they had a proud heritage. (p. 59)

Ethnocentrism in a community goes both ways. People have been subject to ethnocentrism and despite personal repercussions, inflict it on others. While I was at Conne River I heard many stories from people living in the community about what they considered to be rampant ethnocentrism directed to “whites” or “English” by others in the community. This topic has been included because I felt it was directed at me and others on a number of occasions and true healing for an individual or community can not happen if the “shadow side” is not acknowledged.

Sometimes these attitudes can hold back a community’s vision. One example was when the Band had a program planned whereby juvenile offenders could be offered an option to jail. A Band member’s husband, an outsider of European descent, went to graduate school to obtain credentials to run the program. However, at a community meeting he was subject to ethnocentric comments and was not hired. There was no qualified Band member so the program had to be dropped. Another time was when a nurse who is married to a Band member was not given a permanent job in anticipation of a qualified Band member achieving the necessary credentials. It makes sense to have jobs for Band members but it’s questionable that when members of the community can not secure employment whether such a policy benefits healthy community development. A further discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

My own experience was to feel a subtle current of animosity in the words and actions of a CRHSS staff member who in one instance restricted my participation in a women's group after I was invited, saying it was for Native women only. Since I had been invited by another Native woman it felt to be a stumbling block in getting the larger picture of relationships within the community. Generally, I felt my whiteness mattered to some and not to others, as would be typical in many communities.¹¹

The feeling of some at Miawpukek is vividly exemplified by a directional sign posted by the Band at the crossroad to Conne River. I noted that a sign at the highway turnoff had been vandalized and instead of the welcoming intent, the message was "Conne River ----- Everyone." The "Welcomes" had been painted out. An Elder from another community commented in Krawll (1994) on the importance of dealing with the pain that begets ethnocentrism:

What the government failed to understand or didn't understand was that society did not want our people. There is a lot of racism, prejudice, and bigotry. I don't want to get into this in full detail but you cannot talk about the issue of healing without touching on this. I must be able to acknowledge where the pain and destruction began, as well as recognizing my own racism. My Elder said that I needed to go beyond my 'blaming' if I was going to heal. So I don't blame as much as I used to, I just know that things happened. Now I know we have to go past that and move forward. (p. 77)

¹¹ I spoke with a friend who has been living at a reserve in Ontario for about six years. We discussed being an outsider in an Aboriginal community. She said she is not one of "them" and it's obvious in attitudes and opportunities.

CHAPTER 4: EARLY MI'KMAQ HISTORY

The Mi'kmaq are known to have inhabited the north-eastern coast of North America for thousands of years. In New Brunswick there is oral, written and archaeological evidence to show some 3,000 years of continuous human occupation with evidence of Palaeo-Indian sites dating to 10,000 years ago. (Leavitt, 1996, pp. 141-142) At the time of European contact in the 16th Century, the Mi'kmaq were a large and prosperous nation with a population between 6,000 (Jackson, 1993, p. 14) and 15,000 (Prins, 1996, p. 54) who occupied the whole of present-day Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and a portion of New Brunswick and Gaspé. They, along with the Mi'kmaq in northeast Maine, were among the first Indigenous tribes in North America to encounter Europeans and by the early 16th Century regular contact was established between the Mi'kmaq and French and Portuguese fishermen and Jesuit missionaries.

There is much contention about whether the Mi'kmaq arrived on Newfoundland about the time of European contact or if they had been travelling by canoe from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, some 60 miles, for thousands of years. There are ongoing land claims proceedings between the Miawpukek Band Council and the Newfoundland government and there are profound implications dependent on the time of their arrival on the Island. Aboriginal land claims are constrained by the government view that their arrival on Newfoundland happened after Cabot's "discovery" of the Island in 1497. One of the main reasons for this view was that the Mi'kmaq were deemed incapable of making ocean voyages from Nova Scotia despite ample evidence of ocean crossings well before Cabot's arrival. (Marshall, 1999, pp. 43-44) For example, Pastore, a former ethno historian from Memorial University of Newfoundland, wrote that precontact Mi'kmaq would not have

made the trip from Cape Breton to Newfoundland unless their food supply was scarce as “it is difficult to imagine Indians regularly traversing the Cabot Strait in frail, birch bark canoes.” (Pastore, 1978, p. 10, note 163)

THE NEWFOUNDLAND DISCOVERY MYTH

The Newfoundland Discovery Myth is a term used by Native lawyer and resident of Conne River, Michael G. (Gerry) Wetzel, in discussions on whether or not the Mi'kmaq arrived before or after Cabot in 1497. He writes in his 1995 Master of Laws degree:

This myth asserts that Newfoundland was discovered and claimed for the English Crown by John Cabot in 1497. It further asserts that British sovereignty was established over all of the Island of Newfoundland in 1583, when Sir Humphrey Gilbert proclaimed his possession of the area within 20 leagues of St. John's Harbour. The discovery myth is related to the *Mi'kmaw Mercenary Myth*¹² for it asserts that the English preceded the *Ktaqmkuk* (Newfoundland) *Mi'kmaw* in Newfoundland, thus negating any aboriginal claim they might assert on the Island. (p. 421)

Earlier in his thesis Wetzel criticizes Pastore's dismissal of Mi'kmaq accounts of their pre-European use and occupation of Newfoundland. He writes (p. 65):

With regard to the issue of whether or not the *Ktaqmkuk Mi'kmaw* used and occupied areas of Newfoundland before European contact, Professor Pastore found the conjecture of Euroimmigrant opinion more convincing than the historic record...He also noted that *Ktaqmkuk Mi'kmaw* oral history recorded their ancestors used Newfoundland since the 15th century. Despite the Euro-immigrant evidence that supported *Mi'kmaw* long time familiarity with Newfoundland, Professor Pastore asserted that it was 'probably' erroneous and that *Mi'kmaw* people did not begin to come to Newfoundland until the 1600s, after they had acquired European shallops.

However, in 1967 archaeologists discovered pre-European settlement at Port au Choix, on the west coast. Artifacts from the site were carbon dated to have originated some 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. Wetzel's thesis reveals that other ancient sites near Newfoundland

¹² In his thesis, Wetzel (1995, p. 20) wrote: “In this myth the English colonizers created a discourse which asserted that the French instigated warfare between *Mi'kmaw* and *Pi'taw* (Beothuk) people in order to explain their extermination of the Pi'taw people. The culpability for the extermination of the *Pi'tawk'ewaq* (the up above or up river people) was placed upon the *Ktaqmkuk Mi'kmaw* people.

have also been found, and he contends that the educational/legal interpretation of the ancient culture is limited by Eurocentric concepts. He explicates (p. 422):

Archaeological sites discovered on the Magdalene Islands have now proven that the Maritime Archaic peoples, who may be the ancestors of the *Ktaqmkuk*¹³ *Mi'kmaw*, had been making trans-gulf voyages for the past 6,000 years. Further, archaeologists have said with more certainty that the ancestors of the *Mi'kmaw* people were canoeing to the Magdalene Islands 2500 years BC. This information destroys the myth held by Newfoundland archaeologists who have asserted that the Gulf of St. Lawrence was a barrier that prevented the ancestors of the *Ktaqmkuk Mi'kmaw* from reaching Newfoundland in pre-European times.

The Magdalene Islands are approximately the same distance from Cape Breton as Cape Ray, in Newfoundland. Archaeologists working in Newfoundland have found sites similar to those on the Magdalene, but their interpretation of the material culture found in these sites strains itself to the point of admitted conjecture by excluding the possibility that it could be associated with a *Mi'kmaw Sa'gewe'dj'jk* occupation of the southern and western coasts and interior of Newfoundland in pre-European times.

Wetzel points out that both the Mercenary Myth and the Newfoundland Discovery Myth are still deeply held by the justices of the Newfoundland courts who have been educated in Newfoundland and dismiss challenges to the unfounded presumptions of these myths. He writes that he hopes for decolonization to occur concurrently so there can be “a new form of association founded on mutual respect for each others humanity, history, culture and societal rights.”(p. 430)

SPIRIT CANOE COMPLETES CROSSING

During the mid-to-late 1990s, under the direction of Chief Misel Joe, a group of men at Conne River built Spirit Canoe, a vessel they felt was capable of the ocean crossing from Cape Ray, NF, to St. Paul's, NS. It was necessary for them to train extensively as their non-traditional lifestyle no longer supported the physical challenge. During the summer of

¹³ Ktaqmkuk – “the far shore where the waves cross over or the far shore over the ocean.”

1998 they waited for the weather to settle so they could navigate the crossing, but they eventually had to give up the idea for that season. But in July 1999, their second season of patience was rewarded with an appropriate window of opportune weather. They made it most of the way. At a showing of the Spirit Canoe movie for the Community in the Great Hall, Chief Misel explained that big waves came up when they were within a couple of miles from Cape Breton. Being exhausted, all the paddlers, the Chief and a filmmaker went into the accompanying boat for a rest. With no weight in it, the canoe bounced around on the water and rammed into the other boat. So, despite being within sight of land after traveling some 60 miles, they were not able to complete the voyage in the Spirit Canoe.

However, another canoe was brought to Cape Breton from Conne River and they paddled up the Bras d'Or lakes to Chapel Island where they were very warmly greeted. They were met at the Cape Breton landing by Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and some from Conne River who travelled by ferry from Port aux Basques. So although the paddlers did not arrive unaided, as would have been inevitable a thousand years ago, they got close enough that it seems more reasonable than not that the voyage could be made in ocean-going canoes before the advent of European shallops.¹⁴

The Eurocentric perception of North American Natives was enacted in the summer of 1997 with the sailing of *The Matthew* from Bristol, England, to Newfoundland. This was

¹⁴ Whitehead R. "Micmac Ocean Voyages Down the Eastern Seaboard" (English version) at p. 7, in Martijn, *Les Micmacs*, at pp. 224-232. Whitehead states that it is difficult to find one definitive description of a shallop. Whitehead used Kemp's, *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, (1976), at p. 775. Whitehead states at p. 7: A shallop is described as "a light small vessel of about 25 tons," or "a large heavy undecked boat with a single mast." Lescarbot's shallop had a crew of nine. Then there was the "Baske" or "bischen [Biscayen]" shallops. These appear to have been a type of long-boat pioneered by Basque whalers, but later the style and term are used by other nationalities. The one seen by Gosnolds ship carried six to eight people, and had both sails and oars. (in Wetzel, pp. 64-67)

to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the “discovery” of North America by John Cabot. (At the time no one mentioned that the first European visitors were Norse, and they established a camp at L’Anse aux Meadows about 1000 A.D.) A little-known fact about the departure from Bristol was that The Matthew was preceded out of port by another vessel. In a personal conversation on July 7, 1997, Diane Binnington of Bristol, showed me pictures of Chief Misel and his brother standing on this deck in traditional regalia flying a large banner proclaiming that Natives had been in North America for 10,000 years. Later in Newfoundland, the Chief met Queen Elizabeth at the docking ceremonies of The Matthew when it arrived in Bonavista. Before its arrival, he travelled around the province with a birch bark canoe in order to educate Islanders about the Native presence of thousands of years.

European contact, beginning in 1492 with Columbus and in 1497 with Cabot in Newfoundland, had the same effects on all the Indigenous peoples of North America. One immediate and devastating consequence was the introduction of diseases including smallpox, measles, whooping cough and tuberculosis. Martin (1978) points out that the ability of early shamans to be effective intermediaries between the physical and spirit realms profoundly affected the lives of the Mi’kmaq. He writes that before the 16th Century the shamans maintained control over supernatural forces and communication with them, but unfortunately:

the seventeenth-century French failed to appreciate the full significance of the shaman’s mediating position between the spiritual and the temporal, being much more interested in exposing them as frauds or jugglers in league with Satan. From the seventeenth century to the present these intriguing individuals have been given a uniformly bad review. One still finds the medicine man depicted in the scholarly literature as ‘a kind of madman,’ ruefully observes Erwin H Ackerknecht, himself a physician. (p. 37)

The Indigenous peoples had no resistance for these unknown illnesses and epidemics and the shamans did not have cures. This ultimately led to the development of scepticism and antagonism toward the shaman and their practices. (See discussion on p. 174) Knockwood, in his paper *Native Culture and Spirituality*, writes of Americans celebrating the “discovery” of North America by Columbus: “In 1992, many natives will not celebrate the ‘discovery’ but will bring to world attention the 500 years of oppression, poverty and misery that they endured.”

MI’KMAQ/BEOTHUK RELATIONSHIP MYTHOLOGY

A full history of the Mi’kmaq in Newfoundland is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is important to note their relationship with the Beothuk because it is a prime example of how the Mi’kmaq presence has been recorded and regarded by modern historians, ethnographers and politicians. Despite the fact that there is no evidence to support the mythology of Mi’kmaq hostilities, it has been perpetuated by governments, education and media. As far back as 1922 there was skepticism about the Mi’kmaq persecution of the Beothuk. Speck notes that this idea, which he found to have been disseminated from only one or two sources, “arouses indignant denial ...The Indians of Newfoundland today regard the Red Indians (Beothuk) as a people who were doomed to their fate through an unconquerable fear of their fellow men, Micmac as well as European.” (p. 47) He wrote that there was amicable contact between the tribes until a quarrel between a Mi’kmaq boy and a Beothuk boy over the killing of a tabooed animal, a black weasel in the winter, and the Beothuk boy was killed (p.122).

Marshall (1996) concurs, in that all accounts from 1820, 1839 and 1842 agreed there was peaceful co-existence. She writes that there are essentially three versions (including the

black weasel story) of the “critical turning point in relations between the two peoples.” All versions have been related through the Mi’kmaq oral tradition, which Marshall says “is not to explain the actual cause of an historic event but rather to validate current social relations... the killing of a tabooed animal – should not be taken literally with respect to details.” (p. 46)

Howley (1915) wrote that if stories of massacres perpetrated by Mi’kmaq were true:

it would seem to prove that the Indians were really of a very sanguinary disposition, but this is not borne out by other accounts...There are some instances of individuals being killed by them, but it always appears to have been in retaliation for brutal murders committed upon them by the whites. On the other hand, there are numerous cases in which they could have wreaked vengeance upon their oppressors which they did not avail themselves of. (p. 27)

ANCESTRAL TERRITORIES RESPECTED

Wetzel (1980) also wrote that the myth about the Mi’kmaq coming to Newfoundland in the pay of the French to kill the Beothuks not only had no foundation in historical fact, but it was not a rational policy for either the French or the Mi’kmaq to pursue. In addition, the relationship between the Mi’kmaq and the Beothuk appears to have been one of mutual observance of each other's ancestral territory, not unremitting hostility (p. x). MUN historian Pastore (1977) wrote that the mythology of massacre is so “firmly entrenched and repeated, and has established such a strong bias against the Micmac Indians, that it will take a great deal of public education to set the record straight, which even then can never undo the damage that this attitude has created over the years” (p. 9). He explained that after an exhaustive search of French archives in 1962, the leading authority on the early French fishery, Charles de la Morandiere, reported that the French played no role, direct or otherwise, in the extermination of the Boethuks. Then Pastore cited an editorial that appeared in the west coast Humber Valley newspaper, *The Humber Log*, on November 25, 1975.

The Conne River Indians Micmacs are not native to this province and are in the news demanding rights which may well be questioned. While they originated in Nova

Scotia, and occasionally visited Newfoundland for hunting purposes they were imported by the White People to hunt and destroy the Beothuks. Having accomplished this many of them stayed here although the only sizeable community remaining is in Conne River. They are welcome and entitled to stay and make a living along with the other residents of the province.

Such inherent ethnocentrism, misinformation and patronizing can only profoundly affect the relationships between Mi'kmaq and others in Newfoundland, with the Natives being set up to be feared, despised and ignored by everyone, including government policy-makers. The above newspaper article states that the Mi'kmaq were "imported by the White People..." This could mean French or English and is an example of how the Mercenary Myth of Mi'kmaw aggression is being perpetuated.

All these disparaging ideas and theories have been included in the mythology developed over centuries in Newfoundland. This is despite the fact that there had been so little European use and occupancy of the southern coast and interior that neither the French nor the English were in a good position to come in regular contact with the Mi'kmaq or to observe the substance of their normal existence there. (Wetzel, 1980; Wetzel, 1995).¹⁵ Rowe (1977) says "journalists and other writers who have capitalized on this mythology, building up its melodramatic and sentimental aspects, have created further mythology." (p. 5)

An offender in this regard is the well-known Canadian writer Pierre Berton who devotes a chapter to the story of the Beothuk in his 1976 book, *My Country: The Remarkable Past*. In this chapter he lists every tired cliché, every allegation of white atrocity, no matter how undocumented... Thus he writes of the Beothuks as "peaceful" and "innocent", and the whites and Mi'kmaq as "practising genocide." Berton writes of the Mi'kmaq as "predators"

¹⁵ For a full discussion of colonial and settlement policies of Europeans, and patterns of European use, occupancy and settlement in Newfoundland see Wetzel et. al., 1980, and Wetzel's 1995 Master of Laws thesis *Decolonizing Ktaqmkuk Mi'kmaw History*.

who “beat their primitively armed...shy but friendly...enemies in battle” with guns from the French (pp. 123-124).

Wetzel (1995) also criticizes the 1978 work of Pastore¹⁶ for using Euro-immigrant written sources to obtain information about their history instead of doing fieldwork among the Mi'kmaw. However, to his credit, says Wetzel, “Professor Pastore was the first Newfoundland historian to directly question the *Mi'kmaw Mercenary Myth* in a scholarly manner. His analysis of only the Anglo-immigrant sources showed there was no basis for the allegations that the *Ktaqmkuk* (Newfoundland) *Mi'kmaw* exterminated the Beothuk people.” (pp. 64-65) Henderson (1997) also wrote that there is not a single recorded instance where the Mi'kmaq ever gave “aliens” a hostile reception. (p. 33)

It is likely, however, that stories of Mi'kmaqs massacring others, true or not, have taken their toll on the Mi'kmaq people. It is not surprising that self-esteem is a problem within the Miawpukek community.¹⁷ With the message that society has been giving its Native people, it is inevitable that centuries of discrimination have been internalized, resulting in ethnocentrism and power issues within the community today. Henderson also says that the dominant responses of Aboriginal peoples to existing bias against them in Eurocentrism and the colonial legacy, has been disintegration, alienation and resignation (p. 24).

¹⁶ Pastore, R. *The Newfoundland Micmacs: A History Of Their Traditional Life*, St. John's, Newfoundland Historical Society, Pamphlet No. 5, 1978.

¹⁷ Personal conversation with Theresa O'Keefe, July 15, 1997.

DISPOSSESSION IN NOVA SCOTIA

Historically there are generational family ties between the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Whether they arrived thousands of years ago or within the past five hundred years, the patterns of socialization and travel have kept people aware of these connections. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the social and political roots of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia because they are harbingers of the nature of government and Native relationships in Newfoundland.

After the American Revolution – 1775-1783 between Great Britain and the American Colonies – the British Loyalists divided the former Nova Scotia into Nova Scotia in the east and New Brunswick in the west. They decided that the people who were already there were uncivilized and therefore they were denied any consideration in the matter of rights to the land they had occupied for hundreds of generations. It did not matter that formal treaties were agreed upon between the Mi'kmaq Grand Council and the representatives of Great Britain in order to address demands for natural resources. The first major treaty was signed in 1752 when the Grand Council agreed to share – not sell – the natural resources, to protect existing British settlements and to trade exclusively with the British. The Crown promised to protect the traditional Mi'kmaq way of life with liberty to hunt and fish, and to fulfill the fiduciary responsibility of a colonizer, which is to provide basic essentials of life including land.

The Loyalists applied the “legal fiction” that the Crown possessed full title by simply stating that the Mi'kmaq and Maliseets inhabiting the area possessed no Aboriginal rights to their ancestral domains. Immigrants were then able to settle on land that they legally claimed as their own by petitioning the provincial governments for land grants. Others settled on tracts of land that had been purchased or otherwise acquired by companies, churches or

other organizations. The Mi'kmaq were also told to apply for parcels of "Crown land" which was rapidly shrinking. "Without an official permit, they could not reside on the lands that they had occupied since time immemorial." (Prins, 1996, p. 166; Joe and Choyce, 1997, p. 137)

Thus, decimated by disease and outnumbered by masses of poor immigrants Mi'kmaqs were marginalized even more and reduced to less than 0.5 percent of the total population in the Atlantic provinces. Prins (1996) wrote that in Nova Scotia there were 1,400 Mi'kmaqs in a total population of 400,000, and because they formed small bands, the largest having a population of 169, their numbers seemed even less (p. 164). The Europeans were aggressive and refused the Natives access to their ancient fishing grounds or camping sites. Even firewood was denied them as loggers invaded the forests. In an account of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq in 1786, Hollingsworth wrote: "Their numbers, once so formidable, are now reduced as to forebode the entire annihilation of the race; and it has often been observed, with the strict truth, that they are continually degenerating and decreasing..." (p. 165) By the 1830s Mi'kmaqs were "all in as depraved a condition as it was possible for human beings to be." The Mi'kmaqs were at best regarded as exotic survivors of a "wild and savage past" and many expected them to become extinct. (Ibid)

Although Mi'kmaq country was settled mainly by white newcomers, there were also numerous people of African descent. Among the first was a handful of black slaves employed in Halifax since about 1750. Then, with freed Blacks, runaway slaves and American Blacks from Washington and Baltimore, the Mi'kmaqs were, as Prins wrote in 1996, "dwarfed into political irrelevance...and utter powerlessness" (p. 164). After the arrival of the Loyalists in the 1780s control of the land passed to the colonial governments

and settlers. The economy was based on natural resources such as agriculture, lumbering and comparatively large-scale fishing, which were used in ways which were very different from the requirements of the traditional Mi'kmaq economy. (Joe and Choyce, 1997, p. 138)

The two patterns of economic activity could not be carried on successfully at the same time. As more and more land became settled, the Mi'kmaqs' accustomed freedom of movement and their seasonal migrations became impossible to maintain and without access to their different seasonal hunting and gathering territories their traditional economy collapsed. Within a single generation in Nova Scotia the traditional Mi'kmaq lifestyle had become impossible. Recognizing the seriousness of this situation, the colonial government tried to provide annual grants of food and clothing to compensate for the treaty violations. "However, the colonial government had no consistent policy, and by the early nineteenth century the help was normally only forthcoming in cases of extreme emergency or – as during the war of 1812-14 – when the government wanted to make sure the Mi'kmaqs remained loyal." (Ibid)

The Mi'kmaq were seen as a backward race and deemed too insignificant to pose a real threat and were said to be pitied rather than feared. Prins (1996) provides a description of the Mi'kmaqs in 1848, as reported to the Provincial Legislature by the Indian Commissioner in Nova Scotia:

Almost the whole Micmac population are now vagrants, who wander from place to place, and door to door, seeking alms... They are clad in filthy rags. Necessity often compels them to consume putrid and unwholesome food... The (white) inhabitants in general are kind to the Indians; but the wigwam is seldom visited except for curiosity, and little is known of the misery existing there. The half famished mother with her squalid infant and naked children, the emaciated bodies of the aged, and frightful distortions of the infirm, with the unrelieved sufferings of the sick, concealed in the forest beneath a few pieces of bark or a thin shelter of boughs, have a real but almost unknown existence. (p. 165)

Few outside observers expected them to survive as a cultural group because the British colonial regime seemed to offer only two alternatives: assimilation or extinction. Subjecting Mi'kmaqs to social policies that swung between paternalism and indifference, the British cultural offensive involved forced transition from "savagery" to "civilization" (in European terms). "These policies insulted the Mi'kmaqs' human dignity and wreaked havoc on their traditional culture," writes Prins. "But remarkably, they were not crushed." (Ibid, p. 167) The people were coerced into a political system of internal colonialism where small tracts of Crown land were set apart for their exclusive use. These reserves did provide some protection but they were inadequate as a subsistence base and in no way provided the diversification of habitat necessary to pursue a traditional lifestyle.

There was no comprehension then, as now, that the land was integral to their spiritual cohesion. "However, the reserve did provide space and time in which innovative cultural resistance strategies could be worked out so that dominant white society was accommodated without fully abandoning Mi'kmaq ancestral heritage." (Ibid) Gradually some of the traditional Mi'kmaq settlements became the basis for "reserved" lands, tracts of land set aside by the colonial government and acknowledged as exclusively for the use of the Indians. (Joe and Choyce, 1997, p. 139)

About the time that the maritime economy had developed to the point that the traditional Mi'kmaq way of life was no longer possible at all, Confederation happened and the Mi'kmaq became the official responsibility of the federal government. Under its Department of Indian Affairs, the federal government took over and administered the system of Indian reserves which had been devised by earlier colonial governments. At first the

change made little difference to most Mi'kmaqs. By Confederation many had accepted farming as an alternative to their traditional economy and had developed extended family farms on the reserves. Like many of the farms of the European population at the time, these farms were not oriented to the production of food principally for sale, but were self-sufficient, providing enough food for the farm families themselves and for trade within their small Mi'kmaq villages. Milk and other dairy products, potatoes and vegetables went to Mi'kmaq fishermen and trappers in return for meat and fish. (Ibid, p.139) Prins (1996) comments on the population growth: "Considering their poverty, sickness, and other calamities it is remarkable that instead of slowly dying out, the Mi'kmaq population began to increase during the 18th and 19th centuries." (p. 187)

THE NEWFOUNDLAND EXPERIENCE

Unlike the Nova Scotia experience with treaties and reserves, there were no status reserves established in Newfoundland until Conne River was granted status in 1986. There is no evidence of a negotiated treaty between Colonial government and any Native group and at no time was any governmental agency set up to look after Indian affairs. Even when Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, Aboriginal rights were ignored by both federal and provincial politicians. However Pastore (1977) makes the point that although the Mi'kmaqs in Newfoundland did not suffer as drastically as those in the Maritime Provinces, they also did lose access to their hunting and fishing territories. (pp. 16-17) Pastore acknowledges that the Mi'kmaq who immigrated to Newfoundland seem to have fared much better than those in Nova Scotia, but that even in the 19th century encroaching white settlement meant that the Mi'kmaq had to withdraw from areas they had previously occupied. (Ibid, p. 29)

The Mi'kmaw people say they originally followed hunting and fishing migrations from Cape Breton thousands of years ago and have lived on the south and west coasts of

Newfoundland since then. The land supported and sustained them in their traditional ways during most of this time as large caribou herds migrated through their traditional hunting areas in the interior, and the eco-system resources provided all their needs on the coast. There were groups of Mi'kmaw families who were regular occupants of Newfoundland holding and using family subsistence territories for multiple generations, before and after European contact. (Wetzel, 1995, p. xxi) They developed a way of being that integrated all aspects of their lives into their unique cosmology which provided the basis of spiritual consciousness and actions in the world.

When the Europeans arrived after Cabot landed in Bonavista in 1497 they settled in coastal areas and drove the Mi'kmaq inland. The Mi'kmaq continued to arrive on Newfoundland, particularly following the colonization of Nova Scotia by Great Britain in the subsequent centuries, and settled in several areas. The first major infiltration of Europeans into the interior came in 1898 with the construction of the railway. (Mackey, 1986, p. 10) This had profound implications for the Mi'kmaq because their hunting lands were no longer exclusively theirs. However, for those at Conne River both trapping and the forest industry provided the basis of a wage economy over the next half century but as the animals and trees disappeared there was no longer employment and the struggle for subsistence survival continued. The second infiltration and desecration of traditional hunting grounds came in the mid-1960s with the construction of the first road to the South Shore in order to access and build a hydro-electric generating station at Head of Bay d'Espoir. The road allowed universal access to traditional hunting grounds in the south and dams flooded other hunting areas in central Newfoundland.

The Mi'kmaq were not consulted about the infringement on their traditional land use patterns and were not warned about the deleterious effects on the Bay ecology. One woman who was born in 1966 just after the hydro plant was built recalled the beaches and rocks filled with kelp, sea urchins and jellyfish and the water being crystal clear. "Now it's black, dirty and scuzzy," she said. "The plant has changed the sea life and the condition of the water."

By the time I became familiar with the Bay d'Espoir area in the mid-1990s, there was no longer kelp, seaweed and starfish in the water. Instead, there were tampons and excrement coming in on the tide. Within 30 years the ecosystem of the Bay was destroyed as the effluence of the hydro facility changed the temperature of the water and traditional fish, eels and ocean vegetation disappeared, along with aspects of a way of life. Adelson (2000) wrote that the threat of flooding Cree land, also for a hydro-electric project, caused two Elders there to connect "dirty, polluted, and altered land to dirty, polluted and altered animals and ultimately to dirty, polluted, and 'unhealthy' humans" (p. 84). She then clarifies the Cree quandary: "The mercury that now permeates the fish and the cadmium found in caribou and moose organ meats are understood to be directly related to white man's activities. 'If the land is not healthy then how can we be'." (p. 85)

A former Miawpukek chief also spoke to me about the effects of the hydroelectric plant on the flora and fauna on the Bay d'Espoir. She said there is now metal poisoning in the water and that there was a provincial scientist looking at these effects and quit his job over the issue. She said fish in the Bay were being killed because of the pollutants and PCBs used to clear the transmission lines. Rather than cutting the trees, she said Hydro sprayed them with toxic chemicals. The perception of many people is that there is a high incidence of

cancer in the Bay area because of the hydro facility. There was recently a young man about 29 from Conne River with a brain tumor and a 30-year old with cancer. It would be helpful for research to be undertaken in order to assess the situation and determine what steps could be taken to counteract any deleterious effects of the hydro plant effluence on the Bay ecology.

An Elder, expressing what many feel, stated "Our health was a lot better than now. TB was the main killer and I never heard of cancer. It came since we got electricity. I have to believe that's where it came from." This man said electricity changed many things in the community. "There's more food stored, especially with a freezer and there are washers and heaters. This makes you lazy. Some don't cut wood now. And people can't see the same no more and people are made blinder and everybody has cancer."

There is ample documentation showing how the Mi'kmaq presence was deliberately ignored by European colonizers. One early example involves James P. Howley, a recognized authority on the history of the Beothuk Indians. As Director of the Geological Survey of Newfoundland he had Mi'kmaq guides on his annual survey and mapping expeditions into the interior since 1867. Howley's boss, Alexander Murray, the first director of the Geological Survey of Newfoundland, mapped a reservation at Conne River in 1870. However, according to Tompkins (1993) when Howley responded to an inquiry about the Mi'kmaq in 1902 from ethnologist Pere Pacifique, a Capuchin Missionary, he stated (pp. 1-8) that:

So far as I am aware, no report has ever been made regarding them. By a reference to the census returns of 1884 & 1891, I find in the former year there were 202 but in the latter only 123, so they would appear to be fast dying out. I have not the return for 1901 at hand, I expect there will show a very considerable reduction, and that but very few now remain. They nearly all reside in Bay d'Espoir Fortune Bay District, but there are still a few in Bonavista, Notre Dame & Bay St. George Districts...Now that game & furred animals are getting scarce, I believe the Micmacs day in Newfoundland is all but over. I do not believe there are 100 now in

existence here. Consumption is rapidly decimating them. They appear to be very prone to this disease.¹⁸

Tompkins continues, “despite being the person in the Newfoundland Government with the most experience with the Micmac people who lived around the Island at the time, Howley's response clearly indicates that there was no part of the Newfoundland bureaucracy with even minimal responsibility for the Aboriginal population.” (p. 5) Jackson comments that despite the Mi’kmaq site at White Bear Bay being identified by Cormack in the 1820s, it did not appear in any 19th Century census. (p. 99)

A comparison of the 1891 census with previous returns indicates that the Island’s Mi’kmaq had been forced to retreat from the northern bays and according to Pastore (1977) by the end of the 19th Century “the relatively large concentration of Indians in St. George’s Bay seems to have disappeared” (p. 17). The Mi’kmaq however, did not disappear from that area and the St. George’s Band is located there. One contributing reason for the inevitable fluctuations and inaccurate census reporting in the early Mi’kmaq population was seasonal migration from inland to shore areas.

CHURCHES ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY

Prins wrote in 1996 that the Jesuits were the first religious order to focus exclusively on missionary practice. Beginning in 1611, they began to convert the Mi’kmaq to Christianity and to assimilate them into French colonial society. Proselytizing was extended by the Franciscan Recollets in 1619. Recollet priest Christien LeClercq wrote that “to civilize them (the Indians) it was necessary first that the French should mingle with them and

¹⁸ Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, GN 1/3A, 1902, file 70C. James P. Howley to Hugh H. Carter, Private Secretary to the Governor, St. John's, March 18, 1902.

habituate them among us (and) to make the Indians sedentary, without which nothing can be done for the salvation of these heathens” (p. 73). Although the Jesuits started with similar views, they eventually rejected the idea that Indians had to become “civilized” before they could be Christianized.

However, some Mi’kmaq people today still feel the impact of the missionaries on the lives of their ancestors. Nigola Jeddore of Conne River said in an interview: “One time, before they became Christians, Mi’kmaqs were strong.... But (when) they became Christian they turned into very weak people.” Another Mi’kmaq, Joseph Jeddore, asserted that: “Christianizing mission work became an important part of all European colonizing efforts in Canada.... Some powerful spiritualism however, has protected us these past three hundred years.” (Ibid, p. 206)

Later in the 16th Century the Recollets were instructed to withdraw from Mi’kmaq country and focus on the St. Lawrence Valley and did not return for forty years. After that many missionaries arrived representing various other religious orders. By the early 19th Century the Newfoundland government adopted the expediency of having the churches assume much of the responsibility for Aboriginal peoples. Tompkins (1993) confirms that the church took over land as well as the lives, as evidenced by one survey map which shows land marked for “Indians” was subsequently in the name of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Public Record Office in Kew, England, holds a copy of a manuscript survey map by James P. Howley, done in the 1880’s, of the agricultural lands on the West Coast of Newfoundland in the Codroy Valley area [C.O. 700, no. 22B(2)]. On this map there is a block of land on the north side of the Grand Codroy River marked ‘Indian Reserve.’ On the subsequent version of this map, which is to be found in the Crown Lands map collection at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador in St. John’s, the lands formerly indicated as ‘Indian Reserve’ have been granted to the Roman Catholic Church. The Micmac are members of this church. (p. 5)

EUROCENTRIC IGNORING/STIGMATIZING

Indigenous peoples have been robbed of their humanity and called less than human. Savages, slaves, commodities, half-castes, and half-breeds are just some of the names that have been used to describe them...Colonization brought disorder to Indigenous peoples' lives, to their languages, to their social relations, and to their ways of thinking about, feeling, and interacting with the world. Their ways of being have been systematically fragmented and devalued in Western knowledge, sciences and other dominant modes of knowing...The challenge for Indigenous peoples is one of restoring their spirit and bringing back into existence, health, and dignity from the world of the fragmented and dying. (Battiste 2001, p. 13)

An example of the prevailing attitude in the early 19th Century was included in an address given by Governor J. T. Duckworth to the "Micmacs and Others" on August 1st 1810. Quoted in MacGregor (1908), Duckworth expressed concern for the Native Indians indicating why they were under the protection of the King. His justification documents the disparaging attitude which has prevailed against all Native people since colonization. "The safety of these Indians is so precious to His Majesty, who is always the support of the feeble..." (p. 9)

Tompkins (1993) argues that during the 20th Century, Newfoundland governments have consistently maintained that although Aboriginal people exist in Labrador, according to official record they have not existed in Newfoundland since the demise of the Beothuk Indians in 1824. Therefore, there never was anyone responsible for Aboriginal peoples within the government structure. In 1988, Tompkins detailed a policy history of the Confederation negotiations between Newfoundland and Canada up to the signing of the first Labrador Health Agreement in 1954

This was compiled in order to determine whether or not the intention of the Federal Government was to extend the terms of the British North America (BNA) Act which included the Indian Act, to the Inuit and Indian peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador¹⁹.

Tompkins' 1993 study uncovered (p. 2):

... that there was a clear intention on the part of the Federal Government to do so and that a legal opinion obtained from the Department of Justice in 1950 clearly stated that the terms of the BNA Act applied to Newfoundland as a new province. The fact that the terms of the BNA Act, in so far as it related to aboriginal peoples through the Indian Act, was not applied directly at the time of Confederation, was simply a policy decision agreed to by the Canadian and Newfoundland Governments.

Despite being "frequently acknowledged in reports and memoranda" Tompkins went on, the Mi'kmaq were excluded from any consideration of federal financial responsibility under the terms of the Indian Act. Both provincial and federal governments had chosen to officially ignore the existence of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq in the pre- and post-Confederation periods. So when negotiations began in 1947 for Newfoundland's entry into the Canadian Confederation and during the subsequent efforts to negotiate agreements for the provision of funds for various agreed-upon programs for Aboriginal peoples, the Newfoundland Delegation and later the Newfoundland provincial government never possessed sufficient or accurate information concerning the composition of the Aboriginal populations of either Labrador or the Island.

