A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE BARK, BONE, WOOD AND HIDE ITEMS MADE BY THE HISTORIC MICMAC, MONTAGNAIS / NASCAPI AND BEOTHUK INDIANS

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JANET ELIZABETH CHUTE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE BARK, BONE, WOOD AND HIDE ITEMS MADE BY THE HISTORIC MICMAC, MONTAGNAIS/NASCAPI AND BEOTHUK INDIANS

by

© Janet Elizabeth Chute, B.A. (Honours - First Class)
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the description and comparison of bark, bone, wood and hide objects manufactured by the historic Montagnais/Nascapi, Micmac and Beothuk Indians. Both artifactual and ethnographic evidence was examined during the course of the study. Artifactual collections were viewed first-hand at eight museums throughout northeastern Canada and the United States. The Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, Holland, and the British Museum were contacted overseas. Literary sources included primary historical accounts and secondary compilations, as well as recent anthropological studies.

The Beothuk material was re-analyzed in view of the information derived from comparison of this evidence with non-lithic items made by the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi. This comprised the bulk of the work, as it involved the detailed description of artifact types categorized according to function. An investigation of the stylistic design elements and the mortuary practices of the three tribes provided additional information for comparison.

During the final stages of this study the functional categories of historic artifacts were projected back in time to correlate with parallel classes of non-lithic objects recovered from Maritime Archaic sites in the Northeast. Whereas the Beothuk evidence exhibited traits similar to certain aspects of the Maritime Archaic, the historic Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi items showed closer affinities to the material cultures of other historic northeastern Algonkian peoples. This data tended to isolate the Beothuk Indians as an older resident

group in the Northeast composed of an assimilated body of Maritime Archaic descendent peoples with an Algonkian speaking, or proto-Algonkian speaking, migrant population, which expanded eastward to the Labrador coast in prehistoric times and eventually crossed into Newfoundland.

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INTRODUCTION

Two major hypotheses prevