

# No Longer Neglected: The Native Peoples of the Maritimes

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nalists or old age”.<sup>8</sup> Despite the limitations of Finlay and Sprague’s venture, possibly they should be applauded for attempting what fewer and fewer would risk. The grouping and subgrouping of urban, ethnic, minority, majority, social, intellectual, labour, business, and regional historians is already producing calls for greater integration in the face of disintegration, and mention of the “common Canadian experience”.<sup>9</sup> As a first step a textbook treatment of the Maritimes, incorporating recent work, might provide an opportunity to examine Atlantic regionalism and yet contribute to the comparative integration of all regions and groups now required. Realistically, synthesis at a restricted level, if carried out with an awareness of the broader contexts, may be the most direct route to the national synthesis.

W.G. GODFREY

### No Longer Neglected: A Decade of Writing Concerning the Native Peoples of the Maritimes

Until recently the public and the scholarly community had to rely for information concerning the native peoples of the Maritimes on the works of two ethnohistorians, an ethnographer, and a social anthropologist. Unfortunately, the most popular of these works was in many respects the least accurate. Wilson D. Wallis and Ruth S. Wallis combined information from three centuries in their *Micmac Indians of Eastern Canada* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1955) to present a distorted image of a people. The inability to know the social fabric of Micmac life at any point in history contributed to the impression that native people are unchanging and have non-adaptive cultures. A better introduction to the native people of the region is A.G. Bailey’s *The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures 1604-1700: A Study in Canadian Civilization* (1937; reprinted Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1969), although it deals with a restricted problem and time period and until its reissue in 1969 it was generally unavailable. Even less accessible was Bernard G. Hoffman’s “Historical Ethnography of the Micmac of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1955), which has become the standard starting point for reconstructions of the

8 See Robert Bothwell and David J. Bercuson, “The *Canadian Historical Review* and the State of the Profession: a View on our Sixtieth Birthday”, *Canadian Historical Review*, LXI (1980), pp. 1-2; Desmond Morton, “History and Nationality in Canada: Variations on an Old Theme”, *Historical Papers* (1979), p. 7.

9 Morton, “History and Nationality”, pp. 8-9.

aboriginal life ways.<sup>1</sup> Philip K. Bock's sociological ethnography on *The Micmac Indians of Restigouche* (Ottawa, National Museums of Canada, 1966) was the first community study of a reserve in the region and remains the only such study in English. Similarly, the only published life history was William C. Sayres, *Sammy Louis: The Life History of a Young Micmac* (New Haven, The Compass Publishing Company, 1956), produced with limited distribution as part of the Sterling County Studies. Although the correlation may be spurious, it is interesting to note that, as native activism began to wax, so too did the interest of the academic and publishing communities.

The decade of the seventies saw a flood of younger scholars turning their attention to an examination of the Micmac and Malecite peoples, the redirection of the attention of more senior academicians, and the publication of the perspectives of native authors. Much of the work of the younger scholars appeared as theses and dissertations or as papers in "proceedings" of conferences.<sup>2</sup> Although I shall not attempt to discuss these in detail here, it is of some interest

1 See also his *Cabot to Cartier: Sources for a Historical Ethnography of Northeastern North America* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1961).

2 See Andrea J. Bear, "The Concept of Unity Among Indian Tribes of Maine, New Hampshire and New Brunswick: An Ethnohistory" (BA Honours thesis, Colby College, 1966); David J. Christianson, "Wabanaki Subsistence Strategies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (BA Honours thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1976), published as "The use of Subsistence Strategy Descriptions in Determining Wabanaki Residence Location", *The Journal of Anthropology at McMaster*, 5 (Summer 1979), pp. 81-124; C.L. Currier, "Wabanaki Ethnic-History, Five Centuries of Becoming Indian: An Ethnohistorical Approach to Becoming Indian" (PhD dissertation, Washington State University, 1978); Stephen A. Davis, "The Teacher's Cove Site: An Archaeological Study of a Prehistoric Site on the New Brunswick Coast" (MA thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1974), published as *Teacher's Cove: A Prehistoric Site on Passamaquoddy Bay* (Fredericton, New Brunswick Archaeology Series 1, 1978); Olive P. Dickason, "Louisbourg and the Indians: A Study in Imperial Race Relations, 1713-1760" (MA thesis, University of Ottawa, 1971), published with the same title; Ellice B. Gonzales, "The Changing Economic Roles for Micmac Men and Women: An Ethnohistoric Analysis" (PhD dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1979); Harold F. McGee, "Ethnic Boundaries and Strategies of Ethnic Interaction: A History of Micmac-White Relations in Nova Scotia" (PhD dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1974); A.H. Morrison, "Dawnland Decisions: Seventeenth Century Wabanaki Leaders and Their Responses to Differential Contact Stimuli in the Overlap Area of New France and New England" (PhD, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1974); Kenneth L. Morrison, "The People of the Dawn: The Abanaki and Their Relations with New England and New France, 1600-1727" (PhD dissertation, University of Maine, 1975); Paul M. Proulx, "Micmac Inflection" (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1978); Maria Rossilini, "A Safe and Secure Asylum: Nova Scotia Indian Policy 1749 to 1867" (BA Honours thesis, Dalhousie University, 1974) and her "Wards of the Crown: Indian Affairs in Colonial Nova Scotia to 1867" (MA thesis, University of Waterloo, 1979); Lawrence F. van Horn, "Differential Language Use at Burnt Church, A Bilingual Micmac Indian Community of Eastern Canada" (PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 1977); James Wherry, "Eastern Algonquian Relationships to Proto-Algonquian Social Organizations" (MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1978), published under the same title in *Occasional Papers in Anthropology* No. 5 (Halifax, Saint Mary's University Department of Anthropology, 1979).

that the majority are in the disciplines of ethnohistory or history. Although there are examples of native scholarship in the nineteenth century, as is witnessed by Joseph Nicolai's *The Life and Traditions of the Red Man* (Bangor, C.H. Glass & Co., 1893),<sup>3</sup> the majority of Micmac and Malecite writing is much more recent. Some of this writing is in the scholarly tradition of academe, such as Andrea J. Bear's honours thesis from Colby College in Maine. Some is consciously political, such as Andrew Nicholas, "New Brunswick Indians — Conservative Militants" in Waubageshig, ed., *The Only Good Indian* (Toronto, New Press, 1970), pp. 42-50, a critique of the Euro-Canadian educational system.<sup>4</sup> Other attempts by native peoples of the Maritimes to communicate their experiences have taken artistic forms; the music of Willy Dunn, the drawings of Leonard Paul, and the essays of Morris Isaac come to mind.<sup>5</sup>

There are two source books by non-native authors which reprint primary and secondary materials relating to the native people. W.D. Hamilton and W.A. Spray in their *Source Materials Relating to the New Brunswick Indian* (Fredericton, n.p., 1976) arrange materials as they relate to certain specific issues, such as the election of chiefs, or the role of native people in the American Revolution. The book serves a useful function as it fulfils the needs of the mid-range researcher who requires something other than secondary sources but who is not versed in archival research. It will be of most use to the secondary school teacher preparing classes dealing with the native people. My own *The Native Peoples of Atlantic Canada: A Reader in Regional Ethnic Relations* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1974) focuses on ethnic interaction and attempts to express the attitudes of individuals in their interaction with one another. The viewpoints of native peoples are sometimes expressed along with those of Norse, French, British, and Canadian observers. Selections were made in which the biases of the writers would be apparent. In the "introduction" I suggested that the two most common biases were those which perceived the native people only as aboriginals and therefore not relevant to contemporary issues or as ineffectual actors in contemporary society and therefore deviant. I had hoped that awareness of those attitudes would prompt their change; I was most likely wrong in making that assumption.

Archaeological site reports probably constitute the most particular of the specialized studies, since they report primary data with minimal generalization.<sup>6</sup>

3 This work has been reprinted with an "Introduction" by James Wherry (Fredericton, Saint Annes Point Press, 1979).

4 There are two other anonymous, native authored, discussions of education: *The Memramcook Conference of North American Indian Young People* (Memramcook, N.B., Teaching and Research in Bicultural Education, 1969), and *Textbook Analysis, Nova Scotia* (Halifax, Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, 1974).

5 Morris Isaac, "Funny I'm Still Looking for That Place", *Anthropologica*, 13 (1971), pp. 23-36. See also Rita Joe, *Poems of Rita Joe* (Halifax, Abenaki Press, 1978).