A Conne River Elder alleged that the committee did not fully comprehend the immediate and long-term benefits available. Whether or not they comprehended the benefits, the delegation did not have the intention to consider the ramifications of their decision on the Mi'kmaq people involved. However, the successful lobbying of the Conne River Band

¹⁹ Tompkins, Edward. "Pencilled Out: Newfoundland and Labrador's Native People and Canadian Confederation, 1947-1954." Report prepared for Jack Harris, MP, March 31, 1988.

Council showed that such a decision can be overturned and in 1984 they gained status and in 1986 were given official legal recognition as an Indian Band under the terms of the Indian Act. Miawpukek First Nation is the only band of eleven in Newfoundland to gain status though negotiations by other bands, such as the Sipcop Band at St. Alban's, formerly the Village of Ship Cove, are in process.

It is important to acknowledge both the fact and the context of the Mi'kmaw being marginalized and denied their voice. Whether from Eurocentric government and media stigmatizing or church proselytizing it helps explain many of the ongoing struggles of Native peoples. For example, traditional cultural continuity was achieved through sharing stories, songs, history, personal experiences and social commentary. (Leavitt, 1996, p. 13) The language and traditional culture at Conne River were on the edge of extinction by the 1970s as the long-term result of Europeanization including decrees proclaimed by a Roman Catholic priest in 1924. This is an example of the violence of thought and deed which brought a dark dimension to the dynamics of a community whose traditions were steeped in egalitarianism, humour and one-ness with the land they lived on. Also, in the priest forbidding the Mi'kmaq language from being spoken, the people lost their connection to their traditional knowledge, place in the world and their spiritual beliefs.

CHAPTER 5: 20TH CENTURY LIFE AT CONNE RIVER

Traditional American Indian communities do not conceive of 'religious knowledge' apart from its complex relations with other domains, including economics and politics. There is no knowledge other than what is lived out, and there is no living out that is not political and historical...How can any study of adaptations to 'modernity' in Native religious life ignore the direct and indirect attacks that modern Euroamerican institutions have made and continue to make on Indian ways of life?...Of course historical study is the only way to achieve depth in the analysis of religious, political or other developments and questions...Thus I would find highly suspect a synchronic community study that lacked historical depth. Conversely, historical studies that exhibit no relationship with the present, no input from today's descendants of that history, strike me as pallid and decapitated. (Irwin, 2000, pp. 70-71)

A VIEW FOR THE THRONE

Almost a century after Duckworth's visit in 1810, the Governor of Newfoundland, William MacGregor, visited the Mi'kmaq living at Bay D'Espoir in July of 1908. In his report, which was presented to both Houses of the British Parliament in September of that year, he referred to the community as a Reservation, then said they have no title to the land. In his report MacGregor describes the country, the people, their subsistence living and some of the struggles they faced. He lists the names of the 23 men only, and whether there was a wife, mother or children in the house. The total population was 131 living at Conne River and nearby Burnt Woods, which is now part of the land of Miawpukek First Nation. People from within the community at the time considered Conne River and Burnt Woods two communities as they were accessible only by footpath traversing woods and creeks.

MacGregor described the country as hilly as covered with a forest of small spruce and birch. In the Bay d'Espoir area, which extends as a long inlet of the sea, the hills were already generally bare from over cutting. A sawmill was already in the middle of the community, on the allotment of Bernard John but without his sanction or permission in spite of the protests of the community. MacGregor reported that none of the Mi'kmaq worked at

this mill and they regarded it as an eyesore on what they considered as their land, and built in defiance of them. That mill survived until the summer of 2000 when it was finally dismantled as it was not financially viable, though by then it was operated by people from the community.

MacGregor described the Mi'kmaq houses in 1908 as small and inferior, of sawn timber but with glass windows. Most of the houses were on an area of about a quarter of a mile where the ground is least steep and which MacGregor described as most suitable for minimal building and gardening. He wrote that there were only three or four acres of cultivated land. He stated that:

The greatest cultivator would not grow in one year more than three or four barrels of potatoes and a few heads of cabbage. There are two miserable cows in the place, and some of the least poor Micmacs possess three or four extremely wretched sheep. They have practically no fowls, but I saw one fowl and a tame wild goose...These Micmacs are hunters and trappers, and are ignorant alike of agriculture, of seamanship, and of fishing...The women can spin wool, and knit stockings. A few of them were even fairly well clothed; the majority were in rags... (p. 3)

MacGregor commented that the people appeared comparatively healthy with no evidence of tuberculosis. He met a woman of ninety and another in her eighties, "attesting to their longevity, which generally still prevails." MacGregor wrote that they were easy to govern and seldom quarreled, and that there was no liquor consumption. That has certainly changed and will be discussed later in this chapter. MacGregor wrote that the community was Roman Catholic and the church was "decently well built and kept, on the best site." He thought to comment on the nature of community and kinship ties by stating that the dead were buried in the cemetery immediately adjoining the church "as members of a single family...". (p. 3) He noted that a school, under church auspices, was started Jan. 17th 1907.

Seldom has a school been started under greater difficulties than this Micmac institution. I was able sincerely to congratulate the teacher on what she has been able to accomplish under such unfavourable circumstances. It is manifest that the children are bright and clever and that they would become useful and intelligent citizens if they had ordinary educational advantages. (p. 3)

This was, of course, a manifestly judgmental Eurocentric comment which denies the usefulness and intelligence of a way of life he didn't understand. It is an example of the benevolent misanthropy of acculturating a population, trying to take over their lives amid continuing ethnocentrism and bigotry. For example, he says in one sentence that "they do not understand agriculture" then says "With some aid, such as supplies of seed potatoes and a few animals, they could no doubt derive much greater resources than at present from agriculture"...as if acquiring some seed potatoes and a cow was going to turn the hunters and trappers into farmers. This is a relevant piece of history because during the 1990s large farming projects were again being introduced into the community and again not succeeding. Community gardens were planted and tended, resulting in crops of cabbages, carrots and turnips. These did not survive after a few seasons, though family gardens are successfully maintained.

MacGregor (1908) commented that he doubted a bright future for the settlement. He noted that the people were neither fishermen or seamen. He acknowledged the difficulty of procuring game because of Europeans encroaching on their trapping lines.

The question of their trapping lands will have to be dealt with before long. Each man regards his rights to his trapping area as unimpeachable. They are recognized at present among themselves, but they have no official sanction for their trapping lands either as a community or as individuals, just as they have no official title to the Reservation. (p. 6)

The current Band Council is still struggling with the Newfoundland government about land claims and hunting territories. Presently, there is a lottery system for the issuing

of hunting licenses. There is a further discussion of hunting later in this chapter.

The rest of this chapter documents the lives of the people of Conne River in their own words. This material was gathered during interviews with elders and others, by participating in ongoing community events and during more than year of living in the centre of the community. The people I interacted with ranged in age from one year to 83. Some of these Elders remember living part of the year in wigwams. One thing that really stood out within the community is the sense of family and family support. The grandparents are close to their children and grandchildren and they spend a lot of time together. Of course that's not true all the time nor for everyone, but their lives are integrally linked and the sense of community is very strong.

At all gatherings, at all events of the Mi'kmaq people, one will find our elders and children. While times are changing as well in our Mi'kmaq communities, still the majority of times the gatherings in the community involve the extended family and children. Children are ever-present, playing, talking, listening and becoming part of their community in the context of the Mi'kmaq culture. (Joe, 1997 p. 150)

Canada's Aboriginal population is characterized by its youth with 57 percent being age 25 or under as compared with 39 percent among the national population in 1986, writes Satzewich (2000). "These facts indicate that continued population growth is likely...The largest on-Reserve population increases in Atlantic Canada between 1966 and 1988." (p. 163) I was informed by several community members and Clinic staff about the Band espousing an increase in family size during the 1980s. What became known as the "brown baby memo" encouraged young people to marry Mi'kmaqs from New Brunswick or Nova Scotia and have "brown" babies to receive a financial bonus from the Band. Durst (1999) wrote that the nuclear family of father, mother and children predominated at Conne River and the extended family was not as involved as in most other communities. (p. 52)

...AND THEN THERE WERE ROADS

The paved road allowing year-round accessibility to Conne River was finally completed in 1998 some 37 years after the government-sponsored building of the trunk road to link up all of the communities in the area except Conne River with the Trans Canada Highway 145 kilometers to the north. This first road into the interior of Newfoundland was constructed from 1962 to 1966 in order to access the area for the building of the Bay d'Espoir hydroelectric project. A branch road was also built south to Harbour Breton and the neighbouring communities in Hermitage Bay in the early 1970s. However, only about 10 men from Conne River worked on road crews. (Mackey, 1986, p. 56)

The construction of the massive Bay d'Espoir hydro project involved work at the main dam site, at various diversions upstream and on the transmission lines. Only the men from Conne River, who knew the interior travel routes, would spend weeks without a break in the country so they only got jobs on the transmission lines. Despite promises of long-term benefits they never happened for the Mi'kmaq men. "These projects produced a brief boom to the whole area but none of the long-term spin-offs promised by the government materialized." (Mackey, 1986, p. 57)

For the hunters of Conne River the hydro project was a double whammy. Not only was much of the land flooded resulting in the end of traditional campsites as well as traditional caribou calving and feeding grounds, but whatever traditional hunting and trapping territories were left were also more accessible to hunters from other communities. Another unexpected result was greater enforcement of game laws as these areas also became more accessible to game wardens. "Thus there was a negative effect on the food procurement opportunities of the Micmac following the completion of these projects. Many of the Micmacs stated that they felt they were 'a fugitive in my own country'." (Ibid, p. 59)

Years ago Conne River and Burnt Woods were different places with no roads or bridges and just a path between them. The school was located in Burnt Woods so children walked three miles, even in the winter to get there. One Elder commented: "We had to strike matches to avoid the bog. If someone died on the other side, we had to get past rocks and water to get the body." Another Elder described winter conditions:

We moved to Burnt Woods for the family to go to school. Right up to your ass in snow – there was no road and we just walked on the path. Now it's plowed and paved and a hell-of-a-lot different. Before the 1960s there was no road out of Conne River. We had to take a dory to get to St. Alban's or Morrisville, which are right across the Bay. When the first road was built it was easier to get back and forth, but even that road was impassable for much of the year.

Some of the community Elders said they liked it when there were no roads. For those people it meant closer kinship ties and there were more gatherings with local communities that were accessible to each other by boat or by walking across the Bay when the ice was frozen. In a focus group, which was part of community needs assessment conducted by staff members of the Conne River Health and Social Services, older participants were recorded by Durst (1999) as remembering their childhood as "happy times with warm feelings of security." (p. 51).

They recalled that family and friends in the community were close and there had been frequent community gatherings over Christmas, for weddings and other social events. They said they liked the fact that there were no roads, and travel from the community involved crossing the inlet by boat. "Most remembered their community in positive terms, prior to the social problems that emerged recently." (Ibid) It is difficult to know exactly why these social problems emerged, but it appears related to the advent of the road to the south shore in the 1960s and the subsequent availability of alcohol in the

community. Now, as a result of year-round accessibility there are new health concerns about AIDS and other communicable diseases that have not yet been seen at Conne River.

STRUGGLES AND JOYS OF DAILY LIFE

Life at Conne River as MacGregor described it carried on for much of the century, according to Elders and others from the community. A history of the Conne River Mi'kmaq since World War One was compiled in 1979 by the Conne River Advisory Committee. Excerpts from this report were included in Wetzel, 1980, including the statement that one of the most profound influences on the community was the 30 years from 1924 that Father Stanley St. Croix took over and imposed Roman Catholic thought and practice. Wetzel writes on p. 68:

He [Fr. St. Croix] made a concerted effort to destroy the language and institutions of the people. This coincided with a dark period in the history of the community. This subjugation of native language, customs and culture, the forced emigration of families, the loss of traditional leadership and the continuing ravages of disease, all served to change the character of the village. Only the subsistence pattern, it seemed, remained the same. The men continued to depend on hunting and trapping for a livelihood, the women to practice their traditional skills. Life was still governed by the seasons. The cycle of seasons began in August when the men hunted caribou, hung and dried the meat and left it with their families as their fall dietary staple. They went into the bush in September to repair their camps and prepare for the trapping season. They laid out their trap lines in October when 'each man scrupulously observed the limitations of his trapping territory established by custom and tradition.'

The first prime fur was taken in November and trapping continued until late spring. Different furs, including most importantly fox, lynx, otter and muskrat were taken at different times during the season. The men returned home by the end of May when the trapping season ended. Families were reunited only on brief, monthly visits, during the thirteen days of Christmas, and at Easter. During the winter the women maintained their homes and cared for children and Elders. In early summer the families joined the men at a "big wigwam" set up at the edge of the bush. Unless any logging jobs presented themselves, the summer

months were spent preparing for winter with survival activities such as spearing and smoking eel and salmon and gathering firewood.

They made traditional wearing apparel such as moccasins, skin boots and mittens and crafts for their own use and for sale. Most items were decorated with traditional beaded designs. Women fitted hide stringers to the snowshoe frames made by the men. They occasionally made birch barrel hoops for fisheries use or stripped birch bark to be sold at two cents apiece for use in lining the holds of the fishing boats. Wetzel (1980, p. 69) notes that the continuity of this lifestyle was essentially maintained from the time of the 1857 Census which described "a group of Indians at Bay Despair."

The Indians do not fish except to spear for Salmon and Eels for the supply of their temporary wants, but derive their subsistence chiefly from the chase. During the winter they frequently employ themselves making hoops and in the spring they strip off a large quantity of birch rinds which they readily exchange at the Merchant's store for bread, clothing, ammunition, etc.

The women also provided food by snaring rabbits and partridge. They also spent time gathering roots and plants for traditional medicines. (See Chapter 8, Table 2, p. 196) The only event for which they stopped their daily activities was St. Anne's Day, which has been a major celebration for all Mi'kmaq every July 26th since she became patron saint in the early days of French settlement in the Maritimes. (See Chapter 8, p. 205 for a discussion of St. Anne's Day.)

When the bottom fell out of the fur market in the 1930s the people of Conne River joined the rest of North America in the Great Depression. Their seasonal cycles were disrupted as trapping income decreased and hunting again became the basis of their subsistence. Other changes also took place during those years; suspension of the Chief system, no Band Council or any form of municipal or community organization, except for the

priest, whose autocratic rule, writes Wetzel (1980), “precluded hopes of improving housing, sewage, health care, etc. English was the language of instruction in the school and this served to alienate the younger people from the old and further accelerated the breakdown of cultural values.” (p. 70) During this time the long-enduring ties with the mainland Mi’kmaw were cut because of the passing of the older generation and the shortage of money which was a travel necessity.

The advent of The Second World War in 1939 provided an opportunity for most of the young men in Conne River to escape the chronic unemployment and poverty. Most between 16 and mid-twenties volunteered with the Newfoundland Forestry Unit. They served in Scotland until 1945. During their time away most of these men lost what was left of their Mi’kmaw language and learned to read and write English at night classes. For some it was their first schooling. They had the opportunity to learn a trade and gain a view of another world and other people. After the war they were not prepared to go back into the bush on a full-time survival basis but took jobs with the Bowater Corporation, a forestry company, and worked there until operations were phased out in 1957-58.

Whenever they could the men worked on projects outside the community such as the Trans Canada Highway and Churchill Falls. This Europeanization contributed to the acceleration of the breakdown of Mi’kmaw values. However, despite the demise of the Elders who spoke Mi’kmaq as their first language and the end of the 30-year reign of Father St. Croix, the people may have lost their traditions but they did not lose sight of their Native background. “Responding to the question concerning racial origin in the last Newfoundland census in 1945, most answered as Micmac, Micmac-English or Micmac-French.” (Wetzel, 1980, p. 71)

A community Elder who was born in 1924 said she always lived at Conne River – not at Burnt Woods where she’s living now, she emphasized. The family of four boys and two girls lived in a board house made from lumber from the woods. Her father used to go logging in the summer and in the fall go “furring – that’s how he made a living.” She remembered using soap made out of fat and cleaning her teeth with wood ashes. They had galvanized buckets and washed the floor with spruce boughs and washed their clothes with a wash board. They had cast iron pots for cooking. They would buy cotton and flannel, mainly for underwear, with the rest of their clothing sewn by their parents using flour sacks or whatever was available. These same materials were used to make rag dolls for the girls. She remembered playing games such as skipping ropes and sewing clothes for her dolls. “The old rag dolls would go when we got a bit of money and could get a real doll from the shop. It would have porcelain head and feet and hands.” She didn’t remember birthday parties as large celebrations, though there would be a cake and the family would be there to acknowledge everyone’s special day.

“My poor old Mother,” recollected another community Elder. “She had small babies so she would take a cotton rag made from flour bags and burn it on the stove and put it on the baby’s belly button to dry it up.” He explained that there was no baby powder so she browned flour on the stove and used it on the baby’s bum. She put bread in a rag and dipped it in tea to make a “sugar tit” for the baby. Like many rural communities that were without electricity, people used an outhouse and kept an indoor bucket for nights. In some families, the children would dump it before going to school. In addition to hauling water from the spring, they had to haul wood from the bush and coal which came in on boats.

The man said Conne River has changed a lot since the chiefs were reinstated in the 1970s. Then everything changed, he said. "Pavement, jobs, 100 per cent different. Before then, there was no electricity and times was so bad half the time there was no kerosene. If we ran out of kerosene, we'd put water in the lamp to get the oil up." He explained that sometimes they would use salt pork cut into strips or cod liver oil as a torch or light. "It would stink though! My poor father was sick for five years and we had no money and things were very bad. I was 14 or 15 when he died." He admitted that when he was nine or ten he had no "real" clothes. "Mom made flour sack pants and would take thread out of one garment to fix another." When sheep wool was available they would steep out witch hazel to make dye for the wool. Then women would twist it together to make two-color wool for sweaters. Another Elder specified that "the men try to catch the sheep and the women sheared them." Yet another Elder explained that her parents also had sheep and her mother spun the wool and knit socks and sweaters.

The younger children participated in daily activities such as going berry picking when they were old enough to do the walk and carry the bucket. One woman said her dad got paint cans because they already had handles, then he would "scrub them so clean and shiny they didn't look like paint cans any more." She explained that they would go pick berries then break off a branch that was loaded with berries and bring it back to the young ones at home. She told me that when they were growing up, their mother said they could be poor but they didn't have to be dirty. So there would be a weekly bath in a galvanized tub in the living room, which was seldom used. When they got older she said they could take a big wash basin to their room to "wash our pits." Before they went to school each day their bed had to be made, dishes washed and floor swept.

Another woman said she wouldn't mind going through it again. "I sit down and tell the story some times" she said. "There was no tap water and not much food when the children was growing up. We saw a good deal more dinner hours than dinners – I guarantee you." One man lamented that people are being too wasteful now. He said:

People don't appreciate what they've got these days. There's mismanagement too – like with the fishery. They don't handle it right and it's heading that way. If they don't smarten up they could be in trouble. There's not a lot of work now; the sawmill is gone, the farm went down. Buddy came in and taught them but strawberries and raspberries are down this year. There were cabbage, turnips, beets and potatoes - wonderful things. I can't see why it didn't work.

During my time at Conne River I never saw a mouse or rat. I commented on this observation to a community member who said "it used to be terrible with rats. People just threw their garbage everywhere and the place was having a real problem." We concurred that there is still a lot of paper and plastic litter around everywhere in the community and we hoped this would not lead to another scourge of rats. I observed children and elders throwing soda cans and candy wrappers onto the streets or into the bush with no consciousness of the impact on the environment.

Several Elders revealed that they were out of their homes and working by the time they were 10 or 12 so they did not have much in the way of schooling. One woman born in 1923, recalled learning the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, and a man disclosed that he can't read as he never went to school. The young girls went to help women with household chores and the young boys worked in the bush, at first cutting logs close to home. One man explained that when he was 14 he went into the woods to work with a buck saw. "We cut logs and hauled them up with rope then towed them to the sawmill in Morrisville. The smallest trees cut were three inches, but most were four inches to two feet, though the big ones were rare." After the trees were cut, the boys would cut up the lumber for pulpwood.

The large logs were skidded out of the bush with horses in the spring. Ships came from Corner Brook to load the lumber. He described his working day:

I'd get up in the morning at 5 o'clock and walk three miles from Burnt Woods to Conne onto the point (closest to the other side) to get the dory. We'd beat our way across the ice and go to Morrisville and come back in the night and next day do it again.

Unemployment was a chronic problem. It was possible to feed one's family, but, without access to the wage economy, there was little money for and clothing. Bowater employed a large number of people in the early 1950's in their Bay d' Espoir woods operation but the Mi'kmaq were the last to be hired and the first to be laid off when Bowater began to phase out their operations in 1956-58. Opportunities for wage employment in the Bay d' Espoir area ceased with the closure of the company. Some men then were guides for one of the outfitters who had hunting camps. Many of the men who had worked for Bowater went to Glenwood, others went in search of logging and construction jobs in other communities or in the labour market on the mainland. (Mackey, 1986, p. 55)

FUNDING PROVIDES FOR LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Now the Band Council has created employment with its government block funding and there are social programs for job creation and welfare that reflect provincial programs. The social ramifications of employment rather than welfare have affected youth who now expect a job instead of welfare. There has been a thrust to shifting awareness to school, trades or other options. The rate of Band pay for various programs varies from \$6 to \$10 an hour with jobs given on a needs basis such as supporting children.

At one time because of limited funding wages had to be lowered so the maximum number of people could be employed. At the time of writing the thesis proposal in 1998, employment at Conne River had gone from about 90 percent unemployment to about 99

percent employed. There were job creation programs that kept everyone employed – for awhile. Some of the projects did not have long-term sustainability and unemployment began to re-emerge by the time of my departure in 2000.

At that time there was much discussion in the community about the elimination of 17 jobs when the sawmill was removed, about the struggles to keep the fishery viable, and the seemingly imminent bankruptcy of the hardware store and the gas bar. It appeared incongruous that with so much construction all the lumber was imported into the community. It was explained to me that most of the employment opportunities were considered job creation rather than economic development and could exist only as long as they were economically viable. I was told that the Band Council does not necessarily support or utilize these time-limited job creation programs.²⁰ Unemployment has increased during the past few years and a concern is that this could lead to increased alcoholism and abuse in the community. (See p. 115)

Traditionally, people at Conne River lived in wigwams at least part of the year. They were made with saplings and large sheets of birchbark, though there is little if any large birch available now. Several of these lodges are occasionally used for gatherings and as a place for passing on traditional knowledge. Although sawn lumber was used for house construction for the past century, housing standards for many in the community were poor until the 1980s when status was gained. During the 1950s and 1960s when the fur prices were high and the sawmill industry was operating, some families were able to build and

²⁰ The Job Creation Program is a social program which was established in 1990. Under Chief and Council direction, CRHSS combined welfare monies to be used to employ community members eligible for welfare in a work-for-welfare program. In order to be able to employ all eligible Band members with this program, CRHSS developed a priority list for work placement along with a corresponding wage scale. (CRHSS: Annual Report 98-99, p. 24)

maintain fairly substantial homes. However the more common type of home during this time consisted of small one and two bedroom houses with up to a dozen inhabitants. (Mackey, 1986, p. 55)

The halcyon years came with status and funding became available to upgrade members' homes. Virtually all the substandard housing has now been replaced by modern buildings built to code standards. Although there is still some overcrowding, most residents are situated in modern suburbia-style single family dwellings. Family groups often situate their housing in close proximity. One of the main problems now is lack of land suitable for building sites. Not only is the size of the Reserve too small, the available land is on the side of steep rock hills which have to be blasted to be useable. This has resulted in housing being an ongoing problem as the population continues to increase with people moving in and babies being born. Since achieving status in the mid-1980s and funding becoming available, the population of Conne River has increased from a couple of hundred people to about 800. This has necessitated additions to CRHSS and the Band offices. During the past two years these facilities have been expanded to accommodate new programs and services.

DISFRANCHISEMENT AND INDOCTRINATION/ THE DARK YEARS

At the turn of the 20th Century the people of Conne River already considered themselves Catholic as their liturgy, spoken in traditional Mi'kmaq, followed the precepts of the Church of Rome. Then in the early 1920s a Roman Catholic priest, Father Stanley St. Croix who was stationed across the Bay at St. Alban's, began to insist that the prayers be done in English, not Mi'kmaq. The Chief at the time, Noel Jeddore, also known as Saqamaw Geodol, continued offering morning mass in Mi'kmaq at the church on the Reserve. Father St. Croix would go to the Conne River Church after morning mass in St. Alban's and he

would have no congregation because everyone had been to Mi'kmaq mass.²¹ He then went to the Collier's home to celebrate mass but got upset because nobody attended.²² The people still considered Saqamaw Geodol as their chief, but after serious misunderstandings between him and Father St. Croix, he was forced into exile in 1925. A granddaughter of Noel Jeddore explains:

I always heard my poor Mom say Noel Jeddore left the year I was born. I heard someone made up lies and he was getting into trouble so he had to leave. My poor mother was Sarah, an 'English' woman. She made up with poor Dad when he returned from the First World War. Noel Jeddore had three sons (Peter, Victor and Joe) and three or four daughters (Agnes, Cecile and Martha; maybe another girl). After his wife died Noel left Conne alone to go to Eskasoni. Poor Dad wasn't one to talk much, and poor Mom didn't know much. After awhile the children left Conne for Eskasoni and I never heard anything about Noel after that.

Saqamaw Geodol was the last "official" Saqamaw of Taqamkuk (Newfoundland) for almost 50 years. He left the Island and went to Eskasoni in Cape Breton, joined by several other families. Before leaving he put the 'Chief's Medal' on the statue of St. Anne in the church. "Oral history says by putting the medal on the statue, his words were to the effect, 'I might be leaving, but the medal stays.' He was our last 'official' Saqamaw for the longest time." (www.geocities.com/pilip/history.htm)

Although the Roman Catholic Church maintained its stronghold in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, it did not restrict Mi'kmaq language use and there are several communities, including Eskasoni, NS, and Big Cove, NB, where Mi'kmaq is spoken. Church liturgy is also conducted in Mi'kmaq. At Conne River, where Father St. Croix forbade use of the language, traditional ceremonies and beliefs, language was mostly forgotten. Intermarriage of Mi'kmaq

²¹ The man, who was born in 1918, said he remembered the time and the people involved. He remembered his grandmother teaching him the Hail Mary in Mi'kmaq, though he doesn't speak the language any more.

²² The Collier family, known as English, lived at Conne River. They had several cows and sheep and had a schooner which they used to transport harvested lumber to sale.

men to “English” women has been another contributing factor to the loss of traditions. Women were responsible for teaching the language, history and culture but if they did not know the traditions they could not teach them. This is not to suggest that men did not fulfill this role, only that they were away for months at a time so if they were not present, the primary language spoken in the home would be English, not Mi’kmaq.

One Elder, born in 1928, recollected speaking the language when he was young. He was afraid when his grandfather and uncles spoke Mi’kmaq because the priest told them it was “bad.”

Mi’kmaq was bad, and the language was bad and evil so the old ones gave up the talking. I was too small to care then, but now I know it was too bad he did that. Then, the language got mixed up with English and now nobody answers if you speak Mi’kmaq. I might catch on but it’s been gone too long and now I’d have to start from scratch. It was different when it was spoken as our first language.

Despite the priest’s restrictions, the language was still used for a few years. A woman born in 1923 said she understood a bit of Mi’kmaq because her grandmother spoke it. She said her older sister, born in 1919, knew more of the language than she did. One Elder, who was young in the early 1930s, remembers people being buried in Mi’kmaq and singing hymns in Mi’kmaq. Father Hayes took over after Father St. Croix left the parish in the early 1950s. Although he continued proselytizing Catholic doctrine, Fr. Hayes proved to be helpful in medical and dental situations. One woman said he took out three of her teeth and her husband referred to him as a “saint” who removed a lump from his wrist using a holy relic (a medallion) and prayers. “Two days later”, he said, “I was okay and it’s never returned since.” He continued:

In the later years Father Hayes would come here about three times a year – Easter, St. Anne’s Day but not Christmas. If there was a burial or ceremony and the priest was not here, a teacher or someone else used to officiate. Usually the teacher would do the

prayers and later when he was around, the priest would bless the grave. There was no Chief then.

Another of the impacts of the Church was the numbers of children being born. One woman, when questioned by her daughter about having more than a dozen pregnancies, replied that she was afraid to use contraception in case the priest found out. The daughter commented that she doubted that the priest would search her mother's dresser drawers but the fear was too ingrained for the woman to risk the possibility. This is a commentary on the impact of Roman Catholic doctrine on many in the community. Another Elder said many of them do not like talking about these things, "probably because of the influence of the Church."

One woman came to Conne River from St. Jacques, Fortune Bay on the South Shore to go into service (i.e. work for a family) in 1947. She and her husband were married a year later. They were both Catholic but could not be married in the church during the day because they had a baby. She explained, "If you were pregnant or had a child you couldn't get married in the day. I remember it was dark and raining but we rowed the dory to St. Alban's with our brother and sister. We had pancakes for our wedding supper because we didn't even have any bread."

Although it was Roman Catholic church policy that had the profound effect of demonizing traditional practices of the people of Conne River in the 20th Century, the Anglican church set the precedent when they established the first residential school for Canadian Indian children in the Red River Settlement in 1820. Porter (1981) asserts that: "Almost without exception these schools were established to convert and 'civilize' the Indians, particularly the children" (p. 7). He continues, stating the contention of historical sociologist S.D. Clark that:

...the ideological predisposition of the Anglican missionaries who ran the residential schools and the needs and interests of successive Canadian governments had an affinity for one another, and that the missionaries' unequivocal denunciation of all things Indian gave a moral and intellectual legitimacy to the legal, political, and social subordination of the country's Aboriginal population.

Church/state discussions began between the Department of Indian Affairs and representatives of the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian churches in 1905 with a debate over residential schools. Despite similar goals the Roman Catholic Church refused to join with the Protestant churches in the presentation of their views on Indian education. (Ibid, p. 61) The Anglicans believed, as they always had, that the purpose of Indian education was to separate the Indian child from the "regressive" influences of his traditional culture. They approved of day schools for young children because, they said, they helped to instill church values into home life. "They considered that ultimately no educational advance is likely to be permanent unless the home advances, or unless the advanced pupil breaks away from his backward home." (p. 183) Porter states that schools were Indian but proselytization extended to Jews and Orientals. (p. 78)

There was some schooling at Conne River/Burnt Woods in the early days, sometimes provided by those, writes Mackey (1986): "who had a little more education than the students." (p. 55) Standards improved as people in the community gained education, so the school in the community was adequate until about the 1960s when the population started to increase. It was decided by Parish order at the time that the higher grades be eliminated from the community school and the students board with families in St. Alban's and go to school there. This allows, as Satzewich (2000) writes, educational institutions to be employed by a colonial authority to "assert their hegemony...Education served to separate and widen the gulf between Natives' traditional social practices and belief systems and the colonial

institutions, thereby reducing the need for coercive means of control such as military occupation.” (p. 115) It was not a residential school at Conne River but the effect on the children and their families were similar. For example, teenagers living away from the community were unable to take part in some of the hunting and traditional food gathering activities, and there was a large drop-out rate of students from the higher grades. One Elder commented that “My kids were lucky to stay with good people because some of the kids got nothing from the people they boarded with.”

It often is a struggle to shape the character and destiny of a group of people that underlies the desire for control over education. Satzewich points out that education can be used as a form of domination and subordination and as a means to express cultural autonomy and growth. He says:

Its power lies in its ability to shape people’s consciousness about surrounding social and natural conditions and possibilities. In the case of native-white relations in Canada, missionaries and state officials readily employed schooling as a means to destroy traditional native cultures and promote the assimilation of aboriginal peoples, but native bands have also looked to education as a vehicle for the resurrection of traditional native values and the reconstitution of native identity. (p. 116)

St. Anne’s School was built on the Reserve in the 1970s and offered kindergarten to Grade 12, which is entrance level for college or university in Newfoundland. Edwina Wetzel, Director of Education was awarded an honorary Doctorate from MUN because of her contributions to education in the area. There was on-reserve housing provided for teachers who came from away. Over the past decade students in the community have taken advantage of educational opportunities and now all of the teachers are from Conne River, as are the Executive Director of CRHSS, all the nurses, early education teachers and social workers, as well as Band administrative personnel.

FISH AND EELS DISAPPEARING

Fish has always been a food staple for the people of Conne River. There used to be salmon, trout, cod and eels, which took expertise to catch during winter. “We’d make eel spears with iron hooks and use them in the winter,” an Elder explained. “We’d find an eel-pot – that is a hole with eels – with so many you can tell everyone because there used to be enough to fill a dory. Now there are hardly any.” Another man explained how to catch them.

First, go to the woods for birchbark. Tie the birchbark rind with roots and it was the torch. We’d get into the boat and hang the torch over the side. You’d light up the torch and go along the shore. We’d make a spear with hardwood and get the eels. Now I use a lantern instead of birch and keep a couple of spears in the cabin and still gets eels. It has to be a good calm night or I can’t see them.

There were about 18 cabins located on the rivers and ponds in the area and there was an abundance of many varieties of fish. The average catch was four fish-a-day in season, and a hundred fish was enough to last the year. “The biggest one day catch was when Mick John got 22 salmon,” an Elder reminisced. “In two days he had 40 fish – almost enough for the year. They would be dried and smoked or salted. “Now,” he lamented, “fish are scarce.” He continued:

It’s no good when so many more people are taking extra fish. We used to take 300 or 400 pounds for the year for the family but now with modern equipment hundreds of thousands of pounds are taken and the fish aren’t there anymore. Then the government closed the river because the fish were getting scarce with pollution and overpopulation.

In the spring of 2000 Band members were notified that fishing on the Conne River was closed. The Band Council, in its action to preserve fish stocks in the river system, are honouring a traditional value of stewardship and conservation awareness so the land can provide for the seventh generation. A community TV notice stated:

NOTICE TO ALL BAND MEMBERS From the office of Saqamaw on the advice of our fisheries department technical people and our legal counsel, has decided to officially close the Conne River to all fishing as of May 8th, 2000.

The Miawpukek First Nation government has spent thousands of dollars trying to enhance the Little River and the Conne River systems. As Band members please help your government to achieve the highest order of conservation awareness. Please help us have the highest order of conservation awareness. This precious resource has been entrusted to our care and everything in our power must be done to protect it for our children.

Welalioq (thank you)
Saqamaw and Miawpukek Council

As Band members please help our conservation officers maintain order and allow them to do their job.

During my time at Conne River there were major violent confrontations between Native and white fishers at Burnt Church, NB. Although Conne River does not participate in the Newfoundland fishery, in a CBC TV discussion on October 7, 1999, provincial bureaucrats and politicians stated that they were ready to quell any problems should they arise at Conne River. This rumour mongering necessitated Saqamaw Misel making a public statement on CBC TV on October 29, 1999, clarifying that there was no problem because there was no commercial fishery and Newfoundland Mi'kmaw "do not support in any way, shape or form, the intrusion into our territory by other members of our greater Mi'kmaw nation, without our knowledge." This example shows how government officials are still creating fear of the Native population.

All of these steps in the struggle toward self-determination are part of the greater effort of Indigenous peoples everywhere. Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) writes that former parts of European empires who have attempted to decolonize have histories involving enormous violence: physical, social, economic, cultural and psychological. These "necessarily, inevitably violent process between 'two forces opposed to each other by their very nature.'

...‘Decolonization which sets out to change the order of the world is, obviously, a programme of complete disorder’.” (p. 27)

ANIMALS AND GARDENS PROVIDED FOOD

Elders remembered that when they were young the majority of families in Conne River had their own vegetable gardens and raised a few domesticated animals such as chickens, cows and sheep for food. Many people told stories of having to raise chickens for Sunday dinner or sheep for Easter or Christmas. This subsistence farming, limited by a short growing season,²³ was necessary in order to supplement limited finances as jobs were scarce and social services generally unavailable. Some families kept animals and grew gardens using seeds and potato eyes. One Elder described a farmer who had gardens with many vegetables and fruit such as gooseberries and apples.

That smart old man kept potatoes, cabbages and turnips in his root cellar. They could open the doors in winter when it got mild and they would take out supplies for a week. The cellar doors were chinked with rags inside and outside to make sure the food didn’t freeze. He also had animals including oxen (altered bull), hens, sheep and some cows. They were all wild on the road as there were no fences. I didn’t like horses because they’re too fragile and you can’t eat it. But I would eat the ox.

Several Elders concurred that because the hydro plant has affected the fish and seaweed in the Bay it also has had an impact on gardening in the community. “We would get four or five dory loads of kelp for fertilizing our little gardens. Before the hydro plant was built it was all over the bay. Seedy kelp is the best,” one man explained. “We used to get kelp for the gardens but there’s none here any more.”

A younger woman remembered from her childhood in the 1950s that women put up moose, caribou, salmon and rabbit as well as berries. She recalled that Mason jars were too expensive to buy so they reused glass jars with a self-contained rubber ring in the lid. Her

family also had a root cellar filled with the preserves as well as potatoes, turnips and other garden vegetables so there was enough food for the winter. Her father, along with other men from the community, would be gone for months at a time to work in places like Glenwood or Botwood. Then they'd have enough money to pay bills and buy supplies, like sacks of flour, pounds of salt beef and salt pork. Durst (1999) explains that various income sources was not unusual. "Their incomes were diversified and never overly dependent upon one economic source, a pattern common to many Native communities" (p. 51).

MacGregor (1908) describes the food available at Conne River early in the century:

Their food consists chiefly of flour, a few potatoes, some cabbage, and perhaps half a score of caribou a year for each family, hung up on trees and thus frozen during the winter. They also smoke fish, principally freshwater fish, and obtain a few grouse and hares, but this small game has almost disappeared from the district. They have to go inland a score of miles to obtain caribou for food. (p. 4)

After this there were many changes in lifestyle, particularly diet and exercise patterns. Traditional hunting, fishing and gathering entailed a nomadic lifestyle with a lot of physical activity and what they felt was good quality food. Since this changed and there has been less nutritious food available generally, and with a decrease in physical exercise there has been an increase in obesity and non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM). Since environmental determinants of NIDDM include several lifestyle-related factors such as obesity, eating and physical activity patterns the impact of acculturation on NIDDM prevalence becomes apparent.²⁴

²³ This was evident when I saw lilacs in bloom in Toronto in May, in Killaloe in the Upper Madawaska Valley in June, and Newfoundland in July.

²⁴ Szathmary E., Genetic and Environmental Risk Factors. *Diabetes in the Canadian Native Population: Biocultural Perspectives*. Toronto: Canadian Diabetes Association, 1987. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb/lcdc/publicat/cdic/cdic_164/cd164b_e.html

Although there is a component of wild game and fish in their diets, there is considerably more use of convenience food filled with fillers and preservatives and loaded with salt and sugar. The limitations of this food is reflected in the increasing incidence of diabetes, especially among the Elders and the young. Conne River participated in Aboriginal Diabetes study through Dalhousie University along with three other reserves from Nova Scotia and Labrador. Theresa O'Keefe confirmed that Conne River had the lowest incidence with eight per cent diagnosed with the disease, but these rates are now increasing.

HEAVILY PROCESSED FOODS PLENTIFUL

The food consumed has changed from traditional game to heavily processed meats, frozen vegetables and sugar-laden sweets. At Conne River, as at most reserves, the stores and snack bars stock primarily high turnover foods such as soda pop, candy and high-fat snack foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables are rarely available and canned or frozen varieties are limited. A limited amount of fresh meat and fish are sometimes available but protein choices are often limited to peanut butter and processed meats such as wieners and bologna or frozen processed fish, meat and chicken. The gas bar and the arcade both offer deep-fried take out such as fries, burgers, and chicken fingers which are generally laden with chemical and filler additives. Occasionally seafood such as cod, cod tongues, scallops and shrimp were available. Battiste (2001) explicates the importance of traditional foods:

Indigenous peoples generally cannot afford adequate store-bought diets and are healthier in places where they have access to traditional foods. Traditional foods are also important in community feasts, in religious ceremonies, and in exchanges of gifts used to reinforce kinship ties...Among the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq and the Innu of Labrador, seasonal moose and caribou hunts are as central to social relations and personal identity as they are to human health. (pp. 46-47)

Research reported by Travers in 1995 expressed concern about access to traditional sources of food and the necessary reliance on store-bought foods of a Band from Cape Breton.

With respect to food shopping, Membertou Band members have an advantage as the urban location means ready access to supermarkets with variety and lower prices. However, in the more isolated community, although there is a larger community with two grocery stores within 15 kilometers, such a trip requires access to reliable transportation. Although most study participants can make arrangements for travel to grocery stores, they may be occasionally reliant upon reserve stores for food, making it impossible to consume a healthy diet. (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb/lcdc/publicat/cdic/cdic164/cd164b_e.html)

A major problem with obtaining a variety of commercial fresh food at Conne River is the cost of importing food onto the Island. Transportation from the mainland involves the increasing gasoline prices which in 2000 was more than \$1 a litre in some places, in addition to the time and cost of the marine crossing. The situation is exacerbated by the great distances food has to be trucked to supply grocery stores in the villages around the Bay. There is limited fresh food available in St. Albans early in the week but it is generally sold out by Thursday afternoon. Most milk was reconstituted from powder and sold in identical containers beside the limited fresh milk which became available during 1999.

The Band has built a Nutrition Centre and CRHSS has developed a program to provide meals for special needs clients. There are four nutritionists who cook for various Band functions as well as make special meals for the community members who are diabetic, have heart disease or otherwise unable to cook for themselves. The meals are delivered to their homes on a regular schedule. However, the cooks and their skills are limited by the available selection of food.

SUBSISTENCE THREATENED

With the arrival of the Europeans came the advent of the fur trade. Prior to that time the people subsisted on marine resources such as seal, cod, flounder, smelt, salmon, various shellfish and shore birds. Band groupings camped on or near the coast to fish and moved inland for brief periods for winter hunting of big game including moose, caribou and bear. Groups hunted together in order to share game equitably and to ensure that everyone was free to hunt during major game migrations. If this freedom was restricted by individuals or families, everyone would prosper or perish depending on the availability of localized game. (Jackson, 1993, p. 124)

The demands of the European fur trade for small fur bearers radically reoriented Mi'kmaq subsistence and settlement patterns into the interior as individual families were forced to concentrate more and more upon the harvest of furs to support themselves. (Ibid, p. 15) In 1908 MacGregor noted that each family had its own trapping ground in the interior of the Island. These territories were respected by everyone else, though anyone was free to fish, travel or shoot game there. Although they traditionally lived on the shore and not inland they "claim no fishing rights at sea, and say frankly they are only trappers and guides." (p. 5)

Millais described an incident in about 1907 when he was travelling in the bush with a Mi'kmaq guide he called Joe.

The sanctity of their trapping-grounds is considered inviolate by the Micmacs. They live on fairly good terms with the Newfoundlanders, but let another Indian or a white man come into their trapping area for the purpose of taking fur, and the amiable red man is at once transformed into a demon of rage and jealousy. I only saw Joe angry on one occasion, and that was when we were descending a rocky hill to the Gander, some distance above Rolling Fall, when we found two lynx traps made during the previous winter. Joe's eyes blazed, and he gave a grunt of fierce dissatisfaction. When we got to camp he put down my rifle carefully and disappeared into the woods, returning some ten minutes afterwards with a face of thunder and lightning.

'It is as I thought,' he hissed; 'they have killed my beavers, and I will get even with the devils,' only he did not say devils. Then he proceeded to let loose his passion on the white trappers who had for the first time ascended the Gander, a province which Joe considered his exclusive right and poured such a torrent of threats and abuse on their heads that I have seldom heard. I think that something: 'will happen to the boats of those unfortunates next time they move into the interior, if nothing worse occurs.' (p. 226)

One man spoke about how life has changed since his childhood in the late 1920s.

Before, everyone shared. If a moose was killed, five or six fellas go in and share it up among the people. We'd get thirty to fifty pounds of meat – sisters, mother, brother. I'd share and they would do the same. It was the Indian way to share everything. It's not that way any more. Then things changed. Everybody was on their own.

Other Elders described their experiences of survival.

The food we had, growing up in the '30s was what we could get ourselves. We'd get fish like salmon or herring, caribou in the winter, beaver, rabbits, a few veggies. We ate everything that moved. We sometimes couldn't get enough to eat because there was no money. It wasn't easy, I tell you. There were not even rabbits. Everything was 'flump' –the bottom fall out of it. I can't see yet how we survived: We didn't want or expect anything. My poor mother said she'd like her children to die in their sleep rather than die of starvation.

When I was providing for my family, I had to go for days and days to find food. Sometimes in the 1950s winter I'd be gone eleven days looking for meat. We could change meat for tea and sugar with someone who had more than we did. If you were no good to hunt, you'd go hungry. We had to go to the country to hunt and you had to stay until you got something. Only the strong survived and a lot of people died trying to survive because there was nothing here. There was no seal in the early days in the Bay but St. Jacques had seal and we'd eat seal oil with molasses and baking soda. We wouldn't eat it now!

The men of Miawpukek are known to be excellent guides in the bush, bringing to mind their ease and familiarity with the terrain and the innate knowledge that makes it look easy. One Elder recalled using a muzzle loader when he was small. "Most hunters had guns, not bows and arrows," he explained. "When I got richer I got a 12 gauge shotgun with lead balls which were long shots for big game." However, now there is some concern about wild game including migratory birds, being a substantial source of neurotoxins.

The meat of migratory birds such as wild geese can be high in lead, especially if lead shot is used to hunt the bird. Lead contamination gets right into muscle tissue and often times can only be detected under x-ray examination. Because the use of lead shot is not fully banned in Canada, lead pellets can contaminate the meat.²⁵

Contamination is not limited to lead shot as both game and small animals in the Bay area are increasingly found to be affected. Many residents told me stories of big game being filled with tumours, and one Elder said she would not eat rabbit because it was no good any more. However, hunting is still an important food source and contaminated meat is usually discarded. One young hunter did not listen to the advice of the Elders and ate tumour-filled meat. His subsequent death from cancer was blamed on the meat.

Traditional hunting grounds are no longer exclusive and a limited number of provincial licenses are available for hunting within restricted areas. Men and women hunt in family groups, and Elders and those who are not able to hunt now are given a share of the meat. The catch from the Band-run fishery, and scallops and lobsters in season, was also shared among Band members.

The Band operates Conne River Outfitting which offers big game hunting for moose, woodland caribou and black bear to tourists from Canada and the U.S. Experienced guides also offer wilderness tours and fly fishing for speckled trout or ouananiche (landlocked Atlantic salmon). (Story, 1982, p. 361) The guides also share the history of their culture on the land, sea and rivers in the Bay d'Espoir area. There are five fully-equipped lodges catering to tourist needs. (www.members.tripod.com/~outfitting/)

²⁵ Starnes R. Lead shotgun pellets contaminate game birds. The Ottawa Citizen 1998 Dec. 17; Section A:20. (<http://www.webhart.net/lead/aboriginal.html>)

HOSPITAL BOATS AND HOME TREATMENTS

One woman remembered when the hospital boat came around every week. “If there were any medical problems we’d wait for the hospital ship when a doctor came around and if you had to go to stay in the hospital you’d be away until the boat came around again.”

Another remembered that there was no doctor or nurses in the community when he was young. However his recollection was that the hospital boat from Harbour Breton or St. John’s went to Conne River only a couple of times a year. Another woman remembered when families treated themselves and was grateful that the doctor now comes weekly and nurses are available all the time.

One Elder said that cancer was unheard of when she was younger. “In those times it was TB that was the problem and lots of people at Conne died of it. I had it after nursing two sick women so I went away for four months and I hasn’t had a recurrence since.” An example cited by Millais (1907) succinctly details some causes of mortality among the Mi’kmaw that were prevalent at the turn of the 20th Century. “Steve Bernard, my hunter in 1906, was the sole survivor of eleven children. Drink, consumption, strains, measles, and carelessness had killed them all except Steve before they came to the age of twenty-one.” (p. 226)

CONNE RIVER HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (CRHSS)

Social Services, particularly Social Assistance, was transferred from the neighbouring community of Milltown to the Band in 1985 after they gained status. This action was a major step for Miawpukek First Nation and since that time, more services have been offered. Some of the multidisciplinary services provided by CRHSS under Band administration are: Social Assistance, Special Needs Loans, Funeral and Burial Expenses, Job Creation Programs,

National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP), Child and Family Services, Home Care, Hot Meals for Elders, and an Elder's Social program.

It was not an easy task to develop the services within the community. Durst (1995) explains that: "The transfer and development of these services was time consuming and at times tedious and frustrating for the Band who were not familiar with bureaucracy." (p. 27) After hiring a social worker and educated and concerned staff, the process was accelerated and most of these programs have developed since 1990. The Mission Statement and Mandate are from CRHSS public information.

MISSION STATEMENT

Conne River Health and Social Services is an agency established by the Council of the Conne River Micmacs, Miawpukek First Nation, to address the health, social and survival needs of the residents of the reserve in a manner that teaches self reliance, strengthens families and promotes community values of mutual support, sharing and togetherness.

Our Mission is to help community members help themselves in all areas pertaining to health and wellness. Health is multifaceted and looks beyond the individual in only its physical state. It deals with the whole person; physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Our integration of health and social services and programs is one step toward building a healthier community.

MANDATE

Conne River Health & Social Services is mandated to deliver programs and services in a number of different areas as it attempts to meet the needs of the people of Conne River. These mandates are primarily determined through the funding Agreements that the Miawpukek First Nation has entered into with the Federal Departments of Health Canada, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

In addressing the health of the people of the Miawpukek First Nation, CRHSS is mandated to deliver services in the areas of medical treatment, environmental health, immunization and communicable disease control, mental health, substance abuse and addiction, growth and development, child health, nutrition, home care and dental treatment.

In addressing the needs of children and families, CRHSS is mandated to deliver services in the areas of child protection, family support services, community education and awareness, family violence, self-esteem development and elder involvement.

In addressing the socioeconomic needs of the people of the Miawpukek First Nation, CRHSS is mandated to provide services in the areas of social assistance, job creation and special needs.

The Conne River Band Council wanted control over its own services partly because of the difficulty community residents experienced trying to receive services. Talking with a few Elders from the community, one gets a clear picture of just how difficult it was. One woman said that when she went for some "relief" to the Welfare Office in a nearby village some 20 years ago, "they made me feel that I did not belong there. There was a lot of discrimination towards Conne People." This was confirmed in a report by Durst (1995) who wrote that "even though there was a demonstrated need, they avoided asking for help because of the disrespectful and humiliating manner in which they were treated by department officials." (p. 28)

People had to depend on surviving off the land. One community member recalled that when he was a young man needing assistance, he was told "No, go back and catch rabbits." When he asked what he was supposed to do while catching rabbits the reply was, "that's your problem." People remembered they had to "basically threaten the welfare officer before they could get any help. And that was people with large families."(Ibid)

CRHSS STAFF RECRUITMENT

The first Executive Director of CRHSS was Fred Chaffe who held the position from 1989 to 1991. Theresa O'Keefe was a Band nurse at the time. She recalled: "When he came it was an old Band hall and club. He committed the agency to structure with program profiles stating objectives, goals and activities and how these goals would be met." When Terry Hickey took over the position he initiated a thrust for integrated services. "He worked on

what Fred started and added depth to the programs.” During 1992-3 Theresa became assistant director for staff development and human resources. Through the Band recruitment process she was chosen to do a two-year degree course in Administration at Dalhousie University in Halifax in order to assume the position of Executive Director in 1996. She has retained the position since then.

All staff, including social workers and counsellors, nurses and early childhood education specialists are now Band members. “A couple of years ago a facilitator showed us that we didn’t know how to work as a team,” explained Theresa. “Now we have ongoing training sessions and skills-upgrading. We have learned how to give and get through constructive criticism and open communication. “I am fine-tuning and adapting the vision to the needs of the community. We are all working towards the same goal that is stated in our Mission Statement.”

CRHSS staff have taken advantage of upgrading courses – some at colleges and universities and others specifically for Reserve personnel in the Atlantic region. One woman described a series of monthly courses in Halifax with classes from computer literacy to bereavement or policy and codes. She participated in a class that was offered to people from various Atlantic Reserves so they would all have the same understanding of Band government which at this time varied between Bands. She commented that Conne River is really well organized and run by the people. “On other Reserves, the Chief decides who runs the Council so when they’re out of office so are administration people. When people keep changing there’s no continuity and they don’t know how to do the various jobs involved in running a band.” She said CRHSS personnel have maintained their jobs since the 1970s when they were provincially run.

Theresa said there are no glaring health conditions at Conne. She acknowledged that although there are major problems such as diabetes, cancer and hypertension they have not been overwhelming the community. This may be changing with increases in diabetes and the increasing incidence of cancer. All illnesses are treated allopathically where responsibility for one's health and health care is on the shoulders of physicians. Theresa acknowledged the necessity for people to reclaim responsibility for simple ailments. "More public awareness is needed so people will take responsibility for more of their needs that don't need medical attention. The nurses, who are on call every day and night, can assess if it is an emergency or not." She explained further that there is a community approach to health care with health promotion programs in such venues as community TV notices, bulletin board announcements by the Band Office, newsletters and home visits. Health practices and health structures both impact on people so the integrated agency is involved with the holistic healing of body, mind and spirit with as much attention given to the care providers as the clients.

One Elder put in a plug for a senior's home, "so we wouldn't have to leave home to go to a strange place. There is now home care in Conne, but with a seniors home they wouldn't need so many workers and it would be better for everyone." Keeping Elders in the community is a way of continuing the inclusion of all members in their extended family. Although the Elders of Miawpukek First Nation do not know the specifics of traditional Mi'kmaq practices they have important first-hand information about survival on the land. The introduction of traditional knowledge brings with it a spiritual component that has been missing during the past century.

HIV/AIDS – AN IMMINENT THREAT

HIV/AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) has become one of Canada's major social problems. Studies in mainstream society show that instances of HIV infection occur more frequently where poverty, violence, drug abuse and alcoholism are present.²⁶ The last decade has seen a steady rise in Aboriginal AIDS cases in Canada. Some studies have shown that as many as twenty percent of 16,000 AIDS cases in this country may be Aboriginal. Infection rates in First Nations women and two-spirited (gay) people are rising rapidly. First Nations AIDS cases are in younger people than in non-Aboriginal AIDS cases. Thirty percent of all newly documented cases among First Nations Peoples are under 30 years of age and almost one in four cases is female, compared to one in thirteen among non-Aboriginal persons. In some cases people are being infected at ages 19 and 20. Although it has not yet infiltrated into Conne River, Band leaders recognize the importance of prevention.²⁷

Theresa explained that at Conne River some youth are very promiscuous and this is an area of concern. "AIDS will come. Now that we have the road many people come to the powwow from the mainland into the community. This is opening the pool for contacts. We know it's a big problem so we give free condoms and have ongoing awareness programs." A study was done at Conne River in 1996 to assess the behaviours, knowledge, and attitudes of youth toward AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Participants were 46 students, 24 male and 22 female, from Grade 8 to grade 12 and were from 13 to 21 years of age. The

²⁶ The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, Ottawa, ON. Statistics taken from LCDC Epi-Updates. <http://www.caan.ca/facts/AIDSandFirstNations.htm>

²⁷ CAAN is a National Coalition of Aboriginal people and organizations that provide leadership, support, and advocacy for Aboriginal people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS regardless of where they reside.

questionnaire was modified from instruments used in a national survey conducted by Queen's University, Kingston.

Results showed sexual intercourse reported by more than 60 percent and included all age groups; more females than males reported being sexually active and they had a higher level of knowledge of both AIDS and other STDs than males. There were no significant differences between males and females in their attitudes towards AIDS as the disease affects them personally, though females were much more compassionate of those affected by AIDS than males. A blitz on AIDS and awareness was planned with workshops for students, CRHSS staff, community members and the Band Administrative staff using promotion strategies in health, dental and social services in the community.

The report also showed women had frequent unprotected intercourse with multiple partners which has resulted in a big shift in teen pregnancy. At one time this used to be a major shame to the family but now attitudes have changed. "Even if a young unmarried girl becomes pregnant, she is still honoured and respected while carrying a child and is given to know that this child is very sacred." (Joe, 1997, p. 150) Theresa related an incident with a woman and her 14-year old daughter. She was prepared to deal with upset around the girl's pregnancy but was told by the mother "it will be a nice change to the family." Theresa said "Kids are babies themselves and it's not okay for babies to have babies." She knew of no abortions.

In related results there was little drug usage except for alcohol which is prevalent. Generally, I was told by many sources that there is a lot of marijuana available and "they don't even think about it being illegal. It is better than alcohol," said a CRHSS staff member

in a personal conversation. It was also reported to me by several sources that there has been an increase in cocaine use since the completion of the road.

ALCOHOL AND ABUSE

Despite MacGregor's claim in 1908 that there was no drinking at Conne River, Joe Bernard did not become Chief in 1880 until he gave up drinking, and although Reuben Lewis became Chief in 1900, he was not invested as Saqamaw until 1907 because of his drinking habit. Millais (1907) explains: "The late chief, Joe Bernard, drank heavily until he was made chief, and then gave it up. The present chief, Reuben Lewis, was also of a Bacchanalian tendency, until he received word from Sydney that he must abandon the habit on being elected, which he has done." (p. 226) Millais then describes the folly of alcohol:

The curse of the Indian is cheap rum, and nearly all the young men drink hard when they get the opportunity. It is no uncommon thing for a trapper to make from 300 to 500 dollars in the course of a season's work, and to waste it all during a few days' debauch. This is all the more deplorable because very often white fur-traders encourage the Indians to drink as soon as they have concluded a deal, and cheat the unfortunate men if they once fall into their clutches.

Many of the Indians, too, wander away with two or three bottles of rum in their pockets, and after being dead drunk lie out for days in the rain and snow, when severe chills are contracted, which are generally followed by consumption. Numbers die of phthisis [tuberculosis] and measles, and the mortality is high. It should be made a penal offence to sell rum to Indians.

Shkilnyk (1985) writes that the heavy drinkers in one community "are not necessarily addicted to alcohol in the sense of a physiological enslavement." (p. 21) However, it was reported to me in a personal conversation that a former binge drinker from another community still experiences body trembles, restlessness and the lack of appetite leading up to a binge, when the monthly cheque is about to arrive despite several years of abstinence. This indicates a long-term physiological response although he was able to give up the binge-or-spree drinking that Shkilnyk writes is typical in Native communities across the country

where a week or so of abstinence can follow a period of very heavy spree drinking or they can stay sober for weeks on the trapline. "The obsessed and driven alcoholic of the Western world, the one who can not function without a certain level of alcohol in the bloodstream, finds few counterparts in Indian society." (Ibid)

However, according to Satzewich (2000) "virtually all reports on Aboriginal health status and social conditions emphasize the serious nature of alcohol and drug-related problems." (p. 169) Waldram et al. (1995) write that alcohol abuse "is often found to play a major role in many violent and accidental deaths when detailed investigations into the circumstances surrounding such deaths are undertaken." They also point out that the chief means of transportation, whether motor-vehicle or boat, the risk of accident is extremely high. (p. 89)

An Elder from Conne River could not remember alcohol being in the community when she was young. "Poor Dad didn't drink and neither did poor Mom. Now it's almost even with men and women drinking. At one time women didn't drink. They only took it up in later years. I wouldn't know what to do to stop them." In a conversation with a staff member I was told about rampant alcoholism and the inherent abuse plaguing Conne River. He calculated that every man, woman and child had to spend some \$7,000 to account for about \$480,000 that was spent annually on beer in the community grocery stores. "This doesn't account for about another \$50,000 spent on hard liquor at the bar." It is recognized that throughout Canada Native people have the highest incidence of alcoholism and alcohol related problems. (1984, MicMac Statement of Claim to Aboriginal Lands in Ktaqamkuk)

The staff member said there was a lot a family violence and until recently people wouldn't interfere "because of the sanctity of the family." He described one case where

people saw a man drag his wife by the hair into their house and nobody said anything. He commended the work done by CRHSS staff around violence issues. "I doubt that people would be so silent now because there has been a lot of work done in the community around violence with a major focus with school kids and educational programs and projects. But there's still a long way to go." Krawll (1994) describes the abuse situation in other communities:

In our communities we have experienced a large percentage of us being violated or have violated another person whether it be drugs, sexual, the list goes on and on. When I speak of this a twinge in my heart occurs because I realize that this type of devastation occurred in my community and it is still occurring today. About 90 percent of us have been affected. That is a high percentage and I am being very generous saying 90 percent. If a lot of us are brought in we have to begin working first with ourselves and then with others. When you deal with one abuse another pops up, so like the Elder said it is a lifelong journey, so I am able to function and to even help another person. We are working together, it is a re-awakening of the spirit. Some of us have been offenders and some of us have been victims and we are part of the devastation whether we want to be or not. (p. 59)

The Aboriginal Shield Program (www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/das/aboriginal.htm) which is sponsored by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is a substance abuse prevention initiative designed specifically for Aboriginal youth. The program content was developed to supplement existing substance abuse education programs. Many teachers and Band staff have taken the training and the resource material is used in St. Anne's School. There has been much grief and suffering in the community due to suicides and accidents resulting from alcoholism.

Elders frequently expressed much concern about the prevalence of alcohol use among youth and the rates of recidivism among those who have been hospitalized. The suicide rate among Native peoples nationally has been estimated as at least twice the rate for the total Canadian population and constitutes, as Satzewich (2000) writes, "the largest single cause of

injury and poisoning-related deaths... Intertwined with the severe risks and alarming health statistics characteristic of aboriginal populations are above average incidences of alcohol and drug abuse.” (p. 169)

After the death of her father, former Chief William Joe, former Chief Geraldine Kelly voiced concern about alcoholism in the community stating it was the main problem at Conne River. “ I felt it was wrong and someone had to stand up and say it was wrong.” She explained that there was no social worker in 1984 and no on-call nurses, but there was funding available so she was able to get training in social services. She attended meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, Alanon and Alateen and took a diploma program through Addictions Research Foundation and the University of Toronto summer school. She went out with Salvation Army and Police to detox centres and made contacts with professionals. Then eight people from Conne River were trained and an emergency response team and eventually a Tribal Police force was established.

One woman who worked in the community from 1984 to 1994 said there were many alcohol-related deaths and three or four suicides during that time. She witnessed the aftermaths of shootings, suicides and violent deaths which she said were not talked about in the community. “But if you care about the people it eats away at you. There’s a closeness and that’s the nice thing about living here – but I wish they could learn to live a healthy lifestyle. I still get calls about alcoholism, abuse and women being battered.” Another community member described the situation at council meetings in the early 1990s.

All council meetings started with a bottle on the table and sexist rude remarks about having a ‘pair of tits’ at the table. People would be drunk at the Band office so they’d sleep there and that was acceptable at the time. One Chief had the bottle put away. But there is still an enormous amount of drinking here in the community on the weekends.

A woman suggested that there could be a change of attitude through workshops and public awareness with people in positions of authority or parents standing up and saying that every alcohol-related death is wrong. "Everyone has been touched by alcohol-related deaths but they don't connect drinking on weekends or in the club as being an alcoholic. The attitude is that we're just having fun." She commented that while she was a child in Conne River there was a problem with the teachers drinking during school hours and nothing was done about it at the time. Eventually she went into the school and spoke to Grades 7 to 10. She showed videos, made presentations, invited guest speakers, had a poster contest and offered retreats to get the students out of the heavy drinking atmosphere.

Another community member said women in the community started drinking in the 1960s when the first road was built and strangers arrived. Another Band member explained that the club was built onto a convenience store at a time when there was no government and permission was not needed. Others also criticized the amount of alcohol still available at the Band administration offices and expressed concern about people in authority being convicted of selling drugs.

Krawll (1994) addresses the importance of individual healing and acknowledges that it is part of the process of healing the community. She writes:

Community development rests in the hands of individuals coming together to take action to improve conditions. But, before community issues can effectively be addressed, there has to be the capacity for individuals and families to address their individual problems and begin to resolve them. Treating the individual therefore is only a part of the process, even though healing must start within the person him – or herself. Healing must be experienced in a holistic way, whether individually or collectively. This may mean that healing takes place in the individual, the family, or the community as a whole, or all three levels at once. The ultimate objective of healing is to effect change within the family, extended or immediate, and the community at large. (p. 59)

A CRHSS staff worker who was abused by her ex-husband explained to me in a personal conversation that she was forthright with her new partner and told him she wouldn't "put up with any abuse and I will be out of here if it happens." She said that as an abuse counsellor people are stigmatized if she is seen with them – "even if it's going for a walk with a friend. People think we talk about our work but everything is confidential at the Clinic." The issue of confidence also arises because people know everybody's background. She explained: "People don't want to go access the services because they don't want to be seen getting help and they don't trust somebody who has violence in their history." This phenomenon of non-trust was also described to me by counsellors from two other Bands working in their own communities, which are in the early stages of community healing.

Waldram (1995) reports that many Aboriginal peoples are recognizing that the interrelated problems of self-inflicted and interpersonal violence "can be resolved only through a healing process undertaken by the communities themselves. Moreover, the early onset of antisocial behaviour is associated with those who lack exposure to traditional culture." (p. 92) The Band Council initiative to encourage and include traditional practices, not only at CRHSS but for community events, is impacting lives in ways that integrates a spiritual dimension into everyday life. However, some Members feel there is more that could be done to inculcate traditional values into everyday life. One Band member said:

There's too much booze and the generation of young people now in their late 20s didn't get the benefit of being taught to be in the country. They're very materialist and want the biggest skidoo or boat or truck. You can kill yourself or revive the community. Programs could be developed to support traditional values. Give the old people a chance to pass on the traditions which provide a healthy lifestyle with physical activities and fresh food. This is what develops a spiritual awareness and a connection with the ancestors. It is possible to develop a spiritual connection with the land. Mi'kmaq like to live that way and they know their families will be healthy and they will be building a strong community. Welfare communities are physically, mentally and spiritually sick.

CHAPTER 6: GOVERNANCE

Canada was founded when the British North America Act was passed in 1867 to unite the provinces under a common Dominion government based in Ottawa. Under its new constitution, jurisdiction over Indian affairs was transferred from the provinces and its crown-appointed governor to the new federal government. The Indian Act of 1876 consolidated various pieces of pre-Confederation legislation concerning the interests of the Aboriginals, who comprised only one percent of the population by that time. Porter (1981) notes that the Act defined the term Indian and sought to protect Indians and Indian land, but sought assimilation of Indian people into mainstream society. (p. 183)

Although First Nations peoples are identified in the Constitution as a founding nation of Canada they were historically excluded from participating in Constitutional development and political process. This follows the intention set in the mid-1700s when there was no entrenchment of Aboriginal rights as a principle of justice in Crown negotiations. Rather, all efforts were made to establish a legal framework for gaining title to land and for achieving political order. Boldt (1994) elucidates on the notion that in 1763, Crown sovereignty was made invisible by treaty negotiations which he says only pretended to recognize Indian nationhood.

But if the Crown's true intent had been to recognize Indian nationhood it would not have made Indians wards of the Crown. Because Indians had no notion or understanding of the abstract concepts of 'sovereignty' and 'proprietary title' it appeared to them that nothing had been taken from them. Invisible to them was the reality that the Royal Proclamation had created a legal foundation and framework for the Crown to claim, at its pleasure, all of their ancestral lands and to place them under colonial authority. While these were invisible to Indians, they were well understood by France and any other European nation with a yen for Indian lands.

...Then, on the basis of purchase and grants, the Crown transferred proprietary title to land surrendered by Indians, from itself to the provinces, to settlers and to

corporations (e.g., the Hudson's Bay Company). But it consistently denied Indians proprietary title to any of their ancestral lands, even to the reserves. (p. 4)

Their struggle from the margins is relevant to all aspects of Aboriginal life. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) web site points out that the years of being denied a voice in the Canadian political process: "has left First Nations Peoples with an incredible void to fill just in order to attain a level of political, social, and legal knowledge that is on par with other groups in Canadian society." (http://www.afn.ca/About%20AFN/history_of_the_afn.htm.) Boldt (1994) writes that this has not been an easy task as Canada's policies have been firmly on a path to neutralize and invalidate any Indian aboriginal rights that were acknowledged in the Royal Proclamation of 1867 and in various treaties. Boldt explicates:

Successive Canadian Governments have empowered themselves and their appointed judiciary to undermine these aboriginal rights. In so doing, the Canadian government – like its progenitor the British Crown – is breaching international standards of law and moral justice. Under international standards, treaties between nations and the rights of 'a people' are extinguishable only by negotiated agreement between equals, and the conditions must be acceptable to both sides.

The list of historical injustices to Indians is not limited to the dispossession of their lands and their autonomy, and the abrogation of their aboriginal and treaty rights. The list also includes: colonial oppression and exploitation; destruction of their traditional means of subsistence; subversion of their social systems, cultures, languages, and spiritual heritages; abduction and alienation of their children; breaches of the federal government's trust obligations; and prejudice and discrimination in every sphere of contact with the dominant society (e.g., health, education, employment, living accommodations, and law enforcement). To this list can be added innumerable examples of government fraud, betrayal, negligence, mismanagement, malfeasance, arbitrary actions, and incompetence. (p. 6)

The Indian Act was supposed to help Native people "mature" to government-defined standards of civilization so they could be assimilated into ordinary citizenship. Prins (1996) comments: "The official name of this ethnocide was enfranchisement, which literally means 'setting free.' Free from what? From the ties of their ancestral culture!" (p. 184) He explains that these regulations were to turn Native peoples into ordinary Canadian citizens and their

reserves were to become rural municipalities similar to those in surrounding townships.

Satzewich (2000) points out that government policy towards Indians, notably as encoded in legislation such as the Indian Act, is inherently contradictory.

[I]t obligates the state to recognize the 'special status' of those it defines as Indians, while at the same time the state is authorized to set the conditions for the extinguishment of any distinct status... State activity, signified as a whole nothing less than a prolonged, systematic process of cultural genocide in the sense that the administration of economic, justice, welfare, education and health care policies sought to destroy the fabric of First Nations life. (p. 82)

Isolation, geographic dispersion and diversity in culture, language and political ideologies were eventually overcome by Native peoples finding and speaking with each other and eventually by taking their case to an international forum. A first step in the process came when The League of Indians was formed after the First World War. But, as the AFN web site says, it failed to attract wide-spread support and: "often faced Canadian government actions that were suppressive and detrimental to their early goals and actions. The League of Indians in Canada soon faded from the national scene." (http://www.afn.ca/About%20AFN/history_of_the_afn.htm.)

The 1927 Indian Act furthered the goals of the 1857 Royal Proclamation and 1876 Indian Act by forbidding the formation of political organizations, denying Aboriginal peoples from speaking their native languages or practicing their traditional religions. This "apartheid law," says the AFN, prohibited First Nations government in Native communities and in its place the band council system was established. "It was because of such contempt that the First Nations of Canada realized the pressing need to form a national Aboriginal lobby to fight for their rights in Ottawa."

This happened after the Second World War when the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB) was established. However, lack of nation-wide support and

“suppressive government actions, especially in Saskatchewan where the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation government actively worked against all First Nations initiatives. Furthermore, internal administrative problems caused the organization to break into regional factions, causing the NAIB to be disbanded by the early 1950s.” (Ibid)

The National Indian Council was formed in 1961 after a decade of reorganizing to represent Treaty and Status, Non-status and Metis people – excluding the Inuit. Since then the First Nations of Canada have had a national lobby group to represent them in Ottawa. The stated purpose of the National Indian Council was to promote “unity among all Indian people.” However, the various First Nations found that their concerns differed and lack of commonality and disunity led to the disbanding of the National Indian Council in 1968.

The Treaty and Status groups formed the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) and the Non-status and Metis groups formed the Native Council of Canada. The next year the federal Liberal government introduced its 1969 White Paper. This policy called for the assimilation of all First Nations peoples and the removal of First Nations from the Canadian Constitution. “The NIB quickly organized itself and confronted the Liberal government. With the unity of its provincial and territorial members the NIB successfully lobbied parliament and the Canadian public to defeat the White Paper.” (Ibid) This political acumen has resulted in changes in federal and provincial Aboriginal policies including the defeat of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990.

But the struggle to reach this point had involved organizing all the various status First Nations groups across Canada into a single, cohesive lobby. In the 1970s the NIB was criticized for not being truly representative of all the status First Nations. Then in 1979, 300 status First Nations and Chiefs went to London, England, to attempt to halt the repatriation of

the Canadian Constitution. During that timing the basic structure of the NIB was in flux and in need of change so in an attempt to develop an organization that was representative and accountable, in 1982 the NIB made the transition to becoming the Assembly of First Nations. This changed the focus from being an organization of representatives from regions to an organization of First Nations government leaders who are able to directly formulate and administer the policies of the Assembly of First Nations.

Gardner-O'Toole (1993) writes that Aboriginal rights are approached from both natural and legal positivist law. Natural law is concerned with basic human rights that are discoverable by reason and common sense and flow from a sense of natural justice. These "obvious and inviolable" fundamental principles are universal rules of human contact. These basic human rights include the right to life, autonomy, security and self-determination. "Infringements of those rights require exacting justification though they may be explicitly recognized and protected by statutes and constitutions. They exist independently of positive written law." (p. 1) However, it is the legal positivist approach that is traditionally taken by common law courts in discussions on Aboriginal land claims and the constitutional position of Aboriginal peoples. This competing point of view "insists that linkages between law and morality are not just unnecessary, but potentially dangerous..." (Ibid)

Gardner-O'Toole comments on the work done by Mary Ellen Turpel, an Aboriginal lawyer and professor who also questioned the appropriateness of developing a common law doctrine of Aboriginal rights. Turpel doubted the compatibility of a liberal democratic tradition and Aboriginal values which are concerned with community responsibility, spirituality, land, family and social life. She questions whether the current legal framework for discussing collective political and legal rights serves to "limit the possibilities for genuine

acknowledgment of the existence of Aboriginal Peoples as distinct cultures, and political communities possessing the ability to live without external regulation and control.” (p. 23)

The legal positivist approach is based on a demand for written documents such as statutes, constitutions or executive orders from a people who have lived for some 10,000 years with an oral tradition.