6 S.A. D'Entremont and M.J. Moore, *An Inventory of Stemmed Projectile Points of Nova Scotia*

Since this region is among the least well investigated by professional archaeologists, it is not surprising that there are no general surveys or interpretations of the very long prehistory of human occupation of the Maritimes. It is only within the last dozen or so years that the federal and provincial government departments concerned with prehistoric archaeology and the universities have turned their attention to correcting this most regrettable lacunae in our knowledge of the region. The one comparative study has greater methodological significance than it does interpretative. Clearly the area of pre-history is one which requires much more work. The few hundred years of history we know is such a small portion of the 11,000 year total.

Sociological studies of special issues or communities often remain as unpublished institute or government reports, but some do gain wide circulation. Fred Gross' short chapter on "Indian Island: A Micmac Reserve" in Jean Elliott's *Minority Canadians 1: Native Peoples* (Scarborough, Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1971) substitutes labelling for analysis. His eagerness to apply Oscar Lewis' concept of "the culture of poverty" to a rural environment prevented him from seeing culturally distinctive patterns of adapting to conditions of poverty. A much more significant study is Jeanne Guillemin's *Urban Renegades: The Cultural Strategy of American Indians* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1975) which describes and analyses the Micmac adaptation to life in an urban setting. She carefully relates how some aspects of traditional Micmac culture are employed to adapt to new conditions. One can see continuity in change in her monograph; she does an admirable job of demonstrating that one can be a productive member of modern society and still retain an identity as a native person. Tom McFeat uses his experiences among the Malecite in his *Small-Group Cultures* (Toronto, Pergamon Press, 1974) and "The Survival of Groups and the Evolution of Boundaries", *Canadian Ethnology Society: Papers From the Fifth Annual Congress, 1978* (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1980), pp. 56-78 to illustrate certain theoretical issues involving culture change and ethnic identity. Although *The Life and Death of Anna Mae Aquash* (Toronto, James Lorimer & Company, 1978) is about a Micmac woman, Johanna Brand fails to relate the events of Anna Mae's life to conditions in the Maritimes and one learns little of what it means to be a Micmac Indian woman. Claude Audit has published a restudy of Restigouche in *Les Indiens Micmacs*

(Halifax, Saint Mary's University, Department of Anthropology, 1977); Ronald J. Nash, "Prehistory and Cultural Ecology — Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia", *Canadian Ethnology Society: Papers from the Fourth Annual Congress, 1977* (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1978); Bjorn O. Simonsen, *Attrition of Coastal Archaeological Resources in the Maritime Provinces of Canada* (Halifax, The Council of Maritime Premiers, 1978); S.A. Davis, *op. cit.*; Brian Preston, *An Archaeological Survey of the Shubenacadie River System, 1970* (Halifax, Nova Scotia Museum, 1974) and his *Excavations at a Complex of Prehistoric Sites along the Upper Reaches of the Shubenacadie River, 1971* (Halifax, Nova Scotia Museum, 1974); David Sanger, *Cow Point: An Archaic Cemetery in New Brunswick* (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1973).

*de Restigouche* (Rimouski, Collège de Rimouski, 1974). Laurie Lacey demonstrates how traditional and contemporary knowledge is interwoven by focusing upon Micmac curing practices. His *Micmac Indian Medicine: A Traditional Way of Health* (Antigonish, Formac, 1977) traces changes in Micmac curing belief but focuses upon identifying plant and animal medicines. He points out that, because a particular plant or animal product is introduced by Europeans, it need not mean that the manner in which the Micmac incorporate it is at variance with aboriginal practice. While he has recorded contemporary use of some traditional medicines, the next step would seem to be to record contemporary theories of disease and to compare them to those in the historic record.

Clearly Ruth Holmes Whitehead has become the leading authority on Micmac material culture. This status was achieved by her meticulous research concerning porcupine quill decoration in which she integrated the methods of the historian, the ethnographer, the artist, the naturalist, and the craftsman. She continues in the same careful manner in the furthering of our knowledge concerning other aspects of Micmac technology. Her recent exhibition concerning changes in Micmac material culture since European contact demonstrates that culture change need not be equated with culture loss. For those who have not been sufficiently fortunate to see the exhibit they may refer to the book which was produced in conjunction with the exhibit. In *Elitekey: Micmac Material Culture from 1600 to the Present* (Halifax, Nova Scotia Museum, 1980), she discusses the change in costume, birchbark, quillwork, wood/stone/bone, and basketry.<sup>7</sup> Her chapter on basketry is an excellent example of how much our understanding of the native people can be increased by detailed studies of particular aspects of their artifacts.