SAQAMAWS AND CHIEFS

The Mi'kmaw of the North American eastern seaboard have had a government, including a Grand Chief and seven District Chiefs, since before European contact. Until 1860, Newfoundland came under this jurisdiction then it became the district of Ktaqamkuk. By 1900 Indian agents had gained considerable political power over reserve communities so when a Mi'kmaq band elected new leaders, its choice was not official until confirmed and ratified by the agent. Dishonesty, intemperance (alcohol abuse), or immorality were grounds for an agent to remove a Chief. An Indian agent also controlled funding and he could economically reward those who supported his agenda and deprive those who did not. Prins writes: “Wary of manipulation, Mi'kmaqs tended to keep agents at a safe distance. Hostile feelings were usually masked, but not always.” (p. 185)

In 1907, Millais, who wrote about his travels in Newfoundland and had considerable contact with the Mi'kmaq, expressed his opinion about European constraints on them: “I consider that the Indians have ‘rights’ – rights which have come to them by custom and inheritance, just as much as to the white man, and that within reason these should be respected.” (p. 226) He also contended that with some consideration and common sense:

...we might show them that there is some force in the arguments of Christianity over the Totem Pole. The half-breed Micmacs of Newfoundland are the most amiable and law-abiding of the North American tribes, and it should be the duty of the Government to know more of these people, to understand their rights in the different

trapping areas, to keep in close touch with their chief, and to enforce laws by which it will be a criminal offence to sell them a single drop of liquor. (p. 225)

Prins (1996) points out that the position of Chief-for-life was abolished by the government and democratic elections were mandated for specific terms in office. Many Bands resisted this until their traditional Saqamaws died, but by 1900 most held regular elections. When the federal government limited recognition to individual Mi'kmaq Bands, it refused to deal with Grand Chiefs in charge of large districts and this resulted in diminishing the political power of high-ranking tribal leaders. (p. 184)

Despite its long history of an Indigenous presence, when Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation in 1949 there was no consideration of the Aboriginal peoples of the province. Due to confusion created by the political transition and by not implementing the Indian Act, Mi'kmaq bands were not federally recognized and were left to their own devices. They were not subject to government interference but they had no access to status rights including funding and reserves.

The Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI) was organized in the 1970s and was comprised of 11 Bands of which Miawpukek First Nation is the only to have managed to achieve status.²⁸ The resulting discrepancies between what the status and non-status Bands receive in government funding has created tensions which are further exacerbated as other Bands strive to gain status. Also problematic are the ongoing ethnocentric attitudes from media and government representatives who deny the Mi'kmaq their heritage and place in the history of the province.

²⁸ The other Bands are: Bartlett's Harbour First Nation; Benoit's Cove First Nation; Corner Brook First Nation; Exploits First Nation; Flat Bay First Nation; Gander Bay First Nation; Glenwood First Nation; Port Aux Port East First Nation; Stephenville/Crossing First Nation, and St. George's First Nation. Bartlett's Harbour lost its Band designation and the FNI presently has nine member Bands.

Historically, the Mi'kmaq selected their Saqamaw as a life position of spiritual leadership based on both his character and observance of traditional practices. Europeans thought that the son of a Saqamaw would automatically become a Chief himself if he had the ability. Although it could be a young man living in a Chief's household who would likely have the required qualities, he might not be the chief's own son. "The chief would have called many young men 'son' – his own sons, his brothers' sons, the sons of his male first cousins, and his adopted sons." (Leavitt, 1996, p.108) Women are also elected as Chiefs now in Newfoundland and the Grand Falls/Windsor Band Chief is Dorothy Power and Miawpukek has had two women chiefs.

An early Mi'kmaq Saqamaw was Jeannot Pequidalouet who was born around 1705 probably in Cape Breton. He was Saqamaw over Cape Breton and Newfoundland from 1750 to 1778. Although the date of his death is not known he spent much of his time in Newfoundland between 1763 and 1778. Saqamaw Maurice Louis was born in 1802 in Cape Breton and arrived in Newfoundland in 1815. He was appointed in 1860 and died in 1880. He was the first to wear a gold medal as a sign of his position as Saqamaw. It was inscribed "Presented to the Micmac Indians of Newfoundland." This badge of office was purchased for \$48 in 1865 following a collection taken up by the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq.

Saqamaw Joe Bernard was born in 1812 and was Chief from 1880 until 1900. Saqamaw Olibia (Reuben Lewis), a nephew of Maurice Louis, was born in 1852 and was Chief from 1900 until his death in 1918. However he was not invested as Saqamaw until 1907 "because of his drinking habit." (www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2071/history.htm) He did not have any children and after his death his sister's son Andrew (An'tle) Joe was selected as Saqamaw. However Andrew was not old enough at the time so Noel Jeddore

became Saqamaw Geodol. By that time the Saqamaw was a prayer leader rather than a political leader or dispute settler.

William MacGregor, Governor to the Secretary of State who visited Conne River in July 1908, describes how Chief Olibia was selected and how the gold medallion was used.

The principal Chief is Olibia. I was informed that he was selected as Chief by the Micmacs of the Reservation, and was appointed by the principal Micmac Chief at St. Anne's, Nova Scotia and by the priest. I was shown the insignia of office worn on ceremonial occasions by the Chief. It consists of a gold medallion with a chain attached, the whole in a case covered by red velvet. The second chief is Geodol called in English Noel Jeddore, who represented Olibia in his absence. Geodol is the owner of one of the two cows on the Reservation and his brother possesses the second one. The Chieftainship is not hereditary, but is conferred when a vacancy occurs on the man the people prefer. (p. 4)

A dozen years later Father Stanley St. Croix, who was determined to fully Christianize the Mi'kmaq of Conne River, preached against the use of Mi'kmaq language in church and banned its use in church services, although Mi'kmaq is spoken in Roman Catholic church services at Eskasoni, NS, and other Maritime Reserves. Saqamaw Geodol tried to stand up to the priest but was accused of planning to kill him. The priest claimed that the police were coming to arrest Geodol and put him in jail. The Chief believed that this was true so he went to Cape Breton in 1924. Several Elders concurred on events leading to his departure. They stated that the priest preached that to speak the language was sinful, and that what he called the "superstitions" of the people, were sinful. Several other families including Benois, MacDonalds, Bernards and Martins left Conne River shortly after and followed Geodol to Nova Scotia.

Although the priest would not allow another Saqamaw to be appointed, the people looked to Andrew Joe (An'tle) for guidance as he was to have held the position. However, they were afraid of the priest so they never went against his wishes and brought up their

children in the Roman Catholic belief system. The People not only lost their traditional practices, they lost many of their connections with the Grand Council and other Mi'kmaw people in Nova Scotia.²⁹ Without a Saqamaw the priest turned Chiefs into prayer leaders so whoever wanted to be a prayer leader and priest's helper became Chief.

THE DARKEST YEARS

The next 50 years, according to undated notes from the office of the Chief, were said to be the "darkest years the People had ever known." Without their Saqamaw and visits from other Mi'kmaw people, they were left totally alone to be "pushed around by the priest who was out to destroy our language and culture." Father St. Croix was in control of Conne River until the 1950s, although others became unofficial leaders in an attempt to maintain traditions within the community.

They were Joe Jeddore, Saqamaw Noel's brother, from 1925 until 1954, and Piel (Peter) Francis Jeddore, Saqamaw Noel's son, from 1954 until 1971. At that time attempts were made by the younger people in Conne River to contact relatives and Chiefs in Nova Scotia. In 1973 John N. Jeddore, Piel's son, was elected President of the community. He resigned in 1974 because, "The Structure being organized and the title of President did not fit Mi'kmaw society." (www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2071/history.htm) Walter John became President in 1974 and resigned the next year. Neither he nor John N. was officially appointed Saqamaw.

About that time Michael G. Wetzel, a Shawnee from the United States, arrived in the community. He came from a society where the 1960s was a time of civil unrest and

²⁹ There have been some family ties retained, but there has been a great increase in contact since the annual powwows began in 1996 and a road built into the community in 1998.

getting away from government bodies. There was a ripple effect that spawned, for example, the women's movement, midwives and the Indian Brotherhood. They were all expressions of people engaged in struggles for autonomy. In an act of defiance, Wetzel removed the Saqamaw medal from the Madonna in the Conne River church in 1976. He told me in a personal conversation that he had removed it because he understood it was a "symbolic representation of submission to the oppressor. The Chief should have the medal as it belonged to the People not the church."

I was told by community members that in 1975 or 1976 William Joe, Saqamaw An'tle's son, was selected as Chief because he was well liked and a traditional natural leader: "He embodied traits that the people looked up to. He was a great hunter and a good woodsman. He was a nice guy concerned with the feelings of others and he wanted to see people treated fairly." It was decided by the community that the position was to be for life in the traditional Mi'kmaq way. William Joe became Saqamaw for life in 1978 and was recognized as the Saqamaw of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq by Grand Chief Donald Marshall in 1980. He wore the medal until his death in an alcohol-related vehicle accident in December 1982. His nephew Misel (Michael) Joe was elected Saqamaw by secret ballot on January 7, 1983, and was sworn in by Grand Chief Donald Marshall as Saqamaw and a Keptin of the Grand Council. Chief Misel was not involved in the initial Band development as he was working in Sudbury. Michael G. Wetzel was Band Manager at the time.

The political position of Chief is determined in a bi-annual election. The community agreed that if a Chief did not respect the trust of his people, a community petition signed by 80 percent or more who were old enough to vote could direct the Band Councillors to hold a new election. This happened in 1988 and the Chief lost his political position in a vote of non-

confidence and Marilyn John was elected Chief. She served until 1990 when she lost the election to Shayne McDonald. Wetzel was fired as Band Manager and subsequently won a case for wrongful dismissal against Conne River. Ray Cosier became the Band Manager. McDonald served until 1992 when Geraldine Kelly, daughter of the late Saqamaw William Joe was elected. Although these people were elected by the community they were not recognized by the Grand Chief from Nova Scotia as Misel Joe retained his position as Saqamaw. Saqamaw Misel was re-elected political chief in 1994 and has been successful in every election since then. George Parsons has been Band Manager during this time.

A WOMAN CHIEF'S EXPERIENCE

Geraldine Kelly was Chief of Conne River from 1992 until 1994. Her father was former Chief and Saqamaw William Joe. She ran under the Indian Act whereby she was nominated and needed 51 percent of the vote to be elected. However she was not recognized as Saqamaw by the Grand Chief from Nova Scotia as her cousin Misel Joe had been named traditional Saqamaw for life. At the time of her election there were issues in the community about being appointed Chief for life as they felt there was no yardstick for accountability. Many people told me they wanted to vote for their Chief every two years as a result of the problems and court cases involving financial mismanagement.

Geraldine commented that when she was elected Chief people wanted to become "best friends" with her so they could gain favourable decisions about such things as water and sewer hookups or getting a new house. She was not involved in getting Band status as her husband was a fisherman in Lunenburg, NS, and she was not then at Conne River full time. Geraldine worked with the Status of Women in St. John's from 1994 until January 1999. She recently completed a BA in sociology and political science at MUN at St. John's.

She was able to accomplish her social work degree because her son Brian cared for his sick grandmother during the week and she drove several hours each way from St. John's to take care of her mother every weekend.

Chief Geraldine did not run a second time because of personal difficulties. She said there was no interest in traditional healing when she was Chief and people would go to the Clinic doctor rather than use traditional plant medicines they knew about. She commented on attempts to use traditional healing methods saying: "People tried traditional healers from Nova Scotia but when a patient died with his brain tumor they felt they were clutching at straws." She said she does not feel part of traditional practices such as the sweat lodge, peace pipe or sweet grass ceremonies. "It's foreign to me but people have a right to their faith and belief."

THE STRUGGLE FOR STATUS

The 1970's was a time when there was a rebirth of identity as Indians in the community. A variety of elements and a series of events led the way to strong indigenous leadership and outside recognition of the Micmac identity of the community. Since the time of Father St. Croix the Micmac identity was submerged by the Micmacs themselves and in their relationships with other communities. (Mackey, 1986, p. 59)

Michael G. Wetzel was integral to the history of governance of Conne River. He left graduate school in Seattle, WA, in 1970 and went to (MUN) at St. John's. He said he was hoping to work on community development with Aboriginal groups but since MUN did not have studies in that area at the time he went to the Social and Economic Research Institute where he met some Mi'kmaq people. There was no information available about Conne River at the time so he went to the community in the early 1970s. He married Edwina John, Director of Education at Conne River, and they live in the community though his law

practice is in Grand Falls/Windsor some two hours drive. Wetzel achieved a Master of Laws degree at Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, in 1996.

Wetzel said that he knew in 1969 that the federal government wanted to repeal the Indian Act and turn reserves into ordinary Canadian communities so “there would then be no more Indian problem because there would no longer be any Indians.” Conne River was not classified as Indian at the time as they did not have status. He said, in a personal conversation at his law office in Grand Falls/Windsor in June, 2000:

It struck me that Conne River was not recognized by either federal or provincial governments and I wondered why not. I thought they could be receiving a land base and services from the government. Instead, I found that Conne River was to be a project in assimilation. We knew that the basis of the government proposal was to make everyone ‘equal’ which would never work. Conne River people wanted to revitalize so they re-established a Chief. But some people were afraid of being recognized as Indian so they lived in a self-imposed vacuum to hide their identity. My research funding got cut off because of the interference of politicians and their influence at the University. I lost my thesis at the time.

Members of Miawpukek First Nation who had relatives in Cape Breton knew that the families that left with Saqamaw Geodol were fully integrated into the communities and registered under the Indian Act, and that there were certain rights and privileges due to all Indian people in Canada. In 1969, two members of the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, Albert Marshall and Rodney Stevens, visited Conne River. (Mackey, 1986, p. 59) However there was little community political action until Wetzel’s arrival. The general ambivalence was summed up by an Elder who said “I never went anywhere so I never felt Indian.” A woman Elder who gained status through marriage explains:

Before the chiefs, Conne was at a standstill. Gerry Wetzel started all this in the 1970s. Thanks to Gerry – Conne was off the map and Gerry rooted it all up and went into the books. You’d be shot if you called someone an Indian in Conne. People didn’t want to be called Indian. No one said why they didn’t want to be called Indian. Now we’re all Indians – including me, and I’m white.

Wetzel began to work with community member Marilyn John to uncover reasons why the Indian Act was not extended to eligible Aboriginals in Newfoundland. They found that registered bands were under the Indian Act and there was resistance from Federal bureaucrats to register anyone else. He explained their early activities:

Early on I tried to establish a modern community and use some \$7 million funding that was available to the Band to develop other projects. I felt at the time that there was a chance to revive the culture and become prosperous. But there was a severe case of lack of self-confidence. I told them to recognize who they were and to not be afraid to be Mi'kmaq. My vision was self-government at the local level with no intimidation from the Chief, no manipulating the people and with accountability from Chief and Council. Marilyn (John) and I worked our butts off to get money for the community so everyone got a job and good health services.

In February 1973 Wetzel and Marilyn John contacted the Native Council of Canada, an organization for non-status Indians. The Mi'kmaw of Newfoundland had no treaty rights and had no way of accessing funds after the province joined Canada because a Native organization was needed to funnel federal emergency repair program funding. They formed the Native Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, which was one organization for all Mi'kmaq, Inuit, Naskapi and Montagnais despite culture, language and social differences. The Naskapi and Montagnais felt the Mi'kmaq were not so Indian because they lost their language and culture. Wetzel was the first president of the Native Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Inuit Taperisat Association was eventually formed for the Inuit, and the Naskapi and Montagnais joined the Innu Association. Conne River and the other 10 Mi'kmaq communities formed the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI). Chief Ignatius (Nish) Paul of Badger is now its Chief.

Five people from Conne River formed a Band committee with one representative on the FNI Board. Community members did not feel they were fairly represented as other communities had one representative for far fewer people. They felt they could prove Indian

ancestry, which others could not, so Conne River broke away from the FNI. They were assisted by the National non-status organization The Native Council of Canada and by the status organization the National Indian Brotherhood which eventually became the Assembly of First Nations. A Conne River registration advisory committee was formed that was acceptable to the community. It included Alex Denny from Cape Breton, Les Smith of Indian Affairs, Saqamaw William Joe, Melvin Jeddore and Gerry Wetzel, all from Conne River.

The struggle was a reflection of the national scene where Indian government philosophy was to move towards self-government. The 1972 NIB policy paper *Indian Control of Indian Education* “was a clever way to promote Indian Government philosophy nationally as it brought an awareness of Indian Control to the Indian communities,” explains the AFN web site. “Through issues such as housing, health care, and economic development, the NIB soon established itself as a powerful voice for Status Aboriginal people in Canada.” (http://www.afn.ca/About%20AFN/history_of_the_afn.htm)

However, from the local perspective the major problem of the time, said Marilyn, was that Indian Affairs didn't want any more Indians. “They wanted us deleted but we got organized and educated. We applied to the National Indian Brotherhood and together we went after Indian Affairs with lobbies, sit ins and a hunger strike. It was dangerous but you were alive and you didn't care.” Eliminating the Native presence was a continuation of the prevailing attitude encapsulated in 1920 by Duncan Campbell Scott, poet, essayist and Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs: “Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department.” (www.bloorstreet.com/200_block/sindact.htm)

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION NECESSARY

The term 'indigenous peoples' emerged during the 1970s in North America through the struggles of the Canadian Indian Brotherhood and the American Indian Movement. This now-worldwide network of indigenous peoples has, writes Tuhiwai-Smith (1999):

...enabled the collective voices of colonized people to be expressed strategically in the international arena. It has also been an umbrella enabling communities and peoples to come together, transcending their own colonized contexts and experiences, in order to learn, share, plan, organize and struggle collectively for self-determination on the global and local stages....They share experiences as peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of their lands and cultures, and the denial of their sovereignty, by a colonizing society that has come to dominate and determine the shape and quality of their lives, even after it has formally pulled out. (p. 7)

The Conne River experience went beyond Newfoundland after Marilyn John returned from business management studies at the College of Cape Breton and found that nothing had happened in two years of negotiating with the Canadian government. So the committee decided to go international. They connected with the James Bay Cree, the North American Four Directions Council, International Law lawyer Russell Barsh in Geneva and with Seattle University, and achieved NGO status at the United Nations. Marilyn spent two summers in Geneva at the World Council of Indigenous Peoples where she did library research for what happened in 1949 when Newfoundland joined Canada without consideration of Aboriginal rights.

It was suggested that she search the Canadian Privy Council file from 1947 to 1949. She checked the files of correspondence from the Department of Justice to the Privy Council and found a legal opinion which stated that Indians were entitled to "legal, moral and administrative" rights. She said that the Canadian government found out about her work and ordered the files closed to her. But by then she had official copies, so after lobbying for 11 years they went to court. James O'Reilly, legal counsel for James Bay Hydro, approached the

government of Canada while John Munroe was Minister of Indian Affairs, looking for Cabinet approval to form a Band. Marilyn went with a group from Conne River as delegates to a Liberal convention at the time Munroe wanted to be leader. Marilyn explains:

Munroe found me at the convention and asked for my support for his leadership bid. We asked for his support for our struggle for status. We drove him mad. My buddies and I hounded him across Canada and finally Munroe agreed to allow us to help write the Cabinet document. It had to be done through Cabinet so we lobbied for him and lobbied all of the Cabinet Ministers with the history from 1949 and the Department of Justice recommendations from 1973 to 1984. John Crosby didn't want to deal with Indians, but we persevered.

The question then came from the government about who would be eligible for Band membership. They first suggested those who had family connections to Nova Scotia but Marilyn said this was not an appropriate requirement for status at Conne River. She explained that many had lived in the community for hundreds of years and did not necessarily have connections to Nova Scotia because they did not leave in 1924 to escape the priest. Then there was a suggestion to include everyone in Newfoundland through genealogy research through the government. But, said Marilyn, "Indian Affairs didn't want a big list and they cut out people from St. Alban's, Glenwood, Badger, Grand Falls/Windsor and St. George's despite much documented evidence that there was continual contact between the Aboriginal people of these areas."

Families from Conne River told stories about fathers and grandfathers walking a hundred miles across the vast interior barrens. There was no road until 1964 but the Mi'kmaq had always kept in contact with their distant relations. But the government prevailed and mandated that only residents of Conne River would get status. For example Marilyn's cousin was cut from the list because he only worked at Conne River and could not get status because he lived in Glenwood.

Old Man Bernard from Bishop's Falls didn't get status – his sister is registered in Conne and his father was a Conne Chief. His sister's son is registered in Conne but Indian Affairs said he couldn't get status through his nephew. Registration was possible at one time if the relative was on the original Conne River list. But now, only if a grandmother, grandfather, aunts or uncles, sisters or brothers were on the original Band list that was drawn up in 1984.

John McGrath was Assistant Deputy Minister for the Department of Northern Development from 1977 to 1991. McGrath first visited Conne River in the 1960s when he was working on the transmission line at Camp Boggy during the construction of the Hydro Dam at Head of Bay d'Espoir. He made some comments to me about life at Conne River, during a personal conversation in April, 1999, at his home in Pakenham, ON. "Conne River was a small backward community of about 250. It was a native community living in hard times," he said.

McGrath had federal responsibility for Native agreements, including Conne River, and was involved in Status negotiations. He noted that Conne River was the only Band to be designated a Native Community with Reserve status. He said both Glenwood and St. George's also wanted to be included in the designation but they were not successful so they did not get a share of the funding that Conne River received. He said:

My job was to bring the system into the 20th century in a paternalistic way. I have never seen the reserve system help people anywhere else in Canada. We negotiated separate agreements for each community so one group such as Conne River, could not exert its influence during meetings. Gerry Wetzel was the key to everything in Conne River. He saw the target and went for it. The Innu (Indians) and Inuit (Eskimos) didn't have their act together but there was no divisiveness in Conne River. The Feds responded to pressure and Gerry knew how to pressure.

A WOMAN'S STRUGGLE FOR STATUS

Although the Conne River Band has achieved official status under the Indian Act, there are some in the community who are still struggling for official recognition. For example, Rose Benoit has been working for years on the problem. Her husband and son both

have status but she has not been able to gain status herself. Her only opportunity to register as a Band member, a requisite for gaining status, would have been through her uncles Mark Poulett or John Pullett when the official band list was developed and they were sent a letter of invitation in 1984. (Appendix 3) However, neither uncles registered at the time as they were working away from the community.

Rose's mother Sarah and her aunt Hilda were not offered membership status and because they are illiterate, were not able to read the relevant newspaper notices. There was no school in Bay du Nord where they were born, and when they moved to St. Alban's as children Hilda was the only one who stayed in school for five years. Sarah went to Grade 1 at the age of 12 but often stayed away from school because she was embarrassed by her age. The boys were considered too big to go to Grade 1.

I met Mary Rose (Rose) Benoit after her husband, Robert, approached me when I was parked on the side of the road. He disclosed that his wife's mother knew a lot about traditional medicines. Subsequently, Rose mentioned that she did not have status and in a struggle to become a member of Miawpukek First Nation had researched her genealogy very thoroughly. She has provided birth, baptism, marriage and death certificates dating to the mid-1800s. She took me to St. Alban's to meet her mother Sarah Wilcott, her aunt Hilda Collier and uncle Mark Poulett.

Everyone was very pleasant and smiled and laughed a lot. They checked with each other before confirming information and everyone added to the conversation. None have been able to gain Band status at Conne River, though they are the last survivors of the traditional Mi'kmaq settlement on the south shore at Bay du Nord. Rose's father, Joseph Wallace Wilcott, is not Indigenous. Coish (2000) included references to the family of Rose's

mother in his mini-history, *Stories of the Mi'kmaq*, and I am including this example because, despite extensive documentation of her Mi'kmaq heritage, Rose Benoit has not been able to gain status. Coish (2000) uses her family to give an example of kinship ties, leaving no doubt that the Pullett family, from which Rose is directly descended, is Mi'kmaq.

You have a Burgeo-West Coast extended family. You have people between Burgeo and Bay du Nord on the south coast that are interrelated and intermarried – the Benois and the Pulletts. They're in St. Alban's now. They came from Bay du Nord and intermarried with people from White Bear Bay and Grandy's Brook. (p. 63)

Rose tracked her genealogy to Joe Bernard who was born in 1812 and was Chief from 1880 until 1900. His son, Steven Bernard Sr. and Elizabeth Northcote, a servant girl from the south shore, had two sons Stephen Bernard Northcote (Stephen Jr.) and John. John was raised by Nancy Poulette and Tom McDonald. Stephen Jr. was raised by Edward Pullet and Catherine Lewis who were married July 1866. (Appendix 5) Stephen Jr. took the Pullet name after his Baptism on July 22, 1891. (Appendix 6) The Nominal Census of Newfoundland of 1921, page 81 Entry # 4, lists Stephen Poulette born in July, 1889, as a Micmac Indian. (Appendix 7) Documentation has the name spelled Pullet, Poulet, Pullett, Poulette or Poulett.

Stephen Jr. married Rose (Rosie) Benoit on Sept. 8, 1922. (Appendix 8) Rosie Benoit's father was Frank Benoit, brother of Paul and George Benoit. Paul Benoit married Louise (Louisa) Joe on Sept. 27th, 1858, (Appendix 10) and their daughter was Amelia Benoit Joe, Chief Misel's grandmother. All her children are registered. The children of George's son John, known as Jack Batt, also all got status.

Stephen Jr. and Rosie's children are the aforementioned Mark, John, Sarah and Hilda. The entire family is listed as Micmac in the 1945 Nominal Census of Newfoundland, District of Fortune – Hermitage, Section 2, Box 2, Page 215, St. Alban's. (Appendix 9) Stephen Jr. was Rose's grandfather and she remembered him as a hunter and trapper and she showed me

an elaborately beaded moccasin tongue he made in the early 1900s. She knew that he made moccasins and skin boots, that he knew traditional medicines, and that he played the flute and accordion. During one of our many conversations, Rose explained: "My grandfather and Rosie spoke Mi'kmaq to each other but spoke English to the children. Others from Conne River would visit them in Bay du Nord and they would all speak Mi'kmaq."

Sarah Poulett (Sara Poullette) married Joseph Wallace Wilcott on September 6, 1954. (Appendix 11) Their daughter Mary Rose Wilcott was born August 11, 1959. Mary Rose Wilcott married Robert Benoit on January 2, 1987. (Appendix 12) Robert has Band membership through his parents who were Conne River residents on June 28, 1984, as per the Order in Council P.C. 1984-2206 which established the Miawpukek Band registration and membership criteria. Mary Rose (Wilcott) Benoit does not have status and can not get it through the Reserve to which she is historically connected. Despite having the same great-grandparent as Chief Joe, Frank Benoit's great granddaughter, Rose Benoit, still has not gained status because she did not live at Conne River in 1984.

In a letter dated 1996 Terri Harrison, Registrar at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, outlines the Order-In-Council P.C 1989-2006 which relaxed the criteria by permitting children and sibling as well as children of siblings who were eligible for registration by the 1984 criteria. The need to have been resident of Conne River on June 28, 1984 was removed for these persons. Mark Poullette was eligible to register therefore his sister Sarah was entitled to register under the relaxed criteria. Therefore Mary Rose, who is the child of a sibling who was eligible for registration should be granted status. However, Harrison noted that he could not be satisfied that affidavits provided by community Elders (Appendix 13) came by their knowledge personally, so he could not accept that Stephen

Bernard was the natural father of Steven Poulette. In this regard Harrison is not respecting the traditional oral history of the Band.

The explicit details of Rose Benoit's so-far-futile attempts to gain what are her rights is a stark juxtaposition to how easy it has been to lose them. She exemplifies the frustrating situation so many Indigenous women find themselves in – she is Mi'kmaq but is not able to fully participate in the life of her community. Without status she can not get a Band-sponsored job, vote in Band elections, participate in community decision-making and she could not buy a house if she wanted to. The myths of colonialism have been perpetrated on Rose – thousands of years of oral tradition have been invalidated by skepticism and disbelief. Brody (1981) explains some of the ways that Aboriginals, especially women, have lost their Band memberships.

In Canada, a person is an official 'status' or treaty' Indian (to use two of the prevalent terms) because of being on an Indian band's list of members. Indians, or children of Indian parentage, have lost their band membership in several different ways. Before all registered Indians were given the vote (in 1949 for provincial but only in 1960 for federal elections) and were permitted to buy liquor, they were offered these rights in return for agreeing to resign their Band memberships. Also, the Department of Indian Affairs offered some Indians money to leave their Bands. But most important of all, Indian women who married white men automatically lost their Band membership, as did their children. This did not apply to Indian men who married white women; they, along with their children, were entitled to be Band members. (p. 27)

BILL C-31: AMENDING THE INDIAN ACT

In 1985 the Canadian Parliament passed legislation ending more than 100 years of discrimination in the Indian Act. This Act to Amend the Indian Act is commonly referred to by its prelegislation name, Bill C-31. The passing of this bill ended various forms of discrimination that had been ongoing since the Canadian Parliament passed its first consolidated Indian Act in 1876 which gave great powers to government to control the lives of First Nations peoples living on reserves. It was imperative to bring the Indian Act into

conformity with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which came into effect April 17, 1982. (Boldt, 1994, p. 292) Status Indians are those who are registered with the federal government as Indians according to the terms of the Indian Act. Non-Status Indians are those who are not registered. Today, both groups are known as First Nations peoples. Until the passage of Bill C-31, there were several ways a person could lose their Indian status.

One way First Nations peoples could lose their status was through the process of enfranchisement which dates back to an Act passed by the colonial government in 1857. Its objective was to assimilate First Nations into the mainstream non-Aboriginal society. Men over the age of 21 could relinquish their First Nations heritage and be declared to be enfranchised if he was literate in English or French, educated to an elementary level, of good moral character and free of debt. A 1933 amendment to the Indian Act empowered the government to order the enfranchisement of First Nations members who met the qualifications set out in the Act, even when they had not requested this – particularly when they joined the clergy or completed university. Until 1960, when First Nations peoples were extended the right to vote in federal elections, they could only vote if they became enfranchised. This meant they had to give up status so that they could vote in federal elections like any other Canadian citizens. (www.inac.gc.ca, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development)

The Indian Act discriminated against women particularly. If a Native woman married a non-Native she and her children automatically lost their status. Without status, women were no longer allowed to live on their home reserves or to own land on their reserves. They were no longer eligible for the benefits and programs like housing and education that were available to status Indians. Many women did not realize that they would

lose their status when they married non-Natives. However, when a non-Native woman married a Native man, she gained status.

Protests against sections of the Act intensified in the 1970s when groups including Indian Rights for Indian Women organized to lobby against their unjust treatment under the Indian Act. In June 1985 the federal government introduced legislation to end the Act's discriminatory provisions, but only after the U.N. Human Rights Committee had embarrassed the Canadian government before the world community by declaring that Canada was in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (Boldt, 1994, p. 292) The legislation, Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act, respected three fundamental principles: to end discrimination, to restore Indian status to people who voluntarily or involuntarily lost their status because of the Indian Act, and to give First Nations the option of assuming control of their own membership.

After the passage of Bill C-31, Native women who married non-Natives no longer lost their status, and non-Native women could no longer gain status through marriage. The Bill also allowed women and their children who lost their status through marriage to apply to have their status restored. Also, those who had been voluntarily or involuntarily disenfranchised under the Indian Act could apply to have their status restored. Bill C-31 eliminated the process of enfranchisement altogether from the Indian Act. However, the children of a reinstated woman can claim status for her children only if she marries a registered Indian whereas the children of a reinstated Indian man can claim status even if they marry a non-Indian. (Ibid)

Before Bill C-31 the only defining requirement to being a member of a First Nation was to have status. The Bill separated the designation of Indian status and Band membership.

Bands were given the option of setting their own definitions for membership – which could not interfere with the rights of existing members or with the rights of those people who had their status and First Nation membership restored. The federal government has retained the right to establish the prerequisites and eligibility for Indian-status designation.

Approximately 105,000 people have regained or acquired status since the passage of the bill in 1985. (Ibid, p. 293; Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development)

CONNE RIVER'S HUNGER STRIKE FOR STATUS

Conne River residents said that by 1983 they were frustrated by the lack of government response to almost a decade of attempting to negotiate Reserve status. In order to attract attention to their struggle, they protested with a hunger strike in St. John's beginning on the 18th of April. Chief Misel Joe and his brothers were among the nine who fasted, and a hundred others joined them for a support rally. The community commemorates this event annually with the names of all the participants and the history leading to the event listed on the community TV channel. In lieu of other community notices historical events, as compiled by the office of the Chief, were televised as follows:

Because of the 100 who put their lives on hold and left family behind to go to
 St. John's to back up the fasters
 Because of the 13 who volunteered to fast to the death for us
 Because of the 33 who occupied the offices risking jail
 Because of the 9 who put their lives on the line for us
 And finally because of all those Micmac who have gone before
 Let us remember the hunger strike – Divided we fall, together we stand.

Remember!!!
 On April 18 take a moment and remember!
 Because of it we are who we are!
 Because of it we are where we are.
 Thank you all, especially those that fasted!

Notice:

Everyone is welcome to come along, and bring along something to the commemorative potluck supper in remembrance of the hunger strike at the Great Hall, Tuesday April 18, 2000.

- 1977 Saqamaw Bill Joe affirmed as hereditary Saqamaw
- 1978 June – Interim land rights Report present to federal government
 Canada denies more land rights funds
 Aug. 23 – Miawpukek Mi'kmaq call for halt on Upper Salmon Development
- 1980 Aug. – Miawpukek trappers in court.
 Sept. – Newfoundland government tells Ottawa that registration would not be in
 the best interests of the province
- 1981 – First Canada/Newfoundland Native Peoples Agreement - NF refuses to
 sign if Mi'kmaq sign as equal partners
- 1982 – Miawpukek representatives in Ottawa seeking full Indian status.
 April 1 – Government. withholds funds from Miawpukek First Nation (MFN).
 Sept. 25 – Conne River Economy a Disaster (Evening Telegram)
 Dec. 14 – Saqamaw Billy Joe files complaint against both federal and provincial
 governments for violations of Human Rights.
 Dec. 23 – Saqamaw Billy Joe and the activist Martin Jeddore die in auto accident.
 Martin was one of the first organizers of Miawpukek self-government.
- 1983 Jan. 7 – Misel Joe named as hereditary Saqamaw of Ktaqamkuk
 Mar. 21 – MFN receives funding but rejects provincial conditions attached to it
 and the province issues stop payment on cheques.
 April 18 – After more than a year of being subjected to NF's attempts to prevent
 our self determination 100 Mi'kmaq and our supporters join
 Saqamaw Misel in show of support!
 April 21 – 33 Micmac occupy Minister Goudie's office from 8:15 to 11:30 a.m.
 forced out by police – 23 face charges
 April 22 – 9 Mi'kmaq start hunger fast (hunger strike) two women Jackie John and
 Vera John also wanted to fast but were respectfully asked not to.
 Giles Benoit and Mike Jeddore also volunteered but circumstances
 did not permit them to continue.
 – 9 Mi'kmaq put their lives on the line for us: Saqamaw Misel, Michael
 Benoit, George Drew, Wilfred Drew, Ricky Jeddore, Andy Joe,
 Aubrey Joe, Billy Joe and Chesley Joe
 April 30 – Saturday – The Fast Ends! (We win one)

Photographs were shown of people being taken away by police, of those in court, and of picketers with signs with slogans such as "honour the 1981 agreement you signed." There were also pictures of the hunger strikers in a hotel room in St. John's.

A community celebration held the evening of April 18th at the Great Hall opened with a history of the hunger strike and a memorial for the two fasters who have died since then. This was followed by drumming while everyone stood up and those who fasted were thanked and honored. Following the Veteran's Song, Saqamaw Misel spoke of the importance of the fast and that the real reason they did it was for respect, dignity and human rights. He emphasized that they got money later, but that was not the reason for the hunger strike and demonstration. He said the Nine were charged with mischief and fined \$50 which they didn't have to give to the court so they went to jail for five days. He revealed they did have the \$50 but it went to help someone from the Band who needed hospitalization. "We'd rather go to jail than give the money to the police and not take care of our Band family," he said.

This was followed by a community potluck while the drumming continued with the youngest drummer being a two-year-old. Several young women and girls did traditional dances. This was another time that I felt comfortable being in the Great Hall because I had developed relationships or at least had conversations with many people. I hadn't seen the Chief in awhile and he came over and spoke with me explaining he had been in Nova Scotia to do ceremony and sweat lodges.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AIDS HEALING

Decolonization, once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power. Indigenous people have changed, however: they have regrouped learned from past experiences, and mobilized strategically around new alliances. The elders, the women and various dissenting voices within indigenous communities maintain a collective memory and critical conscience of past experiences.

Many indigenous communities are spaces of hope and possibilities, despite the enormous odds aligned against them. Some indigenous peoples use a new language. Sovereignty and self-determination still dominate the talk but there are terms like 'negotiate', 'reconcile', and 'settle'. Many indigenous communities, tribes and

nations are in dialogue with the states which once attempted by all means possible to get rid of them. (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999, p. 98)

In order to develop healthy communities people must have the capacity and opportunity to work together to make decisions and to take action on problems or issues which are mutually important. The Miawpukek Band Council offered a self-government workshop in which community members participated in a process of determining Band priorities. Participants were asked if I could stay in the workshop and on the first day they agreed I could observe. The first exercise was to look at the history of Conne River and the important events that shaped the community from the perspective of the participants. It was explained that the history is important in order to see where the community wants to go. A discussion brought forward the following events:

- 1610 – Baptism of the first Chief - Chief Membertou in Nova Scotia
- 1860 – Maurice Louis first Conne River Chief
- 1872 – Conne River designated as a Colonial Reserve
- 1920 – Marriage of John Jeddore's parents
- 1924 – Exile of Chief (next Chief born in 1925)
- 1925 – Introduction of religion - loss of language
- 1972 – Martin and Melvin Jeddore go to Union of NS Indians meeting
 - reorganization of Conne River with Billy Joe elected as political chief
- 1974 – First economic venture for self-reliance - the sawmill (which was dismantled during the summer of 2000)
- 1976 – K - 12 all taught at Conne River and students no longer sent to St. Alban's
- 1983 – Hunger Fast - St. John's
- 1984 – Official Reserve Status granted by a government Order in Council
- 1986 – Status brought into law on St. Anne's Day (July 26)
 - Tribal Police formed
 - Band takes over education (High School built in 1976)
- 1988 – Changed from Chief-for-life to election every two years for political Chief
- 1991 – Signed Health Transfer Agreement
- 1992 – Local Improvement District established
 - Micmac choir started at St. Anne's School (disbanded in 2001)
- 1996 – First Powwow
- 1999 – Canoe crossing to Nova Scotia

Following the discussion of historical details, there was an exercise to discuss the principal challenges in the community at the time. There were some 22 topics suggested by the participants so the results are indicative of this group only. The item of most concern was to: 1) resolve land claims. This was followed by:

- 2) involving elders into community/getting cultural information from elders
- 3) integrating cultural and language traditions into school
- 4) restoration of language (young and old)
- 5) wildlife management
- 6) increasing recreational facilities for all
- 7) establishing good, sound government

These participants were least concerned with:

- 1) establishing effective relationships with all governments,
- 2) establishing stand-alone health and social services,
- 3) establishing culturally-based judicial system for young offenders
- 4) finishing the TV station
- 5) defining and dealing with membership
- 6) establishing stand-alone police services
- 7) keeping the environment clean

They said there was little interest in the category Keeping the Younger Generation Connected to Land and Culture, but highest interest was Involving Elders into Community/Getting Cultural Information from Elders, Integrating Cultural and Language Traditions into School, and Restoration of Language (young and old) – all having to do with culture and their connection to the land.

The Principal Strengths of Community were seen by this group as:

- 1) qualified and trained people from the community (Human Resource Base)
- 2) strong leadership – fights for the people
- 3) good accountability – have to answer to people in assemblies/transparency
- 4) shared vision
- 5) 100 percent employment
- 6) no extended involvement in community by Indian Affairs
- 7) control education system so can provide high quality of ed. to children
- 8) Mi'kmaq and proud of it
- 9) good infrastructure

- 10) maintain use of land
- 11) use of information technology
- 12) capital assets
- 13) good health services and delivery
- 14) vocal community
- 15) location – isolation

The Principal Weakness of the community were seen as:

- 1) employment dependency on the Band Council
- 2) concern about lack of resources for entrepreneurs
- 3) insufficient recognition of individual personal achievements
- 4) lack of youth events and amenities
- 5) lack of land base for community and buildings
- 6) lack of community cultural knowledge
- 7) location for emergency services

On the second day I was asked to leave the workshop before the program started. I was told “if you’ve worked with Native communities then you know that this happens.” It has been my experience that doors are sometimes closed to outsiders in Aboriginal communities. This is understandable given the discrimination and ethnocentrism they have had to endure. I was grateful for being allowed to observe the first day of the Government seminar and for being given a copy of the workshop material.

In this chapter I have used examples of the struggles of Mi’kmaq people through the historic record as recorded by both Eurocentric and Band sources. The Indian Act of 1876 set the tone for how Indigenous peoples were treated, but the Mi’kmaq were not recognized by either federal or provincial governments when Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949. Neither government considered them for rights which should have been theirs. This chapter has detailed the many of the steps taken by Miawpukek First Nation on their path to self-determination. It hasn’t been an easy journey but their endurance in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles past centuries of colonization speaks to the strength of their resolve to prevail.

CHAPTER 7: CONTEMPORARY MI'KMAQ SPIRITUALITY

This discussion on contemporary Mi'kmaq spirituality seeks to build an understanding of what constitutes traditional Mi'kmaq healing practices and how these traditional practices are differentially conceptualized and perceived by the people of Miawpukek First Nation. This chapter shows how the traditional spiritually-based lifestyle is dependent on the relationship with the land and ecosystem, and raises the question on whether or not religious freedoms have been violated as rights to land usage have disappeared.

There is a discussion of the implications of incorporating aspects of a traditional worldview into what has become a secular way of life for most and determines if people feel there is a place or a desire for traditional healing practices in their lives now. The nature and pervasiveness of the issues leading to this research are documented and analyzed. In order to understand the workings of an Indigenous community it is necessary to experience ongoing daily life over an extended period of time. It takes this time to allow any preconceived ideas and attitudes to be replaced by customs and mores of this culture. As Irwin (2000) explains:

It is hermeneutical in that one simply cannot gain an accurate understanding of what goes on in Indian Country without living in and around an Indian community for a long time. American Indian life does not work by the same rules or categories as life in the 'mainstream' and it usually takes years to become aware of the subtleties of perception, history and communication that inform it. (p. 70)

ASSUMPTIONS

As a member of a particular culture at this specific historical moment, my life has been styled by Eurocentric urban Canadian norms. I grew up in the cities of Toronto and Montreal and have lived in a rural community of about 700, the same as the population of Conne River, for more than 25 years. So I was somewhat ready for the isolation – and the weather – of the Island. In order to be able to write about another culture it was important for

me to live in the community and experience ongoing daily life over an extended period of time. It also allowed people in the community to know me and decide for themselves if they wanted me around. Irwin (2000) wrote that it is one's actions that are important as we participate in the life of a community and thus, in its history.

In American Indian contexts, the only knowledge that is meaningful is that which is enacted ('walk your talk'). It is enacted by individuals, but individuals act, whether they are aware of it or not, only as part of a community, and thus, a participant in that community's history. (p. 65)

At Conne River I was able to observe and participate in daily activities and this allowed me to understand the routines and relationships of people's lives. The nature of the community is such that everyone is included in events held at the Great Hall so I was also able to see that these special events usually include expressions of traditional practices such as drumming, dancing and feasting. My experience of community has been quite varied but never included the ongoing daily generational kinship relationships that became evident during my stay there.

This time in the community allowed me, as a qualitative researcher, to experience what Silverman (1993) calls "the lived context" of their search for traditional practices. (pp. 30-31) Battiste (2001) affirms that it is the lived context that provides the basis for understanding traditionality.

What is traditional about traditional ecological knowledge is not its antiquity, but the way it is acquired and used. In other words, the social process of learning and sharing knowledge, which is unique to each Indigenous knowledge and heritage, lies at the heart of its traditionality. Much of the knowledge is relatively recent, but it has a social meaning and legal character entirely unlike the knowledge Indigenous peoples have acquired from settlers and industrialized societies. (p. 46)

Understanding the wider social and historical context allowed me to comprehend its impact on the lives of the people of Conne River. Through this work and 25 years of

connections with Native peoples across North America, I have come to understand that when they lost their land, traditions and language they lost their holistic approach to life with its inherent balance and integration. There is a spiritual crisis in most Native communities and by finding a voice that is theirs through healing individually and as a community, the Miawpukek First Nation people have begun a voyage of discovery. Irwin (2000) explicates:

Traditional ceremonies and spiritual practices ... are precious gifts given to Indian people by our Creator. These sacred ways have enabled us as Indian people to survive miraculously – the onslaught of five centuries of continuous effort by non-Indians and their government to exterminate us by extinguishing all traces of our traditional ways of life. Today, these precious sacred traditions continue to afford American Indian people of all (nations) the strength and vitality we need in the struggle we face every day; they also offer us our best hope for a stable and vibrant future. These sacred traditions are an enduring and indispensable ‘life raft’ without which we would be quickly overwhelmed by the adversities that still threaten our survival. Because our sacred traditions are so precious to us, we cannot allow them to be desecrated and abused. (p. 66)

It was an honour to be invited to participate in many ceremonies during my time at Conne River. I have been respectful of the many teachings I have received and have maintained confidentiality throughout. This dissertation will be submitted to the Chief and Council of Miawpukek First Nation after the Final Defense for their response and feedback. I understand that teachings are to be respected and are not be used for financial or other profit.

NATIVE SPIRITUALITY NOT CONSIDERED A RELIGION

Religion is defined as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a super-human agency or agencies involving devotional and ritual observances and often having a moral code for the conduct of human affairs. (Stein, 1988, p. 1114)

Spirituality is ‘pertaining to the spirit or its concerns as distinguished from bodily or worldly existence or its concern’ and ‘Characterized by or suggesting predominance of the spirit or things of the spirit’ and ‘pertaining to the spirit as the seat of the moral or religious nature.’ (Stein, 1988, p. 1267)

Although Native spirituality embodies the dictionary definitions of both spirituality and religion, the practices have not been considered a religion by Eurocentric government officials, priests or institutions. The relationship with the land that was integral to their understanding of their place in the universe was beyond the proselytizing nature of Christian colonialism. The result is that as their land has been systematically taken away, Native peoples generally have been deprived of the ability to practice their spiritual traditions which were central to their holistic approach to life. The concept of Aboriginal religion and a comprehension of the land being integral to that spirituality had virtually disappeared over the 20th Century.

An Elder recollected that when he was young his father said that everything had a spirit and these spirits would “get after you” if you did something disrespectful. He then described an incident with his uncle after the children played with his gun. “Once we children made the gun sick by playing with it so it couldn’t shoot anything, not even a rabbit. My uncle took it to Old Louie and after a couple days he cured the sick gun.” The Elder cautioned not to kill an animal if you’re not going to eat it or destroy a tree if you’re not going to use it. “Everything’s got a soul, there’s more to it than meets the eye,” he commented. Leavitt (1996) wrote about some of the ceremony that was incorporated into hunting.

In the past, the Micmacs, after killing a bear, treated its carcass with elaborate ceremony, which included cutting a special door for it to enter the house. They did not risk offending the bear, which they believed to have extraordinary powers. Hunting, though it is not considered a sacred activity by most hunters today, has always been sacred for the Micmacs. (p. 74)

Henderson (1997) explains that the traditional Mi’kmaq belief is that there are three parts to the spark of life of all living things; a form that decays and disappears after death, a

life-force or soul that travels after death to the lands of the souls, and guardian spirits who aid living things on their earth walk. Since the spark of life is the common origin of all things, the Mi'kmaq are taught that everything one sees, touches or is aware of must be given respect. Three separate but interrelated concepts of life include the life soul or seat of life, the shadow or external soul, and the free-soul or shadow life. By believing in a balanced consciousness that is strong and weak, happy and angry, physical and spiritual, the best possible people are created. Balance is achieved through alliances forged by the life soul. (pp. 15-16)

Whitehead (1988) explains that the Mi'kmaq universe has many levels of existence and meaning that are fluid and in a continuous state of transformation. "Power is the essence which underlies the perceived universe; it gives rise to it, transcends it, energizes and transforms it. It is everywhere at once, and yet it is also conscious, particulate: it is Persons." (p. 4) These six worlds from which the People form themselves from this power are; the World Beneath The Earth, the World Beneath The Water, Earth World, Ghost World, the World Above The Earth, the World Above The Sky.

The six worlds are a universe of Shape-changers...Because of this aspect that nearly everything in the six worlds – including the geography – can change both its shape and its mind, the universe is unpredictable, unreliable in a European sense. So how do humans and other Persons survive when nothing is necessarily as it seems? They survive by accumulating Power of their own, the ability to change their own shapes and modes as circumstances require. (Ibid, p. 12)

Most people at Conne River consider themselves Catholic and say they do not follow traditional Mi'kmaq spiritual practices. However this paper notes that even though very few people have maintained a traditional spiritual relationship with the land, it is still integral to their daily existence. One Conne River member stated:

As an Aboriginal person I have had to reconnect with the environment – including the woods, the water, the fish, the weather – everything. It is being among and feeling part of the life force all around. The old trappers told me they felt the only time they had a religious experience was when they were in the country. Then they were closer to everything else. When I speak to elders they ask ‘where do you belong?’ The old Micmac believe they belong to the land, not the other way around.

Survival of Aboriginal peoples has been directly dependent upon their natural environment. Boldt (1994) explicates: “Most Indian tribes/bands held a spiritually rooted respect for the land and all life forms. They viewed themselves as one part of the natural order, related to all other beings and things, and they emphasized harmony and unity with this universe.” (p. 192) Several people at Conne River explained to me that they consider themselves Mi’kmaq because of their use of the land which includes hunting, fishing, berry picking and some gathering of medicines, as well as spending time “in the country.” Battiste (2001) elucidates on the acquisition and use of traditional knowledge (p. 46):

(Thus) what is traditional about traditional ecological knowledge is not its antiquity, but the way it is acquired and used. In other words, the social process of learning and sharing knowledge, which is unique to each Indigenous knowledge and heritage, lies at the heart of its traditionality...Historically, Indigenous peoples not only utilized the naturally occurring biodiversity of North America for food, medicine, materials, and ceremonial and cultural life, but routinely took steps to increase the biodiversity of their territories.

TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The following twelve principles of Indian philosophy were compiled by Murdena Marshall of Eskasoni Reserve. In a personal conversation Professor Marshall explained to me that she confirms all information with community elders. This information from Prof. Marshall, and that from Noel Knockwood, was passed on to me by FNI Chief Nish Paul.

1. **WHOLENESS** All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is part of a single whole. Everything is connected in some way to everything else. It is only possible to understand something if we understand how it is connected to everything else.
2. **CHANGE** Everything is in a state of constant change. One season falls upon

the other. People are born, live, and die. All things change. There are two kinds of change. The coming together of things and the coming apart of things. Both kinds of changes are necessary and are always connected to each other.

3. **CHANGE OCCURS IN CYCLES OR PATTERNS** They are not random or accidental. If we cannot see how a particular change is connected, it usually means that our standpoint is affecting our perception.
4. **THE PHYSICAL WORLD IS REAL** The Spiritual world is real. There are two aspects one reality. There are separate laws which govern each. Breaking of a spiritual principle will affect the physical world and vice versa. A balanced life is one that honours both.
5. **PEOPLE ARE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL BEINGS.**
6. **PEOPLE CAN ACQUIRE NEW GIFTS BUT THEY MUST STRUGGLE TO DO SO.** The process of developing new personal qualities maybe called 'true learning.'
7. **THERE ARE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF TRUE LEARNING.** A person learns in a whole and balanced manner when the mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional dimensions are involved in the process.
8. **THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT HAS FOUR RELATED CAPACITIES:**
 - * the capacity to have and to respond to dreams, visions, ideals, spiritual teachings, goals, and theories.
 - * the capacity to accept these as a reflection of our unknown or unrealized potential
 - * the capacity to express these using symbols in speech, art, or mathematics
 - * the capacity to use this symbolic expression towards action directed at making the possible a reality.
9. **PEOPLE MUST ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT' OF THEIR OWN POTENTIAL.**
10. **A PERSON MUST DECIDE TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN POTENTIAL**
The path will always be there for those who decide to travel it.
11. **ANY PERSON WHO SETS OUT ON A JOURNEY OF SELF DEVELOPMENT WILL BE AIDED.** Guides, teachers, and protectors will assist the traveller.
12. **THE ONLY SOURCE OF FAILURE IS A PERSON'S OWN FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS.**

MEDICINE WHEEL

In the ways of our ancestors, we are taught that everything in life is circular. We observe the changing of the seasons, the travelling direction of the sun and the moon, how we develop from birth to death and in the spirit realm. We are one within the circle of life. The Medicine Wheel teaches us balance, to discover ourselves, and our path. (www.miditrax.com/MedicineWheel.htm)

The Medicine Wheel is the blueprint for life and is used in many ways. About 20,000 Medicine Wheels made with stones have been found in North America, indicating the sacredness of the circle to most, if not all, Native peoples. Medicine Wheels can be a ceremonial space used for energy and healing, understanding, celebrations and teaching.

The Medicine Wheel represents all of creation. all races animals, birds, fish, insects, trees, and stones, the sun, moon and earth are in the circle of the medicine wheel. Each stone tells part of the story. The circle is all of the cycles of nature, day and night, seasons, moons, life cycles, and orbits of the moon and planets. (www.web.onramp.ca/rivernen/med_1.htm)

The teachings of the wheel start in the east, which according to Marshall, is red. Other Mi'kmaw give the east the colour yellow. For purposes of this paper I am using Marshall's teachings.

The spirit guide of the east is the eagle and east is the place of the white man. The season is spring, the element is water, the time of day is morning, the rising sun and the newness of the day. The sacred medicine is sweetgrass and the family stage is birth.

The colour of south is yellow and the spirit guide is the thunders and the thunderbirds. This is the place of the yellow man. The season is summer, the element is fire, the time of day is afternoon where warm breezes come from and life is renewed through the cycles. The sacred medicine is sage and the family stage is adulthood. Elders say this is when spiritual awareness is realized.

The colour of the west is black and represents the Mi'kmaq spiritual world. The spirit guide is the black bear. This is the place of the red man. The season is fall, the element is earth, the time of day is evening, the sacred medicine is cedar and the family stage is Elders.

The colour of the north is white and is reserved for Elders who share it with children under age 7. The spirit guide is the polar bear and it is the place of the black man. The

season is winter, the element is air, the time is night, the sacred medicine is fungus and the family stage is family.

In Native tradition the Wheel also represents the complete circle and therefore balance. The circle can be extended beyond the individual into the political system, the economic system, society and culture itself. If too much attention is spent on only one aspect of the circle, such as politics or the economy, one's life is out of balance. When the people and their spirituality are ignored, society becomes unbalanced. The circle tells about people's roles and responsibilities to the community and were taught from birth. Leavitt (1996) writes:

In the circle you take the responsibility of your own choices. You have the responsibility to be balanced, to have your community balanced. An Indian is born with responsibilities, which must be taken on. You can't say to someone else, 'Let me do it for you.'... Elders know how to keep the balance. As they get older, they are so in tune with what the circle is, the right path, that they recognize when you are veering from it. Instead of telling you, 'Hey, you're heading the wrong way,' they'll tell a story. They don't want to impose their will on someone else. (p. 117)

The late Chippewa Medicine man Sun Bear wrote about the Medicine Wheel following a vision he had. The message was for a healing of the earth and the return of the Wheel. He wrote in 1980: "Let the medicine of the sacred circle prevail. Let many people across the land come to the circle and make prayers for the healing of the Earth Mother. Let the circles of the Medicine Wheel come back." (p. 1)

ELDER HUNTERS SET EXAMPLE

The traditional beliefs of Conne River were passed on to younger generations by the hunting and trapping examples of the older hunters. Millais (1907) described John Bernard as the "doyen" (elder) of the community who at the age of 87 "could see and walk almost as well as a man of thirty." Another "fine specimen" was Noel Matthews who, at the age of 70 was still the most skilled man in a canoe in the island. "He goes furring and packing just as he has always done. Until recently another remarkable old man was Louis John, aged eighty-

one, but he went in as usual in 1906, and dropped dead one day as he was lifting his load.”
(p. 224)

MacGregor wrote in 1908 that the early hunters went inland in September to hunt deer (caribou) and smoke the flesh for food. In November they returned home to prepare their traps for fox, lynx otter, and bear. In December they returned to the bush for fresh meat for their families. They shot does and young stags but not old stags and were careful to never kill any deer they did not actually require and use as food. They made deer-skin boots by scraping and tanning caribou skin in a decoction of spruce bark. They said these boots were worn through in a few days. The advantage of skin boots was that when they were greased there was no noise when tracking in the bush. At the time only a few wore home-made deer skin boots as most people had purchased ready-made boots or shoes. The people also reported at the time that the arctic hare was very rare on their trapping lands and snipe, geese, and ducks were far fewer than a few years ago. (pp. 3-5)

An Elder described how he wrapped his supplies when he went hunting as a younger man. He said he carried individual packages of flour, sugar and tea which were then wrapped in canvas duck in a sausage shape which he was then able to carry easily over his shoulder. Then he could make a “tilt” (a lean-to) out of the canvas. He shared with me his memories about hunting in the Heart country and staying at hunting lodges that were available at the time. He said he trapped weasel, mink, beaver, lynx and otter for the furs and that some of these animals were no longer seen. He would not cut trees or branches as it would “make a sign to the animals.”

Another man explained that at one time traditional hunters could identify moose, caribou, fox and lynx scats. However, he said, they didn’t talk about it because they thought

nobody was interested even though it could help them find an animal. The Elders, after years of learning from their fathers and uncles, knew the season and the time of day that was appropriate to find specific game. "They were studying" he said. "It makes the Elders feel bad that they are the last ones to know the country." This man visited landmarks and old campsites where wigwams were located in excursions with Elders. He was told about one place where a longhouse was located with a wigwam. These were traditionally built on heights off the bog and some wigwams still survive.

He said that during the 1970s the Band started Guide Training in order to encourage the youth into the bush. It was a way of passing on the culture by Elders Martin Jeddore, William (Billy) Joe, Morris Jeddore, Aloysius Benoit and Mike Joe Sr. There were five or six trapping cabins spaced 20 to 25 miles apart. Participants brought the basic staples such as potatoes, rice, flour and canned goods that the traditional trappers brought with them. Each elder took a youth to the cabins for six weeks in the summer to show where their ancestors trapped and where their traditional family territory was located. They established an inventory of wildlife, located the best places for fishing, gathering berries and hunting animals such as caribou, moose and beaver.

In the late fall they went out for another six weeks to learn how to trap and skin animals and learn traditional conservation and use of all the animal parts. The youth would learn the right way to strip meat, smoke and preserve it during the fall moose and caribou hunt. They would also hunt duck and geese, all by the end of November in order to finish before freeze-up. He commented that "the men became healthy and their beer guts were gone." This Guiding program continued for three years. Battiste (2001) writes about the importance of traditional knowledge about the environment:

Traditional environmental (ecological) knowledge (TEK) is a body of knowledge and beliefs transmitted through oral tradition and first-hand observation. It includes a system of classification, a set of empirical observations about the local environment, and a system of self-management that governs resource use. Ecological aspects are closely tied to social and spiritual aspects of the knowledge system. The quantity and quality of TEK varies among community members, depending on gender, age, social status, intellectual capability, and profession (hunter, spiritual leader, healer, etc.) With its roots firmly in the past, TEK is both cumulative and dynamic, building upon the experience of earlier generations and adapting to the new technological and socioeconomic changes of the present. (p. 44.)

A community Elder reminisced about hunting with several other men. He told about one occasion when they got 22 caribou to share with the community. He said upon their return there was a great feast and someone made a drum from a shank. Boots were also made from the shank and when people left the dance “there would be a mess of hair to clean up.” Then they would trade meat for other necessities such as flour or tea. On another occasion he told me about a lesson he learned from his father after playing with a roasted caribou head. He explained that his father came home with a caribou head and he started to play with it. His father had an old gun and the young lad had taken lead shot and put it on the jaw bone of the caribou. He explains:

The old man told me he wouldn't be able to get another caribou because I was playing with the dead one. It took a couple of weeks before the old man got another one and it stuck with me that we shouldn't play with anything we're going to eat.

In his book on the Mi'kmaq of Newfoundland, Jackson (1993) wrote about the traditional importance of prayer for the hunter. He wrote (p. 149):

No Micmac hunter will ever kill a caribou stag without first whispering a short speech or prayer addressed to it in which he regrets the hard necessity that compels him to fire the death shot. [He will also add] his good wishes for the caribou in that land.

Such prayer reflected the respect and understanding that successful hunting depended on the benevolence of the animal's spirit as much as on the hunter's skill. As Speck, who wrote about the Mi'kmaq in the early 1900s once reflected, “to the Micmac, hunting was a

holy occupation.” The spiritual relationship with game was also reflected in the sanctity of certain animal parts. For example, it was forbidden to eat bear brain, a portion of the beaver's hind foot and a gland called the ‘whistler’ from a caribou's stomach. “Poor Uncle Steve Joe ate it once, nearly starved to death on the country. He couldn't see the deer but he could sure hear them. They just kept whistling at him.” Good luck charms were also obtained from animals. A lumpy growth which occasionally appears in the neck of large stags had special significance as a good-luck charm. (Ibid)

Although Shamans were able to demonstrate an ability to manipulate the supernatural, everyone had access to the knowledge and power of the spirit world through a Power or Vision Quest or through participating in a sweat lodge. Jackson (1993) describes a vision quest (p. 148):

Generally, when a Micmac wishes to gain his power, he must, while keeping his object a secret, go into the woods alone and dwell there. His camp must be constructed to shelter two, and in all his equipments he must likewise provide for two. Even at his meals he must set apart an equal share for an unexpected visitor. At length he will find his food already cooked, upon his return to camp, and soon after he will begin to observe a faint and shadowy being flitting in and out of the wigwam. Gradually he will see this being more and more. . . clearly, until it grows as plainly visible as any man. Then the two will become friends and companions, and the Micmac will receive the gift of magic power.

Knockwood (n.d.) confirms that fasting is an important part of a Vision Quest. This religious observance can last several days or more but a minimum of four days is generally expected. By abstaining from all food or drink the body and soul (spirit) enter into an altered state of consciousness where communion with the spirits is possible. The Spirit usually appears in a form of an animal or a bird which becomes a spirit guide where communication takes place. “Not everyone receives a Vision for its only the select few who are given this inspirational gift.” (p. 3)

A CHIEF'S SACRED CEREMONY

I am including some of my observations of the ceremonies and preparations for a Vision Quest, Flesh Offering and Eagle ceremony offered by Saqamaw Misel. This information is limited by the constraints of the privacy of sacred ceremonies, the community was notified of the undertaking by Saqamaw Misel through the following notice on the community TV channel.

This is to inform Miawpukek Nation members that our Saqamaw will be doing a fast for seven days, or as long as the Creator wills it. Beginning May 5th the fast will be undertaken at Pmaqtim (Mt. Sylvester) in honor of Mother Earth and all its resources so that all peoples will become sensitized to the terrible destruction being done to her and will strive to protect her. His Fast will end on the 12th, creator willing, with a flesh offering to the Waters.

The first ceremony of Saqamaw Misel's preparation was a sweat lodge in the community though the vision quest was to be at Mt. Sylvester, a Mi'kmaq sacred location. All the necessary supplies and the two camp builders were flown into the remote site the previous day. When I arrived at the sweat lodge I was overwhelmed by feelings of uneasiness and decided to leave before the Chief arrived. However, when I passed him on the road he smiled and nodded encouragingly. At that point I made the decision to return to the site and arrived in time to speak with Jean Crane, a Naskapi-Montagnais Elder from Labrador who was at Conne River to accompany the Chief on his vision quest. She explained that she had just baked bread because she was in charge of feeding the people that were assisting with the base camp support. "I wouldn't go without my bread," she said.

As we waited around the fire I had the opportunity to ask her about prayers. She confirmed that all prayers were spoken from the heart and that there is no set liturgy. Prayers are offered to the directions and the elements of earth, air, fire and water as well to give thanks or pray for something special in your life. It was getting cold and she commented that

if we had a drum we could dance and keep warm. Then the Chief sat beside us and explained to me that he was on his way to fast for six days on the mountain. After a brief conversation he went to sit with the men and greet other participants as they arrived.³⁰

The sweat lodge ceremony was led by a Medicine Man from Nova Scotia. Before entering the Lodge to prepare for the ceremony, he shared a story about his health and how a sweat lodge and feather treatment worked successfully. He explained that in a previous sweat lodge ceremony he had someone hit his painful back with a feather seven times. He said that after the seven quick strokes, he fell to the ground and it burned a circle on his back all night. The next morning the pain was gone. Subsequent medical tests showed nothing wrong with his health. When this story was finished, prayers were done around the fire using tobacco and sweetgrass, and the sweat lodge was about to begin. I was still feeling uneasy and left after giving tobacco bundles to the Chief, the Elder and the Medicine Man, who promptly threw it into the fire. It was the only time I have ever left a sweat lodge.

A week later I did participate in the sweat lodge that was held when Saqamaw Misel returned from Mt. Sylvester. We started gathering about 6:00 p.m. and it didn't finish until after 11. There were about 10 in the lodge and several others who didn't participate were outside with the firekeeper to lend their support. It was a very powerful ceremony which necessitated several breaks from the intense heat. In one round the heat intensified and we all prayed very loudly together, which helped the suffering in the heat. I am very hesitant to write anything more about what happens in a sweat lodge. It is a time of prayer and meditation and can be a powerful healing. I was blessed to be part of these ceremonies.

³⁰ Anyone who has participated in a sweat lodge knows about Indian Time. A sweat lodge called for 6 o'clock will start when the firekeeper announces that the grandfathers (stones) are hot enough to start the ceremony. It will finish when it's done...usually between two and six hours.

The next morning at 5 a.m. I joined about 20 others to witness a flesh offering ceremony at the beach. It was raining and Saqamaw Misel, who was still fasting, joined me under my umbrella while waiting for everyone to arrive. The Medicine Man started the ceremony with the pipe passed for four rounds followed by everyone smudging. Then the rain stopped and the Chief prepared himself for the offering. The Elder from Labrador and the Chief's wife huddled together under a blanket as it was hard for them to watch this sacred ceremony. I was struck by the Chief's fortitude as he endured the pain then walked to the water's edge to offer his personal prayers. Then we dispersed until the Eagle Feast Ceremony at the Great Hall later that morning.

About 10 a.m. many members of the community gathered in the Great Hall to participate in the Eagle Feast. Saqamaw Misel was in great spirits though his body was in some distress. The Feast consisted of smudging, prayers, and passing bowls of berries, fish, and other foods as spirit offerings. Then Chief Misel presented eagle feathers to a few of the participants. He explained that not many feathers had come to him that year. I was deeply touched and honoured by being presented with an eagle feather and was quite surprised at the profound emotion I felt when he gave it to me. Then there was a traditional Mi'kmaq song with drumming that we all joined in singing. The end of the ceremony was Saqamaw Misel leading everyone around for hand shaking and hugging. This was followed by a community potluck in which many more people participated.

The Miawpukek First Nation Band Council's current land claims struggle with the Newfoundland government is based on the government view that the Mi'kmaw arrived after Cabot's "discovery" of the Island in 1497. They said it was impossible to paddle a canoe some 60 miles between Cape Breton and Newfoundland. Despite the political nature of the

Spirit Canoe undertaking, Saqamaw Misel described the journey as a spiritual adventure which, he said, is what it had always been for him. He described the way the feelings among the paddlers changed and deepened during the voyage. The entire journey had taken a number of years and included personnel changes as well as learning how to build and maintain a birchbark canoe. The Chief showed the film at MUN and at the Band's Great Hall, and commented that the filmmaker was a valuable presence as she was calming, listened to others and counselled them. He added that she was also a good cook! The Spirit Canoe adventure gave new impetus to the Band's land claims struggle as it is now obvious that pre-contact Mi'kmaw would have been able to make the ocean crossing in their traditional canoes.

MI'KMAQ LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Many Mi'kmaqs now recognize language as the key to cultural survival. Commenting on the importance of language preservation, traditional Elder and teacher Murdena Marshall stated: "We have lost our culture and our way of life but we are fortunate that the majority of our native people (at Cape Breton) speak the language." And in Prins (1996), she is quoted as saying: "(Our) language makes us special because we can describe the world from a different point of view...When we lose our language we lose our value systems too." (p. 208)

Native language is part of the circle and Native spirituality and culture are passed on by the oral tradition. (Leavitt, 1996, p. 34) The oral tradition of sharing stories, songs, history and social commentary formerly provided cultural continuity, a shared way of thinking and acting for the people of Miawpukek First Nation. Battiste (2001) writes that the Mi'kmaw language builds on verb phrases with hundreds of prefixes and suffixes that express a "panorama of energy."

The reliance on verbs, rather than on nouns is important: it means that there are few fixed separate objects in the Mi'kmaq worldview. What the people see is the great flux, eternal transformation, and interconnected space. With this fluidity of phoneme, every speaker can create new vocabulary 'on the fly,' tailored to meet the experience of the moment, to express the finest nuances of meaning. (p. 76)

As a verb-based language Mi'kmaq focuses on processes, cycles and interrelationships of all things. Objects and concepts are identified in terms of their use or their relationship to other things in an active process that resonates the importance of relations and relationships rather than material possessions. The philosophy of the Mi'kmaq language is based on developing and retaining relationships. Joe (1997) writes that: "this verb-based language provides the consciousness of what it is to be Mi'kmaq and the interdependence of all things. The word 'Mi'kmaq' thus refers to our kinship as allied people." (p. 148) She then explains (pp. 149-150):

Within the Mi'kmaq language, the world of relationships are embodied in relative relationships of animacy and inanimacy and inclusion and exclusion. Unlike English language that understands animacy as meaning not living, the Mi'kmaq concept holds that all things have a spirit and a relationship. Sometimes an object develops a very special and close relationship to us and thus develops animacy status. Thus, language holds notions of closeness of relationships and distance, rather than living and non-living status.

To hold a view that the earth is living or not living yields a distorted concept of our earth that has led the modern world to manipulate the environment around us. Modern society envisions water, earth, sun, moon as inanimate – without life. But in the Mi'kmaq language, animacy and inanimacy refer more to the closeness of relationships of all things. Some things are close to us because we build an alliance with its spirit. In time, as such, it reflects an animate relationship with us.

HIEROGLYPHICS DEVELOPED BY 1600

Father Christian LeClerq, who was in Mi'kmaq territory between 1675 and 1687, realized they had their own way of writing when he saw young children drawing symbols on birchbark. He and Abbé Maillard, who was in the area during the 1700s, developed more than 2,700 hieroglyphic characters for the purpose of religious instruction. (Sewell, 1997;

Prins, 1996, p. 208) This was called 'sucker fish writing' because it looks like the path the sucker fish leaves behind when feeding on the muddy bottom and was used until the early 1900s. A large birchbark book and a picture of the Lord's Prayer and Creed dating from 1791 and written in Mi'kmaq was said to be read by every family. (Anger, 1988, pp. 18-20)

The Mi'kmaq developed a worldview similar to that of other hunting peoples which grew from a profound knowledge of the natural environment including the flora and fauna and they named places with descriptions of distinctive geographic features.

Gaspe	where it (land) ends
Shubenacadie	ground-nut (a kind of tuber) land
Wagmatcook	where water flows clean
Abegweit	lying in the water (name for PEI)
Restigouche	nicely flowing river (Leavitt, 1996, p. 33)

During their early travels through the country there were signposts indicating places to portage to connecting travel routes or where to expect swift currents, rapids or gravel bars. There are no permanent map collections though there is evidence that birchbark maps were used to indicate streams and other landmarks. Incisions in the bark of a tree or sticks placed on a trail would indicate where a hieroglyphic message was hidden. Prins (1996) includes the comments made by LeClercq about early experiences with bark maps;

...(they) have much ingenuity in drawing upon bark a kind of map which marks exactly all the rivers and streams of a country of which they wish to make a representation. They mark all the places thereon exactly and so well that they make use of them successfully, and an Indian who possesses one makes long voyages without going astray. (p. 37)

Baptist missionary Silas T. Rand, who experimented with phonetic spelling, developed a twenty-two character alphabet in the 1800s in an attempt to translate the Bible into Mi'kmaq. In the early 1900s Capuchin Missionary Father Pacifique of Restigouche devised a 13-letter system based on French orthographic usage. There is now a fifteen-

character alphabet used at Restigouche and Maria, PQ, and Pabineau, NB. (Sewell, 1997) By the 1970s native language teachers at Restigouche, Big Cove and on Cape Breton began teaching Mi'kmaq reading and writing using various writing systems influenced by their own dialects.