John Reid has already reviewed Calvin Martin's *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978) for readers of this journal,<sup>8</sup> but no review of literature during the seventies would be complete without some discussion of this provocative work. Martin has done something which must be done if we are to have an understanding of the aboriginal culture; he has attempted to reconstruct the motivations from the perspective of the world view of the native people. It is interesting that this first effort has come from an historian rather than an anthropologist. As with any bold first inquiry there are errors in his reconstruction and I think that some of the things he is right about regarding the world view are placed in the wrong time period. Nonetheless, we are richer for the work and if I am critical of Martin's interpretation it is a respectful and appreciative criticism. Likewise we are much indebted to two other historians for providing detailed accounts of the Micmac in two restricted regions. Olive

7 See also her "Micmac Porcupine Quillwork 1750-1950", *Canadian Ethnology Society, Papers from the Fourth Annual Congress, 1977* (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1978), pp. 156-66.

It is hoped that her larger book-length monograph concerning quillwork will soon be available.

8 See John G. Reid, "The Significance of the Sixteenth Century for Atlantic Regional Historians",

Patricia Dickason concentrates upon the activities of the Micmac in their relation to Louisbourg in *Louisbourg and the Indians: A Study in Imperial Race Relations, 1713-1760* (Ottawa, Parks Canada, 1976). While there is much to recommend her monograph to us, her discussion of the skill of the Micmac as mariners and sea fighters is sufficient to distinguish it. For too many years have we persisted in assuming an inland subsistence adaptation for the native people. This misconception has led some authors to assume that there was an ecological symbiosis between the native people and the coastal French which explains good relations between them. Ralph Pastore has been most diligent in researching the arrival and adaptation of the Micmac to Newfoundland.<sup>9</sup> His careful work has laid to rest the charge that the Micmac were imported by any European peoples to exterminate the Beothuk. Equally important has been his research concerning settlements and subsistence activities.

Volume 15 of the new *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington, Smithsonian Institution, 1978) is devoted to the northeast and includes encyclopedia-type articles pertaining to the language, prehistory, and ethnography of the peoples in the Maritimes. Of special significance to readers of this journal are the articles by Ted Brassler on "Early Indian-European Contacts", Wilcomb Washburn's discussion of "Seventeenth-Century Indian Wars" along the eastern seaboard, Barrie Reynold's description of the "Beothuk", Phillip Bock's article on the "Micmac" and Vincent Erickson's chapter on the "Maliseet-Passamaquoddy". When discussing the earliest historic periods, the authors tend to support the interpretations of earlier writers such as the Wallises or Frank Speck rather than to reinterpret the data employing current theoretical perspectives. My chapter on "The Micmac Indian: The Earliest Migrants" in Douglas Campbell's *Banked Fires — The Ethnics of Nova Scotia* (Port Credit, The Scribbler's Press, 1978) was an attempt to introduce some newer interpretations. It requires both refinement and expansion to give a fully adequate account of the probable aboriginal life style.

There are two recent historical summaries covering roughly the same period but they are very different books. The main distinction is the intended goals of the authors. The Native Councils of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and the New Brunswick Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians have sponsored the publication of G.P. Gould and A.J. Semple's *Our Land: The Maritimes* (Fredericton, Saint Annes Point Press, 1980). The stated purpose of this book is to demonstrate that "in failing to accept the legitimate rights of the Métis and Non-Status Indians of the Maritimes, the government witnesses to

*Acadiensis*, VIII (Spring 1979), pp. 107-18.