This resulted in three distinctive orthographic modes that Prins (1996) predicted will “ultimately settle on a unified system.” (p. 208) Linguists Bernie Francis of Membertou and Doug Smith have developed the Francis-Smith writing system that is gaining popularity with the Mi'kmaq population and is now being used by the Cape Breton District School Board, the first non-reserve school system in Nova Scotia to offer a Mi'kmaq language class. It is also the orthography for the basis of language instruction at Conne River.

HISTORY OF LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

The following chronology was developed from information gathered at St. Anne's School and by interviews with community members, particularly Rod Jeddore, the school language teacher.

- 1986-1993 - Edwina Wetzel, Director of Education, hired Priscilla Drew to teach Mi'kmaq language in grades K – 6. Her familiarity with the language dated to her childhood when her father spoke it after going to Eskasoni.
- Rod Jeddore was at the University of New Brunswick and was approached by Edwina to teach the language because of his reading and writing abilities in Mi'kmaq, “though I didn't speak it then,” he said.
- 1994 - Rod went to Eskasoni, where Mi'kmaq is spoken by everyone, and spent the summer living in the community and working with Bernie Francis. “Bernie Francis has been a big resource, even now,” said Mrs. Wetzel.
- 1995 - Rod began Master's studies at the U of Saskatchewan.
- Priscilla and Gwen Goodyear continued teaching language at the school while upgrading their qualifications.
- 1997 - Rod returned from Saskatchewan and began teaching Grades 4 to 6.
- He and Edwina, Priscilla and Gwen discussed and brainstormed and “realized we needed more fluency, so Rod went back to Eskasoni for a year to teach K -

9, Rod explained. "I followed the language teachers around and covered all the grades. I shadowed, learned and taught. The main benefit was to be immersed in it."

- 1999 - Gwen spent the year at Eskasoni.
 - The language program has been divided into three sections: K -3 ; 4 -6; 7 -9.
 - Rod is developing a curriculum through the language centre making the Nova Scotia guide applicable to the people of Miawpukek First Nation.
- 2000 - The Language Centre was opened. "I will pass on the language to anyone who is willing to listen and learn," said Rod.

ART AND SPIRIT

Artwork and crafts provide information about a people's way of life, beliefs and aesthetic values. For the early Mi'kmaq, art was functional because they used everything they made. The only metal available was naturally occurring copper which was too soft for blades but could be worked into such items as fishhooks or pounded thin and rolled up to make rings and beads. Little is known about their decorative arts before the arrival of Europeans as fibers, wood, leather, dyes, paints and other organic materials have not survived. (Leavitt, 1996, p. 169)

At Conne River the women in the Craft Shop now carry on this artistic tradition by hand crafting items for use in the community as well as for sale elsewhere. This includes powwow regalia, dream catchers, beaded items, moccasins, mitts, headbands and leather goods. Traditional wood and sinew snowshoes are provided by a community Elder. Art is encouraged in the school and student works hang in the halls. One of the projects I observed was children writing about an elder in their family. This was done through interviews and stories. Art done by people from the community hang throughout the Band offices and Great Hall. Battiste (2001) elucidates on symbolic literacy (p. 157):

Certain forms of Indigenous art are the world's oldest continuous living art tradition. Traditional Indigenous art differs from Eurocentric art in that cultural designs and motifs exhibit a relationship between the pattern and its symbolism and beliefs. It communicates ideas and beliefs or can be 'read.' Examples of this are the symbolic literacies of the Mi'kmaq, the birch bark scrolls of the Anishnabi Miteiwin society,

and the rock art of the Algonquian-speaking peoples. Since the spiritual nature of the work is combined with artistic imagery, there is little personal interpretation in these efforts.

I was encouraged to see a collection of the recent work of Newfoundland artist Jerry Evans at the Christina Parker Gallery in St. John's as it was inspired by his recently-discovered Native roots. Ms. Parker spent a couple of hours showing me all the Evans work she has, assuring me that he was going to gain in popularity and become famous because his work is so distinctive and well done. Subsequently, I met with the artist whose work visually depicts his spiritual quest in his use of feathers, quills, beads, glyphs and stone amulets, and by such titles as – Keeping the Way, Keepers of the Eastern Door, My Relations, Our People of the River, Spirit Tree, Caribou, I Honour My Micmaq Blood, and Truth and Myth.

Jerry Evans grew up in the industry town of Grand Falls, NF, and in the past decade has established relationships with people at Conne River. He said that he was fascinated by Indian stories when he was a boy but the idea of being Native was not relevant to his life at the time. "I was called an 'Eskie' but I didn't know where that came from." He explained that his Mi'kmaq heritage went unrecognized by his family for nearly three generations and that his focus on Aboriginal issues became an integral part of his life's work after confirmation of his heritage in the mid-1980s. His grandfather told him they had Spanish roots but his grandfather's brother told him his great-grandmother was a Mi'kmaq woman who married someone from Cardiff, Wales. Evans said his Native connection gave him license to learn about Mi'kmaq and Beothuk culture, which he did by achieving a Bachelor of Education from MUN with a focus on history. But he knew himself to be an artist and the search for his spiritual identity is reflected in his work.

I kept asking questions and went back every chance I could. I'm still wanting to learn more and to learn the language. I don't want to lose my family history.

Newfoundland's strategy was assimilation for the Indians of the province, so our presence was denied and we didn't learn about our heritage. I am interested in traditional practices in terms of spirituality with respect for land, nature and everything. What I'm doing is for me and hopefully will impart, inspire or teach others about this wonderful part of who I am. The truth has a way of getting out and I've come full circle. I've taken on this discovery with an intense desire to find out more... that's what I'm exploring in my art. My artwork reflects my concerns with the Aboriginal part of me that was denied.

In addition to being part of the Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador's Permanent Collection, Evans' art work is represented in collections across Canada, including the Canadian Native Arts Foundation, The Canada Council Art Bank, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (www.heritage.nf.ca/arts/agnl/evans.html#bio3 Spring1998)

Clyde Drew is another Mi'kmaq artist who lives in St. Alban's across the Bay from Conne River where his family has an historical connection. His interest in Mi'kmaq legends stem from his experiences as a young boy listening to the stories of his father, grandfather and other Elders of Conne River. They told him the legends passed down to them by their forefathers and took time to include even the most minute details. As he developed his carving skills he said the sometimes forgotten stories were remembered as vividly as the day he first heard them. "As a tribute to my ancestors, I feel a responsibility to keep their memories alive by bringing their stories into our modern world. I am their messenger."

Drew carves in stone – preferably alabaster – moose antlers and wood burls. He said that carving in these media allows him to pay particular attention to detail "as did my grandfather and the other Elders who spoke so eloquently of the spirits of the Mi'kmaq spirit world." Drew's sculptures are displayed in many venues from corporate boardrooms to private collections of well known entertainers. His sculptures are sold through a number of galleries and craft shows across Canada and the U.S. (www.cancom.net/~cdrew/artist.htm)

I felt it was important to include these two artists because their particular works embody images or feelings of traditional Mi'kmaq spirituality. They touch the earth and tell us about spirit with respect and without diminishing or appropriating it. Evans' work is inspired by the discovery of his Mi'kmaq heritage and a profound understanding of his connection to the land. The sculptures done by Drew extend the feeling of spirit beyond the material he is working with. An opinion expressed on TV Ontario (February 28, 2002) aptly describes the importance of art in an Indigenous community. "Art is the voice of the reawakening culture and expresses the continuum of life. It is a teaching for the next generation."

In this chapter, I have given a sense of some of the principles of traditional philosophy and understandings of the Mi'kmaq way of being in the world. I have used the words of Elders from the community who remember teachings from their childhood about respect for the land and the animals they hunted, and examples from the writings of other Elders. I have been able to share some of the experiences of witnessing a sacred flesh offering and the sweat lodge ceremonies that were integral to it.

The adventures of those participating in the Spirit Canoe crossing from Newfoundland to Cape Breton exemplifies their determination to prove the capability of their pre-contact ancestors to paddle across the Cabot Strait. It became a spiritual journey for some as feelings deepened about their connections to each other and the profound nature of their success. They were able to vindicate their faith in their capability to emulate actions from the past that they were told were impossible. These men of Conne River embarked on a mundane voyage to prove a point, and discovered after years of determined effort it was a spiritual journey: It was another way to experience their traditional roots.

Art is integral to the Indigenous cultural experience and the artists portrayed in this thesis draw on their Mi'kmaq roots for inspiration. Their themes are a spiritual reflection of what the land has to offer – from perceptions of the land and everything on it, to artifacts such as rocks or antlers – are incorporated into the work. It was also important to include information about the Mi'kmaq language as this is what embodies and reflects the People's knowledge of the world and their beliefs about it, as well as the nature of what they know and believe. They have prevailed despite church sanctions against traditional knowledge and being ignored by both federal and provincial governments.

CHAPTER 8: MEDICINES, HEALING AND SPIRITUALITY

This chapter is a compilation of beliefs and practices of traditional Mi'kmaq society compiled from interviews, papers, books, and electronic sources. Many of these methods are the antithesis to receiving oral teachings for knowledge transfer. This document is not intended to be a definitive manual but is a general guide meant to give voice to some basic philosophical underpinnings, practices and ceremonies of traditional Mi'kmaq customs.

PROVISO

Traditional knowledge is best gained from within the community itself. Miawpukek First Nation Elders are ready to tell their stories – but they have to be asked. Other sources could include Mi'kmaq people who travel to Conne River to do ceremony, or from those travelling away to gain the knowledge. My information is limited because I was not privy to ceremonies and information such as Clan membership, Native women's groups and ceremony, or of course men's ceremony, which are all components of traditional spirituality and religion.

A Royal Commission Round Table was convened in 1993 to address the difficulties faced by Indigenous communities in their attempt to negotiate culturally-based alternatives to health and social concerns. The Minutes of March 10, 1993 states that "... communities will become healthy only if governments are serious about dealing with underlying issues."

(Lynes, 1995, p. 77) Lynes goes on to underscore the Royal Commission discussion paper that stated traditional medicine encompassed a way of life and a spiritual consciousness:

A discussion paper from the Round Table stated that 'Aboriginal medicine is constituted as foundational to cultural practices; which are independent of the state imposed regulatory structures of contemporary Aboriginal life.' It was understood that Aboriginal medicine is a way of life, complete with guidelines for behaviour, systems of authority and in some instances, punitive mechanisms. Their traditional

way of being encompasses a spiritual consciousness which underlies an understanding of their place in the universe.

It was suggested many times that politicians and health care practitioners as well as some Aboriginal communities themselves must change the way they think about health and social issues. It was continually emphasized that everyone involved in this effort needs to begin thinking 'holistically.' An appreciation of such foundational cultural practices was closely linked to the seriousness of an official's interest in change.

A COMPILATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Traditional Mi'kmaq Elder Murdena Marshall explains the importance of generosity, love and forgiveness in her *Lessons of The Cycle of Life* (p. 9):

Generosity of the mind, spirit, body and emotions are the basis of wholistic healing and must work in harmony and conjunction with the seven virtues of love, honesty, humility, respect, truth, patience, and wisdom. Love is ready to forgive all ills, it is ready to plant new life cycle and is ever so patient in acquiring and maintaining balance in a person. It also encourages, nurtures, and cradles the person to forgive so healing can enter with acceptance...In a society where all seven virtues are in place there is no tolerance for selfishness, boastfulness, vanity, deceit, cowardice, and unwanted knowledge, but there is a generous amount of forgiveness.

Marshall further offers the following philosophical underpinnings for achieving balance and harmony for survival as a healthy individual in a healthy community.

(1) A person must have commitment in life. One must think of the possible consequences of that commitment if not followed through. One will be given wisdom when one has lived up to his commitment. Life is rewarded through feelings that accompany satisfaction, happiness and human endeavour.

(2) A person must be made accountable for his behaviours. One must be able to do what is good for him and his family. If a person does anything against his willingness then he is being dishonest with his teachings and beliefs. Honesty can only be gained if the person is able to evaluate his behaviour and be truthful on what are the initial reasons which motivated that behaviour.

(3) Since all things and everyone must work in harmony, a person must have the strength to address his feelings. He must be ready and willing to be able to display, cope or accept his feelings and give a positive thought as to how this particular feeling will affect the cycle, and be strong in accepting the consequences which that feeling will bear on others.

(4) A person, a happy person has a vision or goal for his life and the lives of others near him. He must have the freedom to choose whatever vision or good he may have. He must be given the opportunity to be able to see himself in roles which are highly visible. Everyone has the gifts of survival. Each one of us must learn how these gifts will work to his best advantage.

Chief Joe spoke at a conference at MUN about what makes and keeps people healthy.

He emphasized the importance of communicating and maintaining contact with others.

One of the best things we can do is to appreciate and to support people, to allow them to be their own person, but always use some of the tools that the Creator gave us and it's not always magic that heals people. We all have the gift to laugh, we all have the gift to talk to each other, to touch each other, to hug each other. (Crellin, 1997, p. 212)

Mi'kmaw spiritual leader Noel Knockwood (1992) explains that Native North Americans direct their prayers to a Creator or Great Spirit whose presence is in every object, person and place. "The Great Spirit does not take on a human form and could be without gender. Hence, the term Grandfather, Grandmother God is occasionally used." (p. 2)

Murdena Marshall writes that there are no intermediaries between an individual and the Creator and prayers are spontaneous from the heart rather than a written liturgy.

NATURE, SPIRIT AND CEREMONY

Battiste (2001) emphasizes the complexity of interrelationships between nature and ceremony. She explains that Knowing the complex natures of natural forces and their interrelationships is an important context for Indigenous knowledge and heritage:

No separation of science, art, religion, philosophy, or aesthetics exists in Indigenous thought; such categories do not exist. Thus Eurocentric researchers may know the name of a herbal cure and understand how it is used, but without the ceremony and ritual songs, chants, prayers and relationships, they cannot achieve the same effect.

The traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous peoples is scientific, in the sense that it is empirical, experimental, and systematic. It differs in two important respects from Western science, however: traditional ecological knowledge is highly localized and it is social. Its focus is the web of relationships between humans, animals, plants,

natural forces, spirits, and land forms in a particular locality, as opposed to the discovery of universal 'laws.'

Everything that pertains to tradition, including cosmology and oral literature, is continually being revised at the individual and community levels. Indeed, we suggest that the knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples are more self-consciously empirical than those of Western scientific thought – especially at the individual level. Everyone must be a scientist to subsist by direct personal efforts as hunter, fisher, forager, or farmer with minimal mechanical technology. Since every individual is engaged in a lifelong personal search for ecological understanding, the standard of truth in Indigenous knowledge systems is personal experience. Indigenous peoples may be suspicious of secondhand claims (which form the bulk of Eurocentric scholars' knowledge), but they are reluctant to challenge the validity of anyone's own observations. (pp. 43-45)

Joe (1997) explains the interconnectedness of all things (p. 147):

Mi'kmaq people believe that because all things are connected, all of us must depend on each other and help each other as a way of life, for that is what it means to be in balance and harmony with earth. If we do not care about each other and about the animals, about the plants and their survival, about the trees and their survival, then we will not survive ourselves for very long. Thus a strong element of the socialization of children is built around family and extended family relationships, sharing and respect.

Sacred objects and ceremonies are somewhat universal in North American Native culture, and although rituals vary between nations most include the Peace Pipe, fasting, sweetgrass ceremonies, vision quests and sweat lodges and the use of drums, rattles and bells. Knockwood (1992) explains that traditional prayers and dances accompanied by chanting are done in a circle to honour the Creator: "Mother Earth is round, the trees are round, our wigwams are round. Each day has a cycle. Because the Creator made everything, His (Her) presence is felt in every object, in every person and in every place whether it be animate or inanimate." (p. 3) Ceremonies and rituals bridge the sacred and the profane of all stages of life from birth to death. "The various sacraments permit us to see and to feel the holy," writes Hammerschlag (1988). "Corn pollen, sweet grass, incense, rosaries, prayer

shawls – they all help us to separate the sacred from the profane or the ordinary. All these physical attachments help us to get in touch with the non-tangible aspects of our spirit.” (p. 9)

The Mi’kmaq worldview does not separate the natural and supernatural. Both spheres are perceived as interlinked, writes Prins (1996), perhaps as one and the same, imbued with “the impersonal, preternatural power of the universe (which is) found in certain objects, plants, or animal beings.” (p. 35) Leavitt (1996) explains that a puowin or shaman was a man or woman who could communicate with the unseen world through spiritual powers including clairvoyance and telepathy, and were greatly respected and sometimes feared. This puowin, translated as “mystery person” or “magic-doing person” were said to be able to forecast weather, locate game and fish, predict enemy raids, heal the sick, and use magic to harm, even kill. With medicines and ceremonies they could cure an illness or remedy harm that those other powers caused. (p. 107) Prins (1996) elucidates further:

Although much about puowins remains unclear, it appears that someone born as the seventh son or seventh daughter was destined to possess supernatural powers. Moreover, certain families were known for their psychic abilities, which apparently could be passed from one generation to the next. In general, however, a man or woman could become a puowin through a metaphysical experience such as having a vision or a revelation in a dream. Such experiences were sometimes induced. Without the magic power, spiritual guidance, and healing skills of their puowins, the Mi’kmaq feared for their survival. Accordingly, at least one puowin lived in each community. When he helped or healed people, they expressed their gratitude with special gifts such as precious otter or beaver skins or other valuables. (p. 37)

The sacred objects carried by the puowin in medicine bags also indicate the prominence of the natural world in their traditional spiritual practices. Various objects, including animal fetishes, feathers, rocks or bones, were imbued with special powers and used in ceremony and healing. Franciscan Recollet Christien LeClercq described the contents of a puowin’s medicine bag in his journal of 1676. (Ibid)

Although medicine pouches varied, one has been described as ‘made of the skin of an entire head of a moose, with the exception of the ears, which were removed.’ It held several animal fetishes, including a bark figure of a little wolverine adorned with blue and white wampum beads. Moreover, it contained a miniature bow and arrow, as well as ‘a fragment of bark, wrapped in a delicate and very thin skin, on which were represented some little children, birds, bears, beavers, and moose’...Also among the contents was a stick, a good foot in length, adorned with white and red porcupine quills; at its end were attached several straps of a half-foot in length, and two dozen dew-claws of moose. It is with this stick that (the puowin) makes a devilish noise, using these dew-claws as sounders...Finally, the last article in the bag was a wooden bird, which they carry with them when they go hunting, with the idea that it will enable them to kill waterfowl in abundance.

Lacey (1977) writes that from the time of Jesuit observers in the 1600s, only spectacular shamanic ceremonies were recorded. He says that the Jesuits in Newfoundland gradually divided the confidence of the people because they initially succeeded in saving the lives that the shamans could not help with European diseases as they did not have cures for these unknown illnesses and epidemics. Thus, scepticism and antagonism toward the shaman and their practices developed. (pp. 9-11) Between the early 1800s and first quarter of the 1900s, shamanism disappeared as a culturally acceptable and valid part of Mi’kmaq life.

This coincided with the European fear of witchcraft so shamanism was considered a form of “diabolic demonology” (Flaherty, 1992, p. 21) and was “condemned by priests as an agent of the devil.” (Jackson, 1993, p. 146) Prins (1996) explains that priests competed against the shamans and in “the battle for souls” constantly “undermined their rivals by ridiculing them as sorcerers, witches, charlatans, frauds or jugglers. They also discredited Native beliefs in traditional guardian spirits and spiritual forces.” (p. 82)

So in Newfoundland, as in the rest of the Mi’kmaq world, the Roman Catholic priest became spiritual advisor and the western medical doctor treated illnesses formerly treated by the shaman. During this time there was undoubtedly confusion caused by conversion efforts and overlapping beliefs. In a visit to Conne River in 1931, Frederick Johnson who was

studying Mi'kmaq shamanism had determined its presence in Newfoundland but no one admitted to embody the "witching" powers.³¹ (Jackson, 1993, p. 146)

During my time at Conne River I heard several people speak about small clay figures left at the bottom of the nearby clay cliffs by the "little people" called wud loda mujj in Mi'kmaq. I was told that the figures would look like an eagle or a bear and if one was taken away, something was left as a token of appreciation. Then about 40 years ago people started taking away the figures without leaving something to give thanks and now they no longer appear. One young man visiting from Eskasoni spoke to me about Glooscap's Cave located near his home reserve. He explained this was a sacred site and similar figures used to be found there but in the past five years the cave has been desecrated and the wud loda mujj no longer leave figures or amulets. "White people call it the fairy cave," he explained.

Dreams, visions and trances are significant to traditional Mi'kmaqs who believe they offer entry to the non-ordinary world of spirit powers. During these times of dream-like consciousness an animal or other spiritual helper might come to them. Visions can be achieved through fasting, prayer and meditation. Fasting is a long-time tradition used to purify body, mind and soul and with a sweat lodge ceremony will flush toxins out of the system in about four days.

As a guardian spirit, the ntió'ml offered support and protection against danger, especially invisible threats. With its help, one could gain knowledge about otherwise unknown or secret things. For instance, it enabled Mi'kmaqs to interpret certain omens. Moreover, it offered advice on how to prevent mishap or how to make good things happen. Failure to listen could lead to bad luck, illness, even death. (Prins, 1996, p. 36)

³¹ Saqamaw Misel, who knew of my abilities, told me there used to be people in the community that could do the work, but no longer. I did not speak to anybody else at Conne River about some work I did as a forensic psychic for the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary in St. John's, but it turned out everyone knew about the incidents. One Elder, out of the blue one day, made the comment, "Spirits don't talk to me!" It took awhile for me to realize it was her way of letting me know that she knew what had transpired.

Noel Knockwood (1987) wrote that the first time he fasted and went on a vision quest he did not see anything. "I did not know what to look for, I was alone. I had no spiritual advisors – they were miles away." Before his second vision quest he purified himself in a sweat lodge ceremony and carried only sweetgrass and tobacco as his sacred objects. He explains his journey:

I went into isolation in the forest and I was afraid, because like other humans I feared the unknown. Nobody explained to me the spirit dimensions, I had no one to turn to, other than to turn inward. What gave me strength, I suppose, was my rationality – I was able to reason and say that if God's nocturnal creatures can survive in the dark, why can't I? That is what put me through. And on the third night of my fast, I had a vision from the spirit world which gave me a frightening experience because I did not know what it was.

But when I think back, I tell myself I am a very honored person because the Creator gave me the privilege to see a vision. He sent his messenger to me and I saw that creature just as I see the objects in front of me now. They were real, they were there, and my communion with the spirits began at that time...(being an Indian) is not an easy task, for the Creator tests you in many ways. If you can survive that testing, then you can truly stand in the presence of your people and others and say, 'I am ready to promote the Native way,' and to walk hand in hand with other religious observers who wish to acknowledge that. (p. 8)

Dreams or visions are historically viewed as tools of prognostication and it is considered significant when Elders appear. A tool to guide hunters was to burn caribou bones and the resulting cracks were interpreted as the topographical features where game could be found. (Jackson, 1993, p. 149) Sometimes communion with spirits and spirit guides allowed a young person to see and understand their place in the world. Lakota Sioux leader Crazy Horse did a Vision Quest when he was about 13. His father, who was a medicine man, interpreted his dream as a sign of his son's future greatness in battle. "Crazy Horse became known for his courage in many wars." (www.emazine.com/lectures/CRAZY_HOR.htm)

Another option for inducing spiritual visions for growth and healing is the use of psychotropic plants. Mushroom rituals have been dated to circa 12,000 B.C. from early petroglyphs in Northern Africa. Soma, believed to be a mushroom, is mentioned in early East Indian Vedic texts. The use of mushrooms and peyote cactus (*Lophophora williamsii*) in North America dates back some 6,000 years. The Native American Church, the largest pan-Native American religion in North America, uses peyote in ceremony which is rooted in the concept of holistic health and harmony with nature.

Peyote is viewed as a healing agent and a psychic integrator with the ability to integrate mind, body, spirit, and emotion in a safe, socially sanctioned, religious setting. "They believe that the controlled religious use of this medicine will allow them to see the truth about their lives and that the peyote spirit is able to give them guidance and direction." Peyote ceremony has been reported to be a "powerful" treatment for alcoholism and is an herb medicine in the Native American pharmacopoeia. (McClusky, 1997, pp. 3-4)

The reason the use of peyote has been included in this chapter is because although it is not historically used by the Mi'kmaq it is now being experienced pan-tribally. Some from Miawpukek First Nation have participated in ceremony with medicine people from the Native American Church which incorporates a peyote ritual. It was reported in an editorial in the Minnesota Daily Online, May 16, 1997, that federal governments reserve the right to outlaw religious practices that harm the health and safety of practitioners and citizens, "but the 10,000 year-old peyotist ritual doesn't fit this criteria. In fact, peyote is a non-addictive substance that has no long-term adverse effects when ingested in religious ceremonies." (http://www.daily.umn.edu/daily/1997/05/16/editorial_opinions/epoyot.ed/religious_freedom)

FEATHERS

The eagle to the Native person is symbolic. We pay much respect to the eagle and to the eagle feather, because that is our way of uniting ourselves with the spirit world, to bring that unity about. We refer to the eagle as the 'thunderbird' because he is the only creature ever to be gifted by God to go high up into the heavens into the area of lightning and thunder. Because the eagle is sacred and holy, we also must be of that fashion. (Knockwood, 1992, p. 3)

Chief Ignatius Paul confirmed that all feathers, particularly eagle feathers, are very sacred to Native people. He said that the presentation of an eagle feather is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon anyone and is only presented to someone who has given of him or herself unselfishly in order to benefit the community not just themselves. My experience of being presented with an eagle feather by Saqamaw Misel was a highlight of my time at Conne River.

TOBACCO

Tobacco is the first plant used in traditional ceremonies. During outside rituals tobacco is offered to the fire as a link to the Creator. A small amount is held in the left hand and is then offered to the fire in each of the four directions, the sky and the earth. Tobacco is also used in the smoking mixture of the sacred ceremonial pipe which can be used in sweat lodges, moontime ceremonies and general gatherings. Everyone who smokes from the pipe pledges honour to the Creator, Mother Earth and the community. Tobacco is considered a sacred gift and a symbol of peace and can be used as a protection in a medicine bag or in the doorway of a home.

SACRED PIPE

Passing the sacred pipe around a circle is a component of ceremonies of all Native peoples for their cleansing and spiritual journey. Both the materials and the construction of a pipe hold special symbolic value. The joining of the pipestone bowl, the female component,

and the wooden stem, the male, is considered a metaphorical marriage of Mother Earth and all her creatures. The bowls can be simple or carved with totem and spirit guides. Colours have symbolic value and pipes can be painted, beaded or otherwise decorated. The smoking mixture is made up of a variety of herbs and medicines which vary with different ceremonies and tribes. Generally, four pinches of “tobacco” are used to fill the bowl and prayers offered to the four directions. (www.aboriginalcollections.ic.gc.ca/clan/cultural/pipe.html)

Traditional pipe bowls of many North American Native tribes are made with red pipestone from Minnesota. The bowl represents the blood of Mother Earth and the long stem, which is the length of the maker’s arm, represents the path of life. The pipe carrier fills the bowl and lights it from the sacred fire. In a personal conversation, Lakota Woman explained that the first smoke is not inhaled but is released as the breath of life to the four directions, Mother Earth and the Great Spirit. Pipe carriers are required to do a sweat lodge and vision quest for physical and spiritual purification before accepting their responsibilities. “Pipe carriers are tested with ridicule, laughter, scoff, insults and mockery after which they can accept the responsibilities. The title must be earned.” (Knockwood, 1992, p. 3)

Eaton (1978) explains in great detail her experiences of discovering her spiritual journey and her realization of the central importance of the sweat lodge and pipe. She writes of the pipe (pp. 93-94) as:

...the Amerindian altar. The bowl is the equivalent of the Chalice of the Holy Grail, or the Chinese Pi – the disk of jade with its central sacred hollow, of cups, craters, cauldrons, holes, and all the rich symbolism attached to them on many levels. But one can get lost in symbolism and wander off into research, instead of experiencing the One Truth behind all the symbols and reaching to it, living it in simplicity and joy. The bowl is a circle with a center, the point within the circle, ancient symbol for the Great Source of All. The circle also represents the zodiac and the zodiacal cycles, the Arthurian Round Table, the Tibetan and Hindu Mandala, and the Amerindian Great Medicine Wheel.

The pipe stem also has many symbolic meanings, one of the most obvious being the magician's baton or rod, which must be fashioned of certain woods gathered in a certain way and consecrated for magical uses only....also a function of the pipe stem, to be a two-way line of communication between 'Those Above' and humankind.

SMUDGING

Smudging is the passing of smoke from sacred medicines over one's body or sacred object. The smoke is guided with prayers to the Creator to give thanks or ask for guidance. The traditional sacred smudging medicines of the Mi'kmaq are tobacco, sage, cedar and sweetgrass which are recognized to contain powerful medicinal properties and can be used alone or in combination. To smudge, dried herbs are lit in a shell or earthenware bowl and a feather is waved to prompt the smoke. If there is a ceremonial circle, the container is carried to every person to smudge themselves and any sacred items such as amulets, medicine bags or feathers so they can be used.

Braided sweetgrass is used as a smudge when a person feels sadness or grief, or for spiritual protection and purification. It is used in a sweat lodge as an offering to the grandfather stones and a blessing for the people. Mi'kmaq women traditionally use sweetgrass to make baskets, mats, rugs and bedding. (www.sacredpath.org/html/events/sweetgrass.html) Cedar is known as a source of cleansing, healing, and strength. Dried leaves are used for smudging and in sweat lodges people sit on branches of cedar.

Smudging with sage helps with letting go of negativity and with recognizing goodness in one's life. It is also known as a plant of wisdom and immortality and is beneficial for guiding one through the four stages of life – infant, youth, adult and Elder. Sage is a warming herb so it should not be used "if you are red faced, warm all of the time and of a very happy and optimistic disposition." Sage is a woman's medicine although pregnant and nursing women should not drink sage tea. There are more than 750 species of

sage and can be white, blue, black, purple or red. (www.geocities.com/RainForest/Andes/1029/Medicine)

SWEAT LODGE

In the sweat lodge ceremony people reveal themselves to the Supreme Being, who has many names, and in so doing, they reveal themselves to one another in an intimacy that must be respected. The circle within the lodge is the re-creation of the cosmos, so before the entire creation, you say what you have to say, do what you have to do, pray in the manner that you have to pray, cry if you have to, collapse if you have to. No one judges you or brings anything up to you afterward. It just happens that we might hear another's prayers in the lodge; it just happens that one person or another may be having a particularly hard time, for any number of reasons, and the rest of us support her (or him) with our prayers. Each of us knows that the next time it might be any one of us having the hard time. We know that we do not want the details of our life divulged in public; we are in the lodge because that is our safe space; it is our place of trust. And so I choose not to write about the sweat lodge ceremony, except in a general manner. (Irwin, 2000, p.15)

Like Irwin I also honour the sacredness and privacy of a sweat lodge. I have included the generally universal process of building a lodge as an indication of the ceremony which is inherently based in an understanding of the spiritual nature of the universe. The first step in the process of building a sweat lodge is to hand dig a fire pit. Holes are drilled in each of the four directions around the pit and willow saplings are inserted, bent over and tied together to form a low circular frame. Additional saplings are used to tie the frame horizontally. The frame is then covered with layers of heavy tarps or hides with the door facing east. Cedar boughs are then laid on the floor. The firekeeper, who stays until the sweat has finished, layers rocks and wood and in a tobacco ceremony gives thanks to the grandfathers (stones) which are giving up their lives in order to heal the participants.

The fire burns for a few hours to heat the grandfathers until they are red. At that time the participants crawl into the sweat lodge, the grandfathers are brought in one at a time by the firekeeper and medicines such as cedar or sage are placed on them. Water is poured over

the hot rocks by the leader to create steam. The leader begins the prayers and everyone has the opportunity to participate with their own prayers, healing requests or visions. Sacred objects are taken into the lodge and rattles are used and chants are sung. There are generally four rounds dedicated to the various needs of the participants and hot grandfathers are added at the beginning of each round.

This cleansing and purification process helps body, mind and spirit. There are integrated and/or segregated sweats for men and women. Women who are on their moontime are prohibited from participating as they are considered to be in their most powerful time and their energy could disrupt the proceedings. I knew from my own experience that the intensity of a sweat lodge can deplete all inner resources so the only thing to do is come out of the darkness and be an infant on the ground, reborn and energized. Rolling in snow is exhilarating.

A number of sweat lodges are offered at the annual powwow at Conne River. One ceremony in which I participated was led by a medicine man from Nova Scotia who did a number of ceremonies during my stay there. The Leader was strong, confident and proved himself able to handle a difficult situation. On one occasion a young man was very troubled and intrusive during the ceremony. The leader was very direct with him, told him he needed to be quiet, that he had to stop talking and learn to listen. The young man was told that his spirit and his body were separated and he should see a doctor. The leader had to keep telling him to be quiet. Other than that, there was wonderful singing and powerful prayers.

Children participated in the first round and I was holding and encouraging them to endure the heat, which was minimal because of their presence. The first round was for children, the second round for women, the third round, which was very hot, was for

purification. The fourth round consisted of prayers and the leader called in White Bear medicine to help with a personal healing. Another time I spent a lot of time holding a woman who spent most of the time crying. This is considered a major healing.

On the evening of Winter Solstice I happened to see an ad on the community TV channel for a sweat lodge at the Chief's home. I gathered my sweat lodge clothes and drove over. I got there as the fire keeper was placing hot rocks inside the lodge. I did not want to intrude into a sacred space so I stood behind a tree for a few minutes before walking back to the van. I heard the Chief's wife return home so I joined her for a cup of tea and offered her a box of clementine oranges. The next day Saqamaw Misel came to tell me that I should have told him I was there the previous night because I could have gone in to the sweat at any time. He assured me there would be another sweat so next time I shouldn't be so shy.

He then invited me to a sweat lodge on New Year's Eve. It started when I stood with the others by the fire while the Chief went into the lodge. A swatch was made with pine boughs to cleanse the grandfathers before the firekeeper passed them into the Chief. I was the only woman and held the position of the south door, the place of the grandmothers. The other three participants sat at each of the directions. The door was open while we put bear grease with herbs on areas of our bodies that were sore or hurt. The Chief warned us that it was smelly but I didn't find it so at all. The bear grease focused the heat of the sweat and helped heal some bruises which mostly disappeared. Then the door was shut, it became very dark and the ceremony began.

There are four rounds of prayers and the first was dedicated to the children. On that occasion we were all doing fine and made the decision to not open the door before the second round. Then we opened the door for drinking water and bringing in more hot grandfathers.

The last two rounds took more than two hours. After the sweat we went to the Chief's house for tea before going home. We agreed it was a wonderful way to end one year and begin another. But the celebrations were just beginning. After showering at home I went to the Great Hall to join the rest of the community for New Year's Eve festivities which included a feast followed by fireworks. I truly felt like part of the community that evening as many people hugged me at midnight. I left the Great Hall as Saqamaw Misel, his wife and another couple were leaving for sunrise ceremonies at Cape Spear. This is the most easterly location in North America and was the first place reached by the sun in the new millennium.

Shortly after this experience I was invited to participate in a sweat lodge with some guests of the Chief from St. John's. After we gathered by the sacred fire the Chief was the first to enter the lodge. Then the hot grandfathers were placed into the hole in the centre of the lodge. After many grandfathers were appropriately placed, the Chief honoured me by asking that I come in to sit at his right. The other women from St. John's sat to the south with me, and two younger women from the community sat on the north side with a few men. The first round was for the east door and for the children. The second round was for the women. At that point I was feeling very lightheaded and illish and left the sweat and stood by the firekeeper. I missed the third round which was for the spirit world. I did go back for the fourth round but lost my place and sat next to the door.

TALKING CIRCLE

Talking Circles, considered a sacred form of counselling, have been used for centuries by the Mi'kmaw. They are growing in importance in Mi'kmaq communities and are being used whenever there is a problem or crisis situation. A Talking Circle can be called by anyone for everyone to participate in. Different symbols, such as a walking stick, sweetgrass

braid, rock or a pipe are held during a Talking Circle to ensure that the person holding the symbol may speak without interruption. The pipe is most commonly used in an Elders' Talking Circle. (<http://mrc.uccb.ns.ca/oralhis.html>)

ANIMAL MEDICINE

The power and importance animal medicine became evident in an incident with Saqamaw Misel involving a bear claw. I had travelled with the Chief and his wife to the funeral of a young girl who had been brutally murdered in a Baie Verte Peninsula community. He said that during the service he had an epiphany about a major problem which had been bothering him. He suddenly realized that some unfortunate events could be directly linked to a bear claw which had been given to him the previous year. He suddenly saw that crisis situations developed in the lives of the people who came into contact with it. For example the person who gave him the bear claw had major family crises; his father died, his mother had a stroke and then he was sick. Then Saqamaw Misel developed a health problem. He went to a sacred cave in Nova Scotia to get some clay to make a protection figure and ask for guidance.

He saw that something had taken him off his spiritual path and he was doing things that he considered very unlike himself such as avoiding sweat lodges and spiritual celebrations. He realized it had been a mistake to give the bear claw to somebody else – whose life was also in turmoil. After his return from Nova Scotia he retrieved the bear claw and organized a sweat lodge. I was honoured to be able to participate in this powerful and very long ceremony and had the opportunity to hold the bear claw both before and after the sweat lodge and was aware that the negative presence had disappeared.

Because events that take place in a sweat lodge are confidential and kept within the lodge I can only say that experience was a powerful healing for all of us and we all felt honored to be in the circle. Our prayers were so full of heart it was awesome and one person spoke of it as one of the most powerful sweats they had ever been to. Everyone felt there was a great healing going on in the community. Some family problems were revealed and the people involved came out of the lodge and said they were ready to deal with the situation with an open heart. When I got home and looked in the mirror, my hair was plastered down on my head, my feet were steeped in mud and my sweat lodge clothes and towel filthy. I was truly thankful for the day and its many blessings.

WOMEN'S MEDICINE

The time of menstruation is considered sacred and women traditionally spent it in a moontime lodge, sometimes collecting the blood for use in ceremony. At the onset of menses a young woman is honoured at the new moon in a Moontime Ceremony. Having a child is considered a sacred and honoured tradition. Stories and legends honour all givers of life including Mother Earth and Grandmother Moon, whose responsibilities include controlling the tides of the sea and women's menstrual cycles. Brooke Medicine Eagle (1991) explains:

The feminine mystery teachings have been lost to several generations of women in many native cultures, and to many more generations in most European traditions. The puritanical attitudes of the missionary school teachers who had power over our native Elders often caused them to turn their faces away from the issues of the feminine, especially as they related to women's menses. Now this women's wisdom is coming back into our consciousness from the few remaining elders who carry it, from our inner questing, and from our practice of these teachings themselves. It has tremendous import for not only our spiritual practice, but also for our general health and physical well-being.

Native teachings, as well as those from ancient Eastern traditions, remind us of how important it is to our health, general vitality, and longevity to quiet ourselves during this time and to rest completely during the yin time of our menses. Our female bodies are doing extra work gathering the energy and life-force within our wombs so that a

child can be created there. This is released as we bleed, and yet we give little thought to how we can make up that energy loss. Native grandmothers tell us that we are damaging and aging ourselves unnecessarily by not attending to our natural cycles, and taking care of ourselves with rest and nurturing during this time. (pp. 327 & 329)

Chief Misel's grandmother Amelia Joe, after whom the Conne River Health Centre is named, was a midwife for some 50 years. She and Eve Collier from St. Alban's delivered most of the babies in the Bay d'Espoir area for more than half a century. Before the roads were built in 1965 they would travel by boat as far as Port Aux Basques for a delivery. A display at Bay d'Espoir Motel testified to Mrs. Collier's skill. Her license stated that she could practice midwifery "in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Public Welfare Act of 1931, and for so long as she observes strictly such provisions and the regulations made thereunder." She was known as Aunt Eve and, said the news item, she was "responsible for births of over 1200 children and has the record of never losing a mother or baby – one to be envied even by doctors."

Molly McDonald, a respected Conne River Elder, also provided midwifery services. She no longer delivers babies and Amelia Joe and Eve Collier died as very old women. The last midwife home birthing was about 40 years ago and the midwife was in her 70s. Nurses from Conne River now travel with the ambulance on the two hour drive to the closest hospital which is located in Grand Falls/Windsor. They don't always get there on time and babies have been born in the ambulance. Because the birthing facility is relatively close there is not the problem experienced by women in northern Manitoba Native communities who sometimes have to spend weeks away from their homes awaiting delivery, explained University of Manitoba doctoral candidate Shirley Hiebert in personal conversations.

SUN DANCE

Since the mid-1970s growing numbers of Mi'kmaqs have found inspiration in a cultural mélange of ecospiritual belief and ritual. This neotraditional mélange includes some pan-Indian elements, as well as 'New Age' thought and what is some times called 'born-again primitivism.' Some of the most vital spiritual components, however, can be traced directly to western tribal cultures such as the Cree, Ojibway, and even Lakota (Sioux). They include adopted traditions (vision quests, sweetgrass burning, and drumming, etc.) as well as ceremonies similar to lost Mi'kmaq traditions (the sweat lodge and the sacred pipe). In recent years these neotraditional ceremonies have become quite popular among Mi'kmaqs and their Wabanaki neighbors. A few Mi'kmaqs have even embraced the Plains Indian ritual of the Sun Dance, stirring some controversy on their reserves. (Prins 1996, p. 206)

In the Lakota tradition a man would commit to a Sun Dance if his prayer for help in an emergency or illness was answered. At the appointed time, everyone who made this commitment stayed in a large tipi and fasted for several days in order to access dreams and visions. At the ceremony the Shaman or Medicine Man would cut two pairs of slits in the men's back or chest and pull a leather thong through each pair of slits. The men then did the Sun Dance, one at a time. The thongs in their skin were tied to two ropes that hung from the centre pole in the Sun Dance circle and he was often suspended in midair. Sometimes he stood on the ground and pulled on the ropes as he performed the dance. The test of his honour and bravery was to tear the thongs out of his skin without screaming or crying out. The lifetime scars were a sign of great honour.

Government officials banned this spiritual practice until about 20 years ago. (www.142.27.12.158/~munro/sundance.htm) While I was at a powwow at Conne River I was invited to, but was not able to attend, a Sun Dance in the traditional Mi'kmaq community of Big Cove, NB. Although it is not a traditional Mi'kmaq event, it has been held there on the full moon in July for about 15 years. Men from other Bands also participate in the piercing ceremony and the preparatory traditions such as fasting.

It was explained to me that to host a Sun Dance is a very serious commitment to a traditional lifestyle, and that healers from all over North America participate in order to celebrate the revival of traditional Native practices³². Women do not participate in the Sun Dance though they can observe. One Mi'kmaq woman commented: "Giving birth is the woman's sun dance."

DEATH AND MOURNING

Death and mourning practices at Conne River now follow the Roman Catholic precepts as they have for most of the 20th Century. However, one Elder remembered part of a ceremony from his childhood after his uncle died. "The bad sins was washed off his body and the 'merner's' wore a black armband for six months. It was okay to sing but no cards. 'Mernin' is for six months to a year for the one what's gone." He explained that women especially wear black clothes and pray every day. If a mother dies, the grandmother or someone close brings up the child. Traditional beliefs maintain that one's spirit lives forever as a transparent light aura that cannot be weighed or measured.

You know when you are going to die and they teach us not to be afraid of death, because it is just a change. Our souls can not burn, and we pay much respect to that... because the Native person was not afraid of death. He knew of that other plane of existence, where life continues after the change called death...So, it was an honour and a privilege to die, different from suicide. (Knockwood, 1987, p. 6)

Traditional songs are sung to honour the spirit world or deceased community members and a going away song assures "nemoltesk" which in Mi'kmaq means we'll see you again. Feasts, usually accompanied by drumming and dancing, are an important component of traditional Native ceremonies which can be for family, individuals or the

³² This information was from a conversation with a woman from another Mi'kmaq Band who has seen the scars left by the piercing at Big Cove. I have seen the scars of a piercing done at a march in Washington, DC.

community to honour special events such as birth, marriage, death, a first tooth, powwows or to welcome visitors. Gilbert Sewell, Mi'kmaq historian and storyteller, explains the idea of life as the preparation for entry into the spirit world on his 1997 CD ROM:

The Micmacs believed they came from Mother Earth and were children of the sun; as were all living things. They believed that a higher power called the creator was responsible for all life. They believed that animals, plants, stars, rivers, the ancestors that came before them, the sun, the moon, the winds, all had powerful spirits that influenced their lives. They believe that life is a journey through a world which is both visible and invisible.

A world where the forces of evil and good are forever present. The elders say that the journey through life prepares us for our entry into the spirit world. The challenges met along the way are actually opportunities to grow, to strengthen and to learn. When the challenges are great, the elders are called upon to act as guides. Through ancient knowledge and ways, the elders offer glimpses into the spirit world and the forces at work therein. This has been the way of the Micmac for thousands of years.

SHARED MEDICINE TEACHINGS

Crystals and small stones are great repositories of Power. In 1675, LeClercq inventoried the contents of a Micmac shaman's medicine-pouch. In it was a stone the size of a nut wrapped in a box which he called (its) house. The shaman used to press his stone against his solar plexus and will it to bring him good hunting. (Whitehead, 1988, p. 21)

My first connection with Saqamaw Misel was with the semi-precious gemstone rose quartz. At the time he knew about the power of gem stones and crystals though he was not familiar with their individual characteristics. When I arrived at Conne River in 1999 he told me that he had kept the large piece of rose quartz beside his bed and derived great comfort from being able to touch it. He had broken off some small chunks to give to needy people. I explained that it's not a good idea to break the crystals or gemstones into small pieces as it alters the integrity of the large piece and its power changes.

I then gave him several smaller pieces of rose quartz and other gemstones which he passed on to those he felt would benefit from the energy. He talked about difficulties in the community with people accepting traditional ways. I then presented him with a large piece of

Brazilian amethyst which resonates at a high vibrational spiritual frequency. He gave me a package of ground cedar and explained that I should burn it with sage or sweetgrass or sage and tobacco or I could leave it as an offering with tobacco.

One day Saqamaw Misel came to my office at the Clinic and asked me to teach him about energy healing. He said he knew this kind of thing used to be done at Conne River by Mi'kmaq people but no one around there knew anything about it any more. He said that the teachings were never passed on and since I was living in the community he would appreciate the knowledge and it did not matter that I was not Mi'kmaq. In exchange he offered to teach me about anything I wanted to know and he would show me the Seven Sacred Medicines.

On another occasion he came to view the gemstone collection that I had taken to Heart Hill for a women's retreat. We talked about the stones that correspond to the seven energy centres, chakras, of the human body. He commented on the importance of the number seven in Native traditions and asked for a set of the chakra gemstones. I gave him two of each of the stones as he was going to pass them onto someone else. During my time at Conne River Saqamaw Misel and I had several conversations about the properties and uses of various gemstones. In one discussion he told me about a young man in the community with cancer and he chose a piece of blue lace agate to take to him. Saqamaw Misel said he performs healing circles with a sick person and their family, and he described one incident which involved a man who was very angry with everyone when he got sick. After a few healing circles he was able to release the anger and was peaceful when he died. Another person was holding a piece of rose quartz when he died peacefully. The Chief said he told people they weren't trying to cure the cancer, but to be at peace when they died.

He also spoke about the importance of foot massage and said when someone is sick or dying the tradition is to massage the feet. He said the Mi'kmaq consider the feet important because they are the connection of the body to Mother Earth. He said the foot massage was relaxing and allowed the person to forget their illness for a few minutes. He also mentioned it was a humbling experience and said "you can't be into ego when rubbing someone's feet." In my own work with cancer and AIDS patients I also worked with the feet first because the bottom of the feet have points that correspond to various organs and internal areas so to rub the feet stimulates and relaxes the rest of the body.

Saqamaw Misel told me of his experience of coming out of a session with a cancer patient and having a severe back pain. He commented that it isn't easy doing healing work with dying patients. I added that doing the work hurt my heart and he nodded in agreement. Chief Misel mentioned to me that he had been getting headaches since doing this intense healing work and attuning to higher frequency vibrations. I know that these headaches are not uncommon and are part of the process of changing vibration and many people get them and suggested that protection with light energy is helpful.

PLANT MEDICINE TEACHINGS

In discussing medicines it is important to note that although they are considered theirs by the Mi'kmaq of Conne River, it is not within the scope of this paper to determine if they were used by others in Newfoundland or by Mi'kmaq in other parts of Atlantic Canada and United States, or if the use of medicines reflects their availability in local growing areas. It is impossible to know if these medicines were used before European contact some 500 years ago, or to know if others in Newfoundland use or have used these same medicines. Most Conne River people consider themselves Newfoundlanders as well as Mi'kmaq so it is

impossible to differentiate between Newfoundland remedies and Mi'kmaq traditions without comparing the medicines used by Mi'kmaq in other parts of Atlantic Canada.

The People traditionally used medicines from plant, animal and marine sources to treat a variety of illnesses. The medicines, their uses and traditional gathering and hunting methods described herein are compiled from both informal meetings and interviews with Saqamaw Misel, Elders and others, and from various written sources. Knockwood (1992) explains:

The words psyche, mind, spirit and soul, are synonymous for they all mean the same thing. When the Spirit is weak, the body is more susceptible to disease. Therefore, herbal medicines and holy rituals work hand in hand. (p. 2)

It is a Native tradition for a medicine person to pass on the knowledge of plant medicines through oral teachings. In the traditional way I was taken into the bush by Saqamaw Misel to receive some of these teachings. He said that nobody taught him about medicines as they were used in everyday life when he was growing up. On our walk I had a tape recorder in my bag in order to assure the accuracy of my note-taking. When I asked his permission to use it he said leave it in the bag and he'd repeat any information if I didn't understand it. I paid close attention and wrote some notes after we left the site.

We went for a walk through the bush then along the shore of the Bay. The black flies that were swarming me didn't bother him at all. He said others in the community had the same immunity and some were plagued by the insects' dive-bombing tactics. He showed me many medicines and how they are collected and explained their uses. He reinforced the idea that great care has to be taken when using plant medicines in combination or when afflicted with various health problems.

For example, mixing Labrador tea and mint will exacerbate high blood pressure, but mint alone will reduce high blood pressure.³³ We sat by the shore and he talked about what he knows to be the “real” healing. He said that we have forgotten how to be kind and how to touch people and this is one of the most important ways to heal – how we touch others and talk to others. “Kindness and caring will help people feel better. My vision is for myself and others in the community to be kind to each other.” He pointed out that the medicinal properties are not only in the components of leaves and bark of the plant medicines, but they reflect how they are picked. “This shows how we relate not only to the plants, but to each other. It might be a touch or a look or how you make somebody feel. That’s the real healing.”

One day Vice-Chief Rembert Jeddore pulled up beside me when I was parked at McDonald’s Field, site of the annual powwow and many other community events. We chatted for awhile then he disclosed that he used various herbs and barks for medicine when growing up. He didn’t describe them but he did offer to take me for a walk around one of the trails. He suggested the trail up the hill overlooking the site that had been brushed by his grounds crew in a job creation program a few years ago as it is possible to see very far from the top. I assumed he was going to show me the medicines he remembered but he asked me to show him the medicines because he was interested in finding out about them. I told him I didn’t know enough about it and he suggested that we would go with the Chief. There was no opportunity for this to happen. Caduto (1995) explains that Native traditions do not take plants for granted:

They are life and we, as human beings, owe our continued existence on this earth to the plants. In the European way of thinking, plants are objectified. A plant may be

³³ A Mohawk Medicine Woman explained that a plant can have up to six names depending on the season, on what part is picked, what each section of the plant is used for and how it is administered. She suggested Medicine People are needed to bring the teachings to the community.

useful, decorative or a weed. Plants are unaware, without feelings and meant to be manipulated – cut like a lawn or a tree, harvested like the fruits and vegetable in our orchards and gardens or labeled as nuisances and rooted out. In the Native way of thinking though, the plant people are as aware and as deserving of respect as are those living beings that do not have roots – such as humans. It goes further, however than just our attitude toward the plants. In Native traditions, the plants interact with human beings on a more active basis. Just as in Native Stories human people and animal people are able to communicate freely with each other and even walk in each other's worlds, so too the plants are able to speak with human beings and enter their lives in a variety of ways. (p. xix)

TABLE 2 – MALADIES AND REMEDIES

The maladies are listed in alphabetical order followed by the remedies and how they are gathered, prepared, and used. Information is from texts and personal conversations.

APPETITE	Cherry Bark – used to increase the appetite.
BEE STINGS	<p>Mud – Saqamaw Misel showed me a special “silken” mud that’s good for bee stings and keeping off flies. After collecting the mud he tied a ceremonial red prayer tie onto a nearby tree to give thanks to Mother Earth. There were two other ties on the tree that looked like they had been there for a long time. During my studies with Lakota Medicine man Wallace Black Elk in Aspen, CO, I learned to make prayer ties and had one with me on the walk with the Chief. After asking his permission I also added my tie to the tree to give thanks for this medicine.</p> <p>Tobacco –crush and wet the plant with your saliva then place on the sting. Let it dry and it will pull out the stinger and no swelling will occur.</p>
BOWELS	Ground Juniper – Grind and steep. “Good for the bowels.”
BROKEN BONES	<p>Perhaps the most interesting part of Mi’kmaq magic is connected with the mystic and medicinal herbs. Seven of these are boiled together in water to “constitute a magical potion of great potency.” (Mackey, 1986; Jackson, 1993, p. 147)</p> <p>The Seven Medicines (Seven Sorts) are useful for any type of pain, infection, broken bones or bruises. The following are examples of three ingredient lists:</p> <p>i. Alum bark (vikpe), hornbeam (owelikch), beeches (soomooseeel), wild willow (elemojeechmokse), wild blackberry</p>

(waqwonuminokse), ground hemlock (kastuk), red spruce (kowotmonokse)

ii. Cherry bark, *Prunus pensylvanica* L. f.; Beaver root, *Nuphar variegatum*; Dogwood, *Cornus stolonifera* Michx.; Pussy willows, *Salix discolor* Muhl. and *Salix bebbiana* Sarg; ground juniper, *Junipers horizontals* Moench; Alder rod, *Alunus crispa* (Ait.) pursh; Elk rod.

iii. inner cherry bark, *Prunus pensylvanica* L.f.; hornbeam; beech; wild willow; wild blackberry, *Rupus* spp.; ground hemlock, red spruce.

There are a number of ways to prepare this medicine. The following instructions for the gathering and preparation of the sacred Seven Medicines are for list ii. This reflects the interconnectedness of the people with the cycles of nature and a consciousness of their place in the universe.

Take equal amounts of bark from the first five trees, and the roots from the last two trees (the roots and bark must be gathered in the order given). All the ingredients must be gathered in the autumn.

The trunk of every tree is divided into four sections, one section of the tree faces the sun between midnight and sunrise; another section of the trunk faces the sun at dawn; the third section faces the sun at noon; and the fourth section of the trunk faces the sun at sunset.

At forenoon one must cut the bark from the section of the tree divided by the sun from sunrise to noon, but no further. This quarter of the tree is most favored with good omens. Medicine gathered from this quarter will yield the best results in medicine. It is believed the sunlight purifies the side of the tree trunk it touches, but the shadow part of the tree is hostile and if gathered from a certain section at the wrong time (when the sun is not facing it) it is useless as a medicine and could be poisonous.

The roots gathered from the remaining two trees must be sectioned off in the same manner and if gathered at noon, the roots must be dug and collected from the section facing the sun from sunrise to noon.

For Internal Use: Steep the five barks and two roots, then drink the tea.

For External Use: Boil the mixture until a black molasses-like substance remains. Smear this plaster onto the body where it is needed. The plaster may be held in place with a cloth or paper and should not be removed until the injury is healed or pain is gone.

BRUISES	<p>Follow same procedure as for broken bones.</p> <p>Big shiny leaf alder – take several leaves, put on area of body that has a problem. The leaves curl and turn brown at the edges. Keep replacing the leaves until they no longer turn brown. “Then the person is cured or feels better.”</p>
COLDS	<p>a) Beaver Gall – Used as a preventive. Make a broth from the gall of the first beaver killed and hot water. Drink the broth. The gall is not good if the beaver just ate spruce.</p> <p>b) Beaver Root (Pagosi) Nymphaeaceae Nuphar variegatum- Common medicine used to cure many illnesses including sore throats, sore mouth, colds, cramps and kidney stones. Boil root in water, drink the broth.</p> <p>c) Cherry bark – Prunus pensylvanica L.f - Commonly used medicine for coughs, colds and as a general tonic. Boil the bark for a long time in water. Drink the tea.</p> <p>*Warning* This medicine is not recommended for children. Children who have eaten large quantities of fruit without removing the pits, or chewed on the twigs have died These parts of the plant liberate hydrocyanic acid (prussic acid) into the stomach. (Mackey, 1986)</p> <p>d) Goose grease – Useful for sore muscles, chest infections and earaches. Heat the grease and rub it on the chest or sore muscles. For earaches, the grease is warmed then placed into the aching ear.</p> <p>e) Moose Marrow – Mix moose marrow with the juices from boiled cherry bark and drink the mixture. This is mostly used for babies with a very bad cold (see Warning)</p> <p>f) Tansy Tanacetum vulgare – Good medicine for headaches and colds. Drink a tea from the leaves when you have a cold. Bind the tansies to your head with a cloth when you have a headache.</p>
COLIC	<p>Cherry Bark – Steep the bark and rub the warm medicine on the baby’s stomach.</p>
COUGH	<p>a) Cherry bark Prunus pensylvanica L.f. - Use as for colds (see previous warning)</p> <p>b) Cherries - Make a syrup from the fruit and drink it to stop a cough or to flavor other medicine.</p> <p>c) Molasses and Peppermint - Mix together and drink to help stop a cough.</p>

CRAMPS	Beaver Root - <i>Nuphar variegatum</i> - Prepare and use as for colds.
CUTS AND WOUNDS	<p>a) Puffs - (Horse Farts) - Helps to stop wounds from bleeding. Squeeze out the brown powder when ripe and apply onto the wound. Puffs are found on the grass during the summer. There are less of them today than in the past.</p> <p>b) Turpentine (gum or myrrh from trees) - Burn the turpentine then place it on the cut so that the flesh sticks together and the bleeding stops.</p> <p>c) Balsam Fir - Liquid bubbles on the bark, sometimes mixed with blood and bandaged, used to seal cuts. "It would be better in a couple of days."</p>
DIARRHEA	Balsam Fir, <i>Abies balsamea</i> (L.) Mill. Use the small top seven limbs to make the best medicine. Boil in water then drink the broth.
EARACHE	<p>a) Eel grease - Warm the grease slightly then place it into the aching ear. "Available year round since many people store eels." No longer true.</p> <p>b) Goose grease - Follow the same instructions as for the eel grease.</p> <p>c) Tobacco - Take a puff off of smoke and gently blow it into the affected ear.</p>
ECZEMA	Widdy Tree, <i>Populus tremuloides</i> Michx., Boil the leaves for a long time then bathe the infected area. The eczema should turn into black scabs that eventually fall off. There are few widdy trees but people seem to always know where they can get the leaves.
EYES	<p>Night Blindness - Eat rabbit liver to help prevent night blindness.</p> <p>Snow-blindness - a) Birchbark - Cut little holes into bark and put over eyes. b) Cover eyes with dark cloth you can see through while out in the sun.</p> <p>c) Spruce boughs - Hang boughs from your hat to shade eyes.</p> <p>d) Tea leaves - Lie down and place tea leaves over your eyes. Stay out of the sun for two or three days. Tea leaves will also draw out objects from the eye.</p>
FLU	Salt pork - put in brown paper and place on chest.

HEADACHE	<p>a) Alder Leaves <i>Alnus crispa</i> (Ait.) Pursh - Bind the leaves to the aching head and keep them there until the headache is gone.</p> <p>b) Tansy <i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> - Bind the tanzies to your head with a cloth when you have a headache. Drink a tea from the leaves for a cold.</p> <p>c) White Spruce - <i>Picea glauca</i> (Moench) Voss - Boil the bark until it is stripped of its contents. Drink the broth.</p>
HELPFUL HINTS	<p>Light – Salt pork cut into strips with a stick and lit. Cod liver oil used as a torch or light (“It would stink though!”)</p> <p>Mocassins – were worn daily and made from first caribou of the season with sinew used for thread and the shank used to make the heel.</p>
INFECTION	<p>a) Seven Sorts - Boil the seven medicines for a long time, until a little bit is left. Place a small amount of the medicine onto a piece of paper or cloth and fasten it to where the infection or pain is.</p> <p>b) Goose grease - Heat the grease and rub it on the infected person's chest.</p> <p>c) Pork - Place a large piece of pork on the infected chest. Leave it there for awhile and the person will soon feel better.</p>
KIDNEY/KIDNEY STONES	<p>Also, for water pains, bad water or infection of the water.</p> <p>a) Beaver Root (pagosi) <i>Nuphar variegatum</i> - Prepare and use as for colds.</p> <p>b) Ground juniper <i>Juniperus horizontalis</i> Moench - Boil the ground juniper for a long time in water. This for urinary infections.</p> <p>c) Shell and Fish Head – Scrape out the fish head then fill the shell from the fish head with the scrapings. Boil this substance then drink. (These salt-water fish are no longer found in Bay d’ Espoir.)</p>
MEASLES	<p>Sheep manure - Wrap the manure in a cloth, then steep it like tea. Do not squeeze the cloth. Once it is ready remove the manure in the cloth and drink the tea without sugar or milk.</p>
MENSTRUATION	<p>Sage tea promotes menses (menses) as it stimulates the uterus. Do not give to children under two.</p>

SORE MOUTH	<p>a) Beaver root (pagosi) Nuphar variegatum - Prepare and use as for colds.</p> <p>b) Yellow root – Boil root until juices are steamed from it. Drink broth.</p>
SORE MUSCLES	Goose grease - Warm the grease then rub the sore muscles.
SORE THROAT	<p>a) Beaver root (pagosi) Nuphar variegatum - Prepare and use as for colds.</p> <p>b) Indian tobacco - Chew this tobacco raw.</p> <p>c) Molasses and kerosene – Mix a small amount of kerosene with molasses and drink.</p> <p>d) Pork - Place pork into a sock then wrap the sock around the throat. For chest infections place a large piece of pork on the chest and leave it there for awhile.</p> <p>e) Yellow root - Prepare and use as for a sore mouth.</p> <p>f) Cherry bark (the inner green) for sore throats - boil it up and drink it. salt pork - in brown paper on chest for flu or around neck for sore throat.</p>
TEAS	<p>Indian (Labrador) Tea – fuzzy back of elongated leaf. “Just a tea.”</p> <p>Spruce Tea – steep twigs and needles in water.</p> <p>Newfoundland Mint – little leaves with white berries growing as ground cover.</p>
TONIC	White birch and yellow birch mixed is witch hazel. Green inside the bark is a good pick-me-up tonic in the spring.
TOOTH ACHES	Pipe gunk or miners liniment used on a toothache.
ULCER	Balsam Fir mixed with milk used for ulcer medicine.
WARTS	A community member heals warts by putting her hand over them. “But she doesn’t understand how this works – it just does.”

WORMS	Cherry Bark can be used. See warning.
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POWWOW

The first powwow at Conne River was held in conjunction with the International Conference on Traditional Medicine and Healing in 1996. Although people in the community were interested there was little knowledge about traditional dances, regalia and drumming at the time. The central drumming area was constructed with posts and beams and covered with cedar boughs. Individual circles of chairs were provided for each band within the structure. Dancers circled around the structure for ceremonial dances such as the Jingle, Shawl or Grass dances.

Traditional dancers, drummers and food providers also came from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Traditional foods such as mooseburgers, moose nose, salmon and caribou were provided by Conne River cooks for a free daily feast. Activities included sunrise and Grand Entry ceremonies, sweat lodges, drumming, singing and dancing. A sacred fire was kept going by men during the duration of the powwow. Women provided water for the firekeepers, dancers, drummers and singers. Foods and traditional crafts were available at private booths set up around the dance circle.

I arrived in the community to do the research in time for the fourth annual powwow in 1999. By then it had gained popularity and there was great enthusiasm for the event that was drawing people from many other Mi'kmaq communities. During the year preceding the powwow the women in the Conne River Craft Shop designed and created regalia for many people in the community from children to elders. Traditional dances were taught by a young woman who studied at other reserves. Many women from the community provided big pots

of moose and caribou stew in addition to salads, breads, drinks and desserts for the hundreds of participants. The major meal was served every evening; first to Elders, then to drummers and singers, and finally to everyone else. Alcohol was not permitted on site and this was universally respected.

The night before the powwow people gathered to help with last minute arrangements and to socialize. I was able to visit with the Chief who was doing a sweat lodge in preparation for the upcoming event. He welcomed me and I had the opportunity to ask his opinion about sending partridge feathers to my Hopi friend in Arizona. He suggested mailing them and hope that they would get through customs. He told me that there was a dancer coming from Alaska who was anticipating trouble getting his regalia across the border because eagle feathers were involved. Then he was called back into the sweat lodge. Later that evening I met a man in the parking lot who told me he was from Oklahoma. He said he met Chief Joe in Alaska and came to this powwow in order to provide the official documentation for the eagle feathers of the Alaskan dancer to be brought across the border into Canada.

During the powwow many people visited the sacred fire to say personal prayers with tobacco that was available for offerings. People went to the four directions around the fire holding up tobacco before throwing it into the fire. Many smudged with the sweetgrass braid that was also available. During one visit the fire keeper told me about various healing remedies they remembered. I learned that the secret to taking beaver gall for flu protection in the fall was to eat beaver root first. "It tastes so bad the beaver gall just slips down." He promised me a beaver gall but it did not happen. Saqamaw Misel joined us at the fire and

stood beside me for a conversation about various ceremonies. He said the powwow was the highlight of his year and he really looked forward to it.

The Fifth Annual Powwow in 2000 was held in conjunction with another International Traditional Healing Conference co-sponsored by the Band Council and MUN Faculty of Medicine. I was on the planning committees for both events. The Healing Conference was attended by traditional medicine people from across Canada, many of whom I spoke to by phone and for whom I made travel arrangements. Several of these people expressed to me concern about lack of communication from the committee as they weren't sure about the kinds of arrangements that had been made for them. I spent many hours on the phone reassuring them that the event was indeed happening and they were assured of appropriate accommodations and transportation to our remote location.

An Elder who came from western Canada gave us an example of cultural differences she encountered in her travels. She said when she got to the airport to check in she was told she wasn't old enough for the reduced fare that had been arranged for her. She explained that she has been a Elder since she was recognized by her Band as having special gifts when she was five years old. The airport agent insisted that she pay the difference for a full ticket price because she wasn't old enough to qualify as an Elder.

My plans to present a workshop at the Conference did not work out as I was kept busy giving support to other participants. My roommate and I billeted a presenter from England and a Native woman and her husband I knew from Ontario, who were also presenting. I went with them to the Opening Ceremonies of the Powwow on Friday and that was the last time we participated in any of the activities. During the afternoon I fell and injured my shoulder so I was not able to complete my obligations to the powwow committee.

The next day when I was about to leave for the powwow site I discovered that the couple had taken my van without my knowledge. They didn't return until evening.³⁴ On the third day we left for Gander before Grand Opening ceremonies. It was unsettling because I had been looking forward to the gathering of friends, the dancing, drumming and ceremony. My heart was at the powwow and I felt played by coyote (the trickster).

SCHOOL MINI-POWWOW

An annual mini-powwow is held in the spring at St. Anne's School. All of the community was invited to attend, as well as students from Grand Falls/Windsor and Bishop's Falls who had to travel three hours to get there for the 9:30 a.m. Grand March and the Chief's welcome. Saqamaw Misel and Vice-Chief Rembert then led the flag bearers around the drumming circle. They were followed by the children and others from the community dressed in their traditional regalia. One woman was dressed in deer skin and a couple wore matching black and white regalia trimmed with long fringes and headpieces made with fur and feathers. One man wore ankle bells over his deerskin chaps, a skin jacket and rose-embroidered loin cloth. There were many pre-school children, most dressed in regalia such as moccasins, ribbon shirt and loin cloth.

The Mi'kmaq language teacher was the master of ceremonies though it was difficult to understand him because of poor acoustics in the gym. There were numerous songs with people invited into the circle for various dances such as those in regalia or those under age seven. The drumming, singing and dancing went on for two hours followed by a community feast. There was much anticipation for the upcoming summer powwow.

³⁴ They spent the day driving to the south shore looking for signs of moose or other wildlife. All they saw was elephants – the circus was in Harbour Breton that day.

ST. ANNE'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

St. Anne, mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus, has been the patron saint of all the Mi'kmaw since the 1600s. Those at Conne River have celebrated St. Anne's Day every July 26th for decades in ceremonies that are similar in all Mi'kmaq communities. The following description by Prins (1996) indicates cultural overlaps.

Vestiges of the past could be seen at St. Anne's among older Mi'kmaqs, who still used prayer books printed in the traditional hieroglyphic script and who sang hymns in their native tongue. And after the age-old procession in which the cross and the image of St. Anne were carried from the church to the great iron cross on the knoll, the grand chief still offered a sermon. (p. 204)

A Conne River Elder remembered St. Anne's Day as the major holy day of the summer. "One time St. Anne's was very holy. We used to have parties but there was no drinking – we didn't have any booze." Another memory was a joyful procession to the church. "The band played and the Micmac flag was raised before everyone attended mass." My first experience was to participate in a mass at the school because the new church was still under construction. Now about 250 attend at the church. In the ceremony at the school, flags were placed on poles around the church and at the end of the service the statue of St. Anne was held at the head a procession around the church. People carried home-made flags with red crosses on a white field. Afterwards lunches were sold in the Great Hall amidst much excitement in anticipation of the day's activities.

During the afternoon the celebrations continued with games and activities for all ages at McDonald's field. When I arrived at the field the parking lot was filled with cars carrying cases of beer. There were a couple of hundred people, most of whom were drinking and many who were drunk. In one instance a young lad playing ball was asked by a woman holding a beer if he was drinking. He teetered back and forth as he said "Oh yah, I'm pretty drunk now." The binge drinking exemplifies Shkilnyk's (1985) report that Aboriginal

drinking is a social activity and “drinking is a family affair.” (p. 21) I was struck by the contrast to the powwow which is based in a tradition of respect and honour and where there is no alcohol. Two young women later commented on how special they felt their experience had been at the recent powwow. They were ready to leave the St. Anne’s Day event in order to be off the roads “with all that drinking going on.”

Several community members commented that the Roman Catholic celebration is diminishing every year and the powwow is taking over as the big event of the summer.

Challenged by Mi’kmaq advocating a return to native spirituality, the Catholic church has initiated new efforts to be culturally relevant. In 1992 Father Haskell, an Ojibway priest, was invited to celebrate Mass at Chapel Island during St. Anne’s. Blending Catholic rituals with pan-Indian ceremonies of sweetgrass burning and peace pipe smoking, the priest pronounced at sunrise Mass: ‘I bless you from the grandfathers, the grandmother earth, and all our relatives.’ (Prins 1996, p. 207)

This chapter has provided a sense of the ceremonies and traditions as remembered by Elders and others from Conne River, other Mi’kmaq communities and written sources. There is no doubt that the focus of Indigenous spirituality is a connection to the land. The general information herein is meant to present a perspective on some of the components of traditional Mi’kmaq spirituality. This work cannot be construed as definitive in any way. Although I am barely scratching the surface of traditional knowledge, it is in no way meant to reveal secrets or present a picture of how it “should” be.

At Conne River the struggle towards a traditional understanding of health issues is mired in the community’s desire for Western medicine. Because of their lack of knowledge about traditional medicines and ceremonies, and the fact that there have been no shamans or medicine people in the community in modern times, residents have doubt about their value and efficacy so they demand Western medicines which are provided free to them.

DISCUSSION

Through the process of living with the community of Miawpukek First Nation I have come to understand the profound effects of colonialism on the lives of Indigenous Peoples. The church and state mandate to eliminate all trace of their existence has succeeded in many ways. The people of Conne River, as are Aboriginal Peoples everywhere, divided by dissention amongst themselves and by government rules and regulations that are reinforced by a colonial system that is comprised of many different strategies and techniques.

“These strategies and techniques are a maladroitness manifestation by colonialists of their inherited European culture and values,” writes Henderson (in Battiste, 2000). The lawyer further explicates that colonialists saw their work as a continuation of the idea of an artificial society created by 17th Century European thinkers. He writes:

In remote places, they constructed colonialism on their heritage of Eurocentricism, universality and a strategy of difference. In the process, they either rejected or overlooked the Crown’s vision of treaty commonwealth in international law...An understanding of these competing components will allow Indigenous peoples to understand the nature of postcolonial self-determination, its movements, visions, and projects. (p. 57)

Since the 1970s, some Indigenous peoples have been coming to understand that their heritage encompasses a unique world view and that self-determination also includes the right to practice their spirituality on a viable land base. As a consequence of understanding both political and economic factors there is a growing attentiveness to the organization of health care services as well as health status. Satzewich (2000) writes that: “Native Leaders and organizations building upon the anger produced by the immediate experience of widespread ill health and suffering, have made health issues a major focus within their demands for official recognition of Aboriginal rights and self-government.” (p. 162)

The federal funding agency, Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), instituted an on-line discussion in the spring of 2003 when its Board of Directors requested staff to develop Aboriginal research as a priority area. They launched a multi-stage public dialogue with all stakeholders “interested in research on, for and by Aboriginal peoples.” There were more than 500 from Aboriginal, academic, government and non-government organizations who participated in this Dialogue on Research and Aboriginal Peoples. SSHRC’s primary mandate is the promotion of knowledge opportunities through collaborative initiatives such as creating research partnerships with Aboriginal communities and strategic investment in research capacity. In the *SSHRC Discussion Paper – Draft, July 17, 2003*, there is strong support for research in Aboriginal systems of knowledge.