<sup>9</sup> For example, see his "Indian Summer: Newfoundland Micmacs in the Nineteenth Century", *Canadian Ethnology Society, Papers from the Fourth Annual Congress, 1977* (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1978), pp. 167-78 and *The Newfoundland Micmacs* (St. John's, Newfoundland Historical Society, 1978).

the fact that in Confederation the native people of the Maritimes have received unjust treatment” (p. ix). Gould and Semple attempt to establish that early in the history of British involvement with the native peoples of this region there was a recognition of the aboriginal rights to land and to livelihood by free access to the resources of the land and coasts. Their argument rests most heavily upon the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Lieutenant-Governor Jonathan Belcher’s proclamation of 1761 protecting Indian lands from non-Indian intrusions “till his Majesty’s pleasure in this behalf shall be signified”. Apparently his Majesty’s pleasure was never known; therefore, Gould and Semple argue that Belcher’s Proclamation is still in force. They then proceed to provide an account of how the various governments of the region have attempted to restrict the definition of a native person so that an increasing number of people are excluded from benefitting from legal status as Indians. They close their book with a discussion of court cases which have both supported aboriginal rights and those which have attempted to deny them. While the clearly stated purpose and direction of the book keep it from rambling and provide momentum, there are rather obvious inaccuracies in some of their statements concerning interaction between the French and native people. For instance, they assert that one of the first activities of Europeans in this area was to convert the native people; this may have been one of the first *recorded* activities, but the first detailed records occur more than a hundred years after known contact. At other times they push an argument to the breaking point. One may be willing to accept that there were irregularities in the termination of the New Germany reserve; but to suggest that the majority of all Micmacs had to agree to the termination is to prompt a reader to take the authors less seriously than they deserve. While they are at times inconsistent in what constitutes legitimate evidence to support or deny claims to aboriginal title and their zeal has sometimes prompted them to be intellectually hasty, their arguments are, for the most part, well made and convincing.

One must invoke the names of Bailey, Hoffman, and the Wallises to find scholars more closely associated with native studies in the Maritimes than the author of *Micmacs and Colonists: Indian-White Relations in the Maritimes, 1713-1867* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1979). Since he first turned his professional attention to the study of the documentary history of native people in 1973, Leslie Francis Stokes Upton published at least one major article about the native peoples of the Atlantic region each year until his most untimely death. Les and I did not always agree how best to interpret the historical data or even what should be allowed as legitimate sources for an adequate history. However, I respected his commitment to scholarship and appreciated the detailed and extensive work he did. His work has provided the scholarly community with accurate narratives of the life-ways, as perceived by Europeans, of Atlantic native peoples. I believe these accounts should be tempered with the perspectives of the Micmac and Malecite themselves as



recorded in oral histories; but Les' work should be judged by the academic tradition which guided his research. He chronicled events with skill and we are most fortunate that he decided to bring a number of his articles together with some new material to provide a regionally and temporally cohesive account of the British colonial period.

Especially well documented is the process by which the indigenous population became alienated from the land. His factual and dispassionate account supports the more fervent plea presented by Gould and Semple for recognition of aboriginal land rights better than would a more conscientiously supportive argument. As one would expect, the strongest chapters are those that are concerned with the time period of British control of the region. The period before 1713 is not treated with the same care that is characteristic of the British period. Upton often fails to cite the sources for some of his assertions concerning pre-British native society and some of his inferences have parallels in the writings of others. Since this is outside of his major research focus, he may be excused for an incomplete, or imprecise, portrayal of the richness of the early historic culture, but the overall impression of the book would have been improved had Upton presented an abbreviated introductory chapter to the main section of his book. Likewise, the discussion of post-Confederation events demonstrates unfamiliarity with this portion of the history of the native peoples of the Maritimes. The stated objective of his book is to "trace the interaction of the Micmac Indians and British colonists over a period of one hundred and fifty years" (p. xi). That job Les Upton has done well. He was beginning to move into a comparative phase of research in which British policies concerning indigenous peoples from various regions would be assessed. The best tribute that could be paid to Professor Upton is for a young historian to work with the same thoroughness as Les and to pursue the post-Confederation history and comparative work.

While there has been a good deal published in the last decade concerning the native people of the area, there is much left to do. There is much for us to learn about population dynamics at all points in the historic period, an adequate reconstruction of the protohistoric period is still to be written, detailed studies of technology remain to be done, and sociological work is still in its infancy with respect to the native people. The history of the native people is a very long one and one that is very rich. It is to be hoped that we shall be able to appreciate the insights that come from all frames of reference. We need the native perspective; we need the outsiders' perspective; we need the work of the historian, ethnographer, geographer, sociologist, and scholars from other disciplines. Hopefully, in the process of learning *about* the native people, we shall also learn *from* them. Surely the peoples who have lived in this region for the past 11,000 years have something to teach us.

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