The Draft reflects a clear shift away from the ways in which research is understood and organized in relation to Aboriginal peoples...Aboriginal research is fast becoming a *method* of study more than an *area* of study. In its emerging conception, ‘Aboriginal research’ is research that derives its dynamic from traditions of thought and experience developed among and in partnership with Aboriginal nations in Canada and other parts of the world. (p. 3)

The major factors that appeared to impede positive and full development of research potential were issues of equity and promotion of knowledge. This includes lack of career opportunities for Aboriginal scholars; lack of respect for Aboriginal Peoples and their knowledge traditions; lack of research benefits to Aboriginal communities, and lack of Aboriginal control over intellectual and cultural property.

This reflects the findings reported by O’Neil, Reading et al. (1998) on the responses of Aboriginal health technicians in workshops conducted in 1994 by the Northern Health Research Unit at the University of Manitoba. The initial prevailing sentiment was that “Aboriginal communities have been researched to death” and there was “critical resistance” by the Aboriginal participants to further research. However, their views changed and they

were willing to consider a health survey if Aboriginal peoples controlled all aspects of the study including funding, administration, questionnaire design, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information. It was most important to them that this survey be trustworthy at the community level and that resources be used effectively and appropriately. “Aboriginal people who were deeply familiar with the Aboriginal community must design the questions. Interpretation and analysis of information must also be guided by Aboriginal approaches to knowledge development.” (p. 232)

Although all these guidelines could not be encompassed by this dissertation, the spirit of both survey results have been among the guiding principles of this research – the topic was suggested by community members and their voices have been expressed throughout. This dissertation has been done as a unique contribution to Mi’kmaq ethnography. I have shown how the colonization of the people of Miawpukek First Nation is a microcosm of the colonization of Indigenous peoples worldwide. The politicizing process of the 1970s that happened at Conne River has now been documented to be congruent with global Aboriginal momentum of claiming and honouring traditional heritage and spiritual practices. I have compiled some basic philosophical and practical guidelines for a beginning to understand the breadth and scope of their unique cosmology.

I have also shown there is a need for nutritional consciousness now that year-round road access to the community allows easy availability of the prepackaged, over-processed and chemically-laden items that fill shelf space in grocery stores in the Bay d’ Espoir area. Dr. Shaun Hains of Edmonton commented in an e.mail on the current farming practices that are influencing the food of millions. She wrote about her particular concerns about the impact on children from genetic modification, DDT, other pesticides and inorganic

fertilizers. This is certainly relevant to Miawpukek First Nation as there is very little fresh food and no organic food commercially available in or around the community. She wrote:

There are Indigenous people who have helped their children to not have asthma and other illnesses by growing or eating organic food. Indigenous views on food supply, agriculture, health in infants and healthy communities is a very important discussion that too often doesn't occur. I grew up with moose, fish and rice. When I moved to the city as an adult I learned about many other foods and now I understand many of the harmful things that are done to food.

As I returned to a more healthy way of living, I had so much to learn and it has caused me to pray many times to learn more. Our land in many areas is very sick, and this influences our children. When I look at this and see the truth in this I know that Indigenous research can help and I am more motivated than ever to do more praying and more work. As these ways emerge, I can only pray that it will help more people to feel the land and to listen to it.

Although virtually every person at Conne River has maintained a connection to the land, primarily because of their isolated location, they do not consider this a spiritual connection because the language and traditional concepts have disappeared. I have also documented that some of their traditional hunting lands have been flooded and other lands intruded upon because of road accessibility. Also, that since the construction of the hydro-electric facility at Head of Bay d'Espoir in the mid-1960s, the water in the Bay has become increasingly contaminated and the marine life has largely disappeared. This has been further exacerbated by fish escaping from local farming endeavours and contributing to species modification. Hunters now have to be careful about the game they are providing because animals are now being found with tumours and people are getting sick with cancers.

I have indicated that these environmental concerns are a symptom of the spiritual crisis that is plaguing most Indigenous communities and that their relationship with the land and all it offers is the basis of their understanding of their place in the world. I have also shown with the People's own words that the loss of these concepts, values and way of life

has negatively impacted their lives with alcoholism, abuse and alcohol-related deaths haunting them for decades. There are a variety of avenues available for both individual and community healing but the impetus must come from within the community. Krawll (1994) explains:

To begin the process of healing requires individuals to recognize and address the underlying causes of their problems which, to a large extent, will be the same as the underlying causes of the community's problems. It requires searching within before looking outwards. It means learning to take responsibility rather than getting trapped in 'blame' which can easily occur if one looks to the outside for an explanation before looking within. (p. 27)

One critical factor...was that it reinforced the understanding that Aboriginal people are not so different from non-Aboriginal people in the priorities they set in seeking to heal their community in order to make it a healthy and safe place to live. All emphasized that the foundation of healing lies within. It is in spirituality. It was not how one defines spirituality which is important but the recognition that it plays a critical role in shaping how individuals and communities develop and grow. (p. 65)

In this dissertation I have shown how community members are gradually accepting and participating in traditional activities such as the powwow and sweat lodges, and have suggested that the idea of traditional medicines and practices could be introduced to all children at St. Anne's School. This could be accomplished by participation in a medicine walk or sweat lodge geared to the individual age groups.

Also, although there is no traditional medicine person at Miawpukek, such a person on the Clinic staff would help to incorporate these practices into people's lives. Talking Circles could have an impact on family and child abuse situations because when situations come out of the closet there is a chance to heal. Developing win-win situations by people healing themselves and their community would result in a healthier lifestyle for everyone and the future seven generations, which is a concern of all Indigenous people. The process of coming into balance or wholeness was often described in other communities, as Krawll

writes, as a “spiritual process, or a process in which the return to traditional spiritual beliefs and practices was an integral part of healing.” (p. 28)

BEYOND THE OTTAWA CHARTER

The 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion was developed at the first International Conference on Health Promotion in Ottawa, Ontario in November, 1986. The Conference was a response to a world-wide public health movement and reaffirmed the Declaration on Primary Health Care at Alma Ata, the World Health Organization’s Targets for Health for All document and the debate at the World Health Assembly on Intersectoral Action for Health. The Declaration states that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. “Health is a fundamental human right and that the attainment of the highest possible level of health is a most important world-wide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector.” (<http://www.who.int/hpr/archive/docs/almaata.html>)

The 1986 Charter advocates that health be seen as a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capabilities. It suggests that health promotion strategies and programs be adapted to local needs and possibilities of individual countries and regions “to take into account differing social, cultural and economic systems.” Another important principle in Aboriginal community health is, of course, the physical environment and ecosystem sustainability. The Ottawa Charter, the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) in its 1987 report *Our Common Future* and the 1992 WHO Commission on Health and the Environment’s report

Our Environment, Our Health all endorse links between health and sustainable development.

Mahler, Director General of WHO said:

Looking into the future, I see that just as the understanding of social health came to include cultural and spiritual well-being, we are now witnessing that the term physical well-being means much more than the biology of the human body: it includes a safe environment and the responsibility for our physical surroundings on the planet as whole. (Ibid, p. 38)

Suggested strategies include; building healthy public policy, creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, developing personal skills and reorienting health services. The Charter emphasizes that health services need an expanding mandate which is sensitive and respects cultural needs, but notes particular concern in the areas of technology, work, energy production and urbanization. It has given lip service to adapting to local needs, but these concerns are framed in Eurocentric terms.

The actions outlined by the Charter certainly provide a sound basis for a program of health promotion, but it has been argued within this dissertation that there are other considerations in developing programs for health in Aboriginal communities. I have shown the importance of a spiritual connection to the land as the basis of healing in Native communities. It is within the mandate of Conne River Health and Social Services (CRHSS) to move beyond the Charter's health promotion actions and develop strategies that speak to the needs of their distinctive community. The following experiences are examples from other Indigenous communities.

WOMEN FIND THEIR VOICES

The women of Eel River Bar, a Mi'kmaq Reserve in northern New Brunswick, have taken matters into their own hands and provide an example of action in an Indigenous community. The first step was for the women to find their voices and speak their truth which

took decades because of what they faced. Several women told me that 99 percent of the women in the community had been raped and sexually assaulted – of course by men they know. The women got together and through meetings, drumming and dancing are facing their internal demons. They are determined to maintain their healing path as their vision is to heal the community. They understand that their path is a spiritual one, and they have chosen to come to some understanding of their traditional roots. Their journey is advanced by participation in the Aboriginal Gardens Project which is being done by the Band.

The principles of traditional practices used for individual and community healing to address the problems and struggles faced by Eel River Bar are experienced by virtually all Indigenous peoples, though the details may vary. In another example, Red Earth Woman from an Ontario reserve chose to face the ravages of five generations of family alcoholism, abuse and death by accident, murder or suicide when her 16-year-old daughter, the eldest of six children, became a drug-addicted prostitute on the streets of Toronto. It is with her permission that I am citing her experience.

Red Earth Woman's first step was to become sober so she could face her own demons and start seeking solutions to the generational problems facing her younger children. Most of the children have been hospitalized, assessed and treated many times with Western medical techniques but the manifestations of their problems have only increased. Red Earth Woman also is an untreated survivor and needs ongoing guidance and support. This does not fit into any funding plan.

Then a team, guiding decisions made by Red Earth Woman, began developing innovative strategies for integrating spirituality and a healthy lifestyle into the lives of the family. However, some traditionalists who were supposed to be part of the solution became

part of the problem. They hadn't completed their own healing so they imposed their problems onto the children who acted out after sweat lodges and healing circles, and onto Red Earth Woman who couldn't differentiate her problems from theirs. The team persevered and with a traditional Auntie there were inroads into the mental and physical health of the mother and her children. Then the funding dried up and the usual story of falling through the cracks became a reality. The family's needs could not be fulfilled because of the limitations of Band policy and by lack of comprehension about the value of traditional practices. There was no money from the Band to fund the extra care needed by the children, who have taken giant steps backward since then.

I have detailed this information in order to emphasize the importance of a traditional worldview in the lives of an Indigenous family. Funding doled out by the government agencies give lip service to community healing, but the ravages of disfranchisement are used to prop up judgments that maintain the status quo. Red Earth Woman has been vociferous in expressing her needs and concerns to her Band personnel as well as to other authority figures, agencies, psychiatrists and social workers, but to little avail. She has emphasized that it does take a team to support this endeavour and it takes funding to keep the team happening.

CRHSS at Conne River has developed into an integrated agency that provides a variety of services but there is no thrust towards a traditional approach to their activities. The practice of medicine within the clinic is based on allopathic Western medicine with little thought given to traditional options. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent annually on prescription drugs. This is a mixed blessing as health benefits may be derived for certain ailments but dependency can result when the expectation is to receive free medications. Western medicine rarely addresses an individual's spiritual process.

It is the nature of their connection to the land that can provide the basis for a profound healing at both the individual and community level at Miawpukek. For example, activities at Heart Hill are advertised to build self esteem and self confidence and an understanding of nature. My experience of being there with different groups was that there were no activities relevant to healing, spirituality, personal or community growth. Although I have made suggestions herein, the program that will work best will grow out of the community itself with ongoing staff education and by developing strong social support networks. Henderson (in Battiste, 2000) explains that the function of Aboriginal values and customs is to maintain the relationships that hold creation together.

If creation manifests itself in terms of cyclical patterns and repetitions, then the maintenance and renewal of those patterns is all-important. Values and customs are the participatory part that Aboriginal people play in the maintenance of creation. How do Aboriginal peoples educate and inculcate the philosophy values, and customs of their cultures? For the most part, education and socialization are achieved through praise, reward, recognition and renewal ceremonies and by example, actual experience, and storytelling. (p. 81)

This dissertation has also contributed to the validation of the wholistic philosophy that provides the foundation of Aboriginal knowledge and traditions. Such awareness is gaining ground as the world is beginning to become more cognizant of the costs of science and technology to our environment. Battiste (2000) writes that:

We are witnessing throughout the world the weaknesses in knowledge based on science and technology. It is costing us our air, our water, our earth; or very lives are at stake. No longer are we able to turn to science to rid us of the mistakes of the past or to clean up our planet for the future of our children...we are also becoming increasingly aware that the limitations of modern knowledge have placed our collective survival in jeopardy. (p. 201)

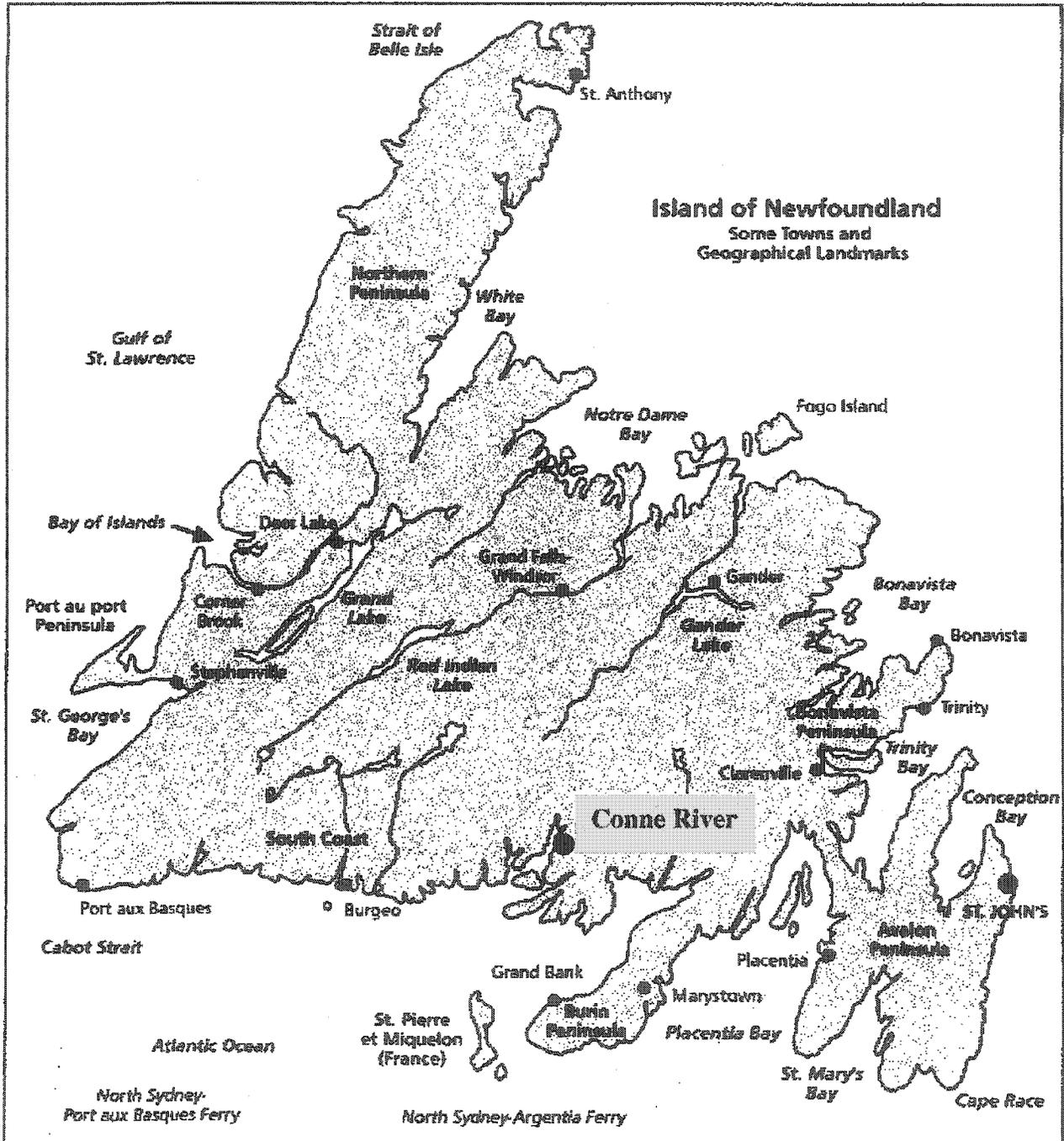
A limitation of this dissertation is that I was in the community long enough to establish a sense of mutual trust and understanding, but not long enough to explore its more subtle underpinnings. I anticipated returning to Conne River several months after my

departure in 2000 in order to update information but it was not possible. It is important to return to the community to discuss the research and present a final copy to them. Therefore, my intention is to find a way to return to Conne River and I will apply for appropriate funding to do so.

Some of the Elders who contributed stories and memories to this dissertation have died. Their words provide insights into the community's unique past and are a reminder of the fleeting opportunities available to chronicle history – for the People of Miawpukek First Nation, as life in their two worlds unfolds. As an Elder succinctly commented: “We had to learn the white way to survive, but we need our traditions to really be who we are.”

APPENDIX 1 - MAP OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Used with the permission of The Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Web Site
Illustration by Duleepa Wijayawardhana, 1999; (www.heritage.nf.ca/nfld_fullmap.html)



APPENDIX 2 – GOVERNOR’S ADDRESS

THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS TO THE MICMACS, &C.

His Excellency, Sir John Thomas Duckworth, K.B., Vice-Admiral of the, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Island of Newfoundland, &c.

To the Micmacs, the Esquimaux, and other American Indians frequenting the said Island, Greeting:

WHEREAS it is the gracious pleasure of His Majesty the King, my master, that all kindness should be shown to you in his Island of Newfoundland, and that all persons of all nations at friendship with him should be considered in this respect as his own subjects, and equally claiming his protection while they are within his Dominions : This is to greet you in his Majesty's name and to entreat you to live in harmony with each other, and to consider all his subjects and all persons inhabiting in his Dominions as your brothers, always ready to do you service, to redress your grievances, and to relieve you in your distress. In the same light also are you to consider the native Indians of this Island; they too are, equally with ourselves under the protection of our King, and therefore equally entitled to your friendship. You are entreated to behave to them on all occasions as you would do to ourselves. You know that we are your friends, and as they too are our friends, we beg you to be at peace with each other. And withal, you are hereby warned that the safety of these Indians is so precious to His Majesty, who is always the support of the feeble, that if one of ourselves were to do them wrong he would be punished as certainly and as severely as if the injury had been done to the greatest among his own people, and he who dared to murder any one of them would be severely punished with death; your own safety is in the same manner provided for; see therefore that you do no injury to them. If an Englishman were known to murder the poorest and the meanest of your Indians, his death would be the punishment of his crime. Do you not therefore deprive any one of our friends, the native Indians, of his life, or it will be answered with the life of him who has been guilty of murder.

Fort Townshend, St. John's, Newfoundland,
1st August, 1810.

J. T. Duckworth

(MacGregor, 1908, p. 9)

APPENDIX 3 – STATUS INVITATION

Taqamkukwa Mi'kamaw

MicMac Social and Economic Development Assoc.

Secretariat for **Taqamkukwa Mi'kamaw Tribal Council**

Conne River,
Nfld.

AOH 1J0
(709) 86.1:-2470 TELEX 016-4990 Tribal Council

September 14, 1984

Mr. Mark Poulett
St.Alban's Bay d'Espoir,
Nfld. AOH 2EO

Dear Mr. Poulett:

I would like to invite you to attend the annual meeting of our Newfoundland MicMac Tribal Government; to be held October 5 & 6, 1984, in Conne River, Nfld.; (A tentative agenda is attached.)

I am inviting you as a special guest who may be interested in applying for recognition as a citizen of the Newfoundland MicMac Tribal Government.

We will reimburse you for your mileage, and find accommodations, where necessary, for you. Please let my office know by September 26, 1984, if you can attend. You can call 882-2470 and ask for Linda McDonald.

Sincerely,

Sagamaw Misel Joe MJ:lmcd

APPENDIX 4 – MEDICINE WALK

PREAMBLE:

Conne River is a community that has lost most of its traditional Mi'kmaq identity, though during this past few years there has been a desire by some to reclaim this knowledge. Currently, use of traditional healing practices is limited, however this information is being developed and traditional practices are beginning to find their place in the community. This includes the annual Powwow, sweat lodges, talking circles and teaching Mi'kmaq language. The CRHSS is also interested in the interface between Western Medicine and Traditional practices with a view to incorporating traditional Mi'kmaq healing into their ongoing health care.

Development of cultural tourism in Conne River is coming at a time when current knowledge and practice of traditional healing is expanding around the world. It is important to protect traditional practices while promoting sustainable ecotourism and maintaining self-determination. Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity signed by 175 nations since 1993, legally obliges governments to protect and promote indigenous knowledge systems for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, while ensuring the equitable sharing of related benefits.

It is important to be aware of piracy, from the unauthorized use of photos and cultural symbols on industry posters, tourism brochures, postcards and tea towels, to the recording copying and staging of indigenous songs, dance and sacred ceremonies. Alston Johnston, executive director of the International Support Group for Sustainable Tourism (dedicated to fostering dialogue and action on indigenous rights in relation to tourism) also writes of the need to protect knowledge of medicinal plants from being appropriated by others than people of the community. This proposal is meant to add to the knowledge about and possible use of Mi'kmaq medicines within the community, as well as part of the programs offered to tourists.

Conne River is a very marketable destination for tourists, and it is understood that members of the community will be implementing and running the programs outlined in the Strategy. This Medicine Walk project is being developed so the information of traditional healing plants will be available to participants in the Traditional Healing Conference and Powwow 2000, and could be incorporated into Mi'kmaq language classes.

The tourism product is usually directed to the visitor market, thus effectively developing cultural tourism. This proposal is to incorporate a Mi'kmaq traditional healing component into the Band tourist plan, to develop various products for sale including herbs and booklets, and to introduce traditional medicines into ongoing Mi'kmaq language classes. This presents an additional ethical responsibility, such as when to offer a sweat lodge, talking circle or spiritual healing. There would need to be discussion before advertising sacred sites; some cultures have instructions about such places, or if and how a tourist is allowed onto them. Sometimes they are allowed to observe with or without Band escorts, sometimes they are kicked off. In Conne River, students will guide tourists through the Medicine Walk, and will be available to escort Band members as well. The First Market therefore is resident Mi'kmaq and visitors participating in community or tourist events including Powwow 2000.

TIMELINE:

This project is to be implemented within the context of MFN Community Tourism Strategy - July 7, 1999.

The Medicine Walk is an established trail near the Powwow site. It needs to be upgraded so it is more obvious and accessible. The various medicines will be identified in Mi'kmaq, English and Latin along with a description of their uses and preparation. This will be completed in time for the 2000 Healing Conference and Powwow. The signage will be presented through the concept of the Medicine Wheel and will include the important idea that traditional Mi'kmaq healing includes body, mind and spirit.

The second phase of the project is to make recommendations for a language teaching program to begin in kindergarten. The program will start with basic knowledge about the medicines, and eventually could include preparation of medicines for personal use. This can be expanded to include offering medicines and herbs, books and charts for sale, possibly within the craft shop mandate.

April 1 - May 15:

- research and information gathering
- consultation at Powwow site

May:

- signage designed and built
- booklets written and edited

June:

- signage installed
- booklets printed - available at Powwow and Craft Shop
- training students for guided tours

July:

- 5 - 7 - Traditional Healing Conference
- 7 - 9 - Powwow
- ongoing tours of Medicine Walk

August:

- consultation with Language Director of St. Anne's School
- development of Teaching Tools for the Medicine Walk

September:

- Report and Recommendations

BUDGET:

1) Researcher/Project Manager	\$20,000.
2) Students (2.8 x \$200)	3,200.
3) Resource Materials - books/tapes	200.
4) Travel - Eskasoni, Eel River Bar etc.	2,500.
5) Signs - (20 medicines x 100 = \$2,000; 4 medicine Wheel signs x 500 = \$2,000)	4,000.
6) Booklet - Medicine Wheel / Medicine Walk plants	300.
7) Trail Upgrade - Walkways - Miscellaneous	1,000.
8) Marketing - Healing Conference/Powwow	<u>300.</u>
Total	\$31,500.

Miawpukek Mi'kamawey Mawi'omi

Council of the Conne River Micmacs

Government of the Conne River Micmacs

Conne River, Micmac Territory, Nfld.

AOH 1J0

(709) 882-2470

Fax (709) 882-2292

March 20", 2000

Ms. Eleanor Alwyn
Conne River Newfoundland
AOH IOJ

Dear Ms. Alwyn,

We, the Community Tourism Management Team have reviewed your proposal. We find it to fit nicely within our plans as you suspected. We want to develop the walking trial by increasing the usage by community members and visitors.

The only problem is that the immediate development of the trail as per your proposal does not fit into the immediate plan. This year will be a developmental year. No new businesses or tours will be started. We want to review existing businesses and provide necessary resources to get those businesses where they need to go.

We do have a development plan that is currently piecemeal, but nevertheless, it will get done. Piecemeal in that we will find dollars within existing budgets to increase the number of trails, permanent garbage cans, and signs, maps, etc.

We will continue to look for research dollars for the medicines that exist in the area, if it can not be done with current resources. Once outside money is found for research, we may contact you to help with the research if need be.

Welalin for you continued interest in our community. We wish your heartfelt luck in your other endeavors. If you have any other questions, please put them in writing or ask to be put on the next agenda.

Sincerely,

Tammy Drew
Leader of Management Team

Certificate of Marriage



ST. BERNARD'S PARISH
ST. BERNARD'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

This is to Certify

That Edward Pullet

and Catherine Lewis

were lawfully married on the 23 day of July
¹⁸⁶⁶_{7/23} at 2

according to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church
and in conformity with the Laws of the Province of
Newfoundland. Rev. R. Brennan

officiating, in the presence of Peter John

and Esther John Witnesses, as appears

from the Marriage Register of this Church.

Dated April 17/96

Fr. Key M^c Kelly. O. Brennan
Pastor

APPENDIX 6 - BAPTISM CERTIFICATE - 1891

Certificate of Baptism

Sacred Heart Parish

ST. BERNARD'S
GRAND LE PIERRE

TERRENCEVILLE
ENGLISH HARBOUR EAST.

RENCONTRE EAST

PARISH HOUSE:
461-2224 (Ph.)
461-2230 (Fax)

St. Bernard's, Newfoundland A0E 2T0



April 17th 19 96

This is to Certify that

Stephen Bernard Northcote

NAME

Child of Elizabeth Northcote

and _____

born at ?

on the 22nd day of July /19/1891

WAS BAPTISED on the 23rd

day of July /19/1891

according to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church by
the Rev. Thomas B. McGrath

Sponsors being Edward Pullet

and Mary McDonald

as appears from the Baptismal Register of this Parish.

Fr. Tony M. Nelly, O.P.M.

Pastor

Marginal Notations _____

APPENDIX 7 - NOMINAL CENSUS - 1921

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

TRUE COPY

This is to certify that this is a TRUE COPY of the excerpt of a listing from GN 2/39/A of the 1921, Nominal Census of Newfoundland, District of Fortune - Hermitage, Section 1, Box 1, Page 80, District of Fortune Bay, Section from McCallum to Goblin Bay (both inclusive).

Dwelling House # 114
Family Household # 123

Entry # 31 Frank Benoite, Indian Point, (M)
Indian Point
Married
Age - 53 at last birthday
Born, July 1868,
Born at Burgeo,
English, Roman Catholic,
Occupation - trapper (fur trade)
Are you a Micmac Indian? - Yes
Person working on own account

Entry # 32 wife - Sarah Benoite, age 40
Entry # 33 son - Peter Benoite, age 18

Page 81

Entry # 1 daughter - Rosanne Benoite, age 16
Entry # 2 son - Paul Benoite, age 12
Entry # 3 son - Lawrence Benoite, age 9

Entry # 4 Stephen Poulette, (M)
Indian Point,
Boarder, single,
Born July, 1889, at Bay Despair
Age - 32
English, Roman Catholic,
Trapper (fur trade)
Micmac Indian? - Yes

APPENDIX 8 - MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE - 1922

**CANADA
NEWFOUNDLAND**

Division of Vital Statistics
Department of Health

FM07586

Name of Bridegroom: **STEPHEN POULET** Place of Marriage: **BAY DU NORD**

Name of Bride: **ROSE BENOIT**

Date of Marriage: **SEPTEMBER 8, 1922**

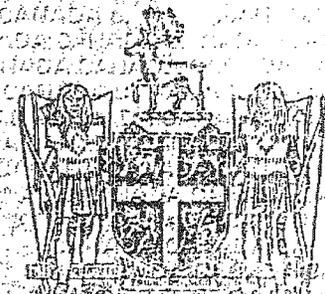
Date of Registration: **OCTOBER 5, 1922**

Registration No.: **22-12-363612**

Given Under My Hand
at St. John's, Newfoundland
this 26th day of **NOVEMBER**, 1922

Brenda Andrews
REGISTRAR GENERAL

CERTIFIED EXTRACT FROM THE REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE
ISSUED AT ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA



APPENDIX 9 - NOMINAL CENSUS - 1945

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

TRUE COPY

This is to certify that this is a TRUE COPY of the excerpt of a listing from GN 2/39/A of the 1945, Nominal Census of Newfoundland, District of Fortune - Hermitage, Section 2, Box 2, Page 215, St. Alban's.

Dwelling House # 2
Family Group # 2

Entry # 09 Stephen Poulett, (M)
Head
Married
Age - 53
Born at Aaron's Cove, Fortune Bay,
Residence in 1935 - Roti Point, Fortune Bay
Racial origin - Micmac
Occupation - logger, trapper

Wife - Rosie Poulett - Micmac
Children - Mark - Micmac
Sarah - Micmac
Hilda - Micmac

CERTIFIED COPY

Cal. Best
for _____

David J. Davis
Provincial Archivist

October 4, 1993

St. Joseph's Parish
ST. GEORGE'S - NEWFOUNDLAND



Certificate of Marriage

This is to certify that

Paul Benoit

and Louise Joe

Were Lawfully Married

on the 27th day of September, 191858

according to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church and in conformity with the laws of the Province of Newfoundland

Rev. Alex Belanger officiating in the

presence of Patrica LeBlanc

and Frank Joe, witnesses,

as appears from the Marriage Register of this Parish.

Dated at St. George's, this 11th day

of May, 1998.

Cecily Garner for

Pastor Fr. Ray Earle CSSR

APPENDIX 11 - MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE - 1954

**CANADA
NEWFOUNDLAND**

Division of Vital Statistics
Department of Health

FM07585DA

Name of Bridegroom: **JOSEPH WALLACE WILCOTT** Place of Marriage: **ST. ALBAN'S**

Name of Bride: **SARA POULLETTE**

Date of Marriage: **SEPTEMBER 6, 1954**

Date of Registration: **OCTOBER 25, 1954**

Registration No. **54-12-002536**



Given Under My Hand
at St. John's, Newfoundland
this **26th** day of **NOVEMBER**, 19**54**

Brenda Andrews
REGISTRAR GENERAL

CERTIFIED EXTRACT FROM THE REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE
ISSUED AT ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

Certificate of Marriage.



St. Ignatius Parish

St. Alban's

Bay D'Espoir, NFLD.

This is to Certify

That ROBERT BENOIT

and ROSE WILLCOTT

were lawfully **Married**

on the 2nd day of January 1987

According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church

and in conformity with the laws of

the Province of NEWFOUNDLAND

Rev. JOSEPH A. GASH officiating

in the presence of SANDRA WILLCOTT

and PATRICIA QUINN Witnesses

as appears from the Marriage Register of this Church.

Dated January 17, 1992

Joseph A. Gash
Pastor

Seal of Parish

LICENCE # 45948

APPENDIX 13 - ELDER AFFIDAVIT

DOMINION OF CANADA
PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND
CONNE RIVER RESERVE

A F F I D A V I T

TO WIT:

I, Molly McDonald of Conne River, in the Province of Newfoundland, Canada, hereby make oath and say as follows:

- 1> That I am a Mikmaq Indian 74 years of age and have lived in Conne River all my life.
- 2> That I live the Indian way of life and I am considered an elder in the Community.
- 3> That Stephen Poulett's biological father was Stephen Bernard, a Micmac Indian from Conne River.
- 4> That Edward Poulett was Stephen Poulett's adopted father.

SWORN TO at Conne River in
the Province of Newfoundland,

This 14th day of Sept,

A.D., 1994, before me:

Molly McDonald
Molly McDonald

COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS
IN AND FOR NEWFOUNDLAND
John N. Reddore
Witness REDDORE

APPENDIX 14 – ETHICS PROTOCOLS

INFORMATION SHEET

Eleanor has explained that the purpose of a study that she is conducting to put information together about traditional Miawpukek healing practices, so they can become part of CRHSS ongoing health care.

I understand that Eleanor is a doctoral student being supervised by Dr. Rhonda Love and Dr. Harvey Skinner of the Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto, and that this study will contribute to Eleanor's doctoral dissertation.

I understand that I will be interviewed and asked to talk about my experiences and memories of traditional healing practices. I understand that the interview will be tape recorded with my consent.

I understand that I may not benefit directly from the study. However, the information collected may provide useful information to help develop programs so traditional healing practices can be included in health care services offered by CRHSS.

I understand that the decision of whether or not to participate in this study is entirely mine, and that I am free to end the interview at any time and that I may refuse to answer any specific questions.

I understand that any information provided during the interview will be kept confidential and my name will not appear in any reports of the study. I also understand that the final report may contain direct quotes taken from the interview, and although I may recognize what I said, it is unlikely that anyone else will know I said it.

I understand that I will keep this copy of the consent form. If I have any questions at any time, I can call Eleanor Alwyn at CRHSS, 709-882-2710, or her supervisor, Dr. Rhonda Love at 416-978-7514 or, CRHSS Director Theresa O'Keefe at 882-2710.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I _____ consent to participate in this research study.

(print name)

(signature of participant)

(date)

(signature of witness)

(date)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Opening the Interview -

Hello:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. I am interested in your ideas and experiences of traditional Micmac healing practices so we can understand more about how they can be used at Conne River. I have a few questions that I am going to ask so you can describe these experiences. You may refuse to answer any questions and you may end the interview at any time without consequences.

Guiding Questions -

- 1) When you think about traditional Micmac healing, what does it mean to you?
- 2) Tell me about any traditional remedies or treatments used by your ancestors, grandparents, parents or siblings. For example, what were remedies or treatments used for and how were they used?
- 3) Describe any traditional remedies that you use, what you used them for and how you obtained them.
- 4) Why do you no longer use other traditional remedies and treatments?
- 5) What kinds of traditional remedies and treatments would you like to see offered by Conne River Health and Social Services?

GUIDE FOR RECORDING FIELD NOTES

Participant Name _____ Birth Date _____

Address _____

Interview Date _____ Length of interview _____

Location of Interview _____

Description of environment _____

Technical problems _____

Content of interview (overview, focus, topics that stand out) _____

_____Nonverbal behaviour _____

_____Insights, interpretations, beginning analysis _____

_____Other Comments _____



Miawpukek Mi 'kamawey Mawi 'omi

Council of the Conne River Micmacs

Government of the Conne River Micmacs

Conne River, Micmac Territory, Nfld.

AOH 1 JO

(709) 882-2470

Fax: 882-2292

882-2458

August 7, 1998

Eleanor Alwyn
Box 317
Killaloe, Ontario
KOJ 2AO

Dear Eleanor:

This is to inform you that at the duly convened Council meeting of August 5, 1998 it was decided that your proposal entitled "Traditional Healing Practices of Conne River Micmac" has been approved.

We have contacted Theresa O'Keefe of the Conne River Health & Social Services and they have stated that they will help coordinate the research, therefore any further contact that need to be made with regards to accommodations, etc, please contact either Theresa or Josephine.

We look forward to seeing you again and hopes that your visit to Conne River is a pleasant one.

Trusting this is satisfactory.

Alma Benoit (for)
Saqamaw Misel Joe



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES

PROTOCOL REFERENCE #4583

June 1, 1999

Ms. E. Alwyn
P.O. Box 317

Dr. H. Skinner
Professor and Acting Chair

Re: "Traditional Healing Practices of Conne River Micmac" by Dr. H. Skinner, E. Alwyn

We are writing to advise you that a Review Committee composed of Dr. R Hagey, Dr. D. Burnam, Prof R. Hutchinson and Prof L. Fitznor has granted approval to the above-named. research study.

The approved consent form is attached. Subjects should receive a copy of their consent form.

During the course of the research, any significant deviations from the approved protocol (**that**

is, any deviation which would lead to an increase in risk or a decrease in benefit to

human subjects) and/or any unanticipated developments within the research should be

Best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan Pilon".

Susan Pilon Executive Officer

Human Subjects Review Committee

SP/mr

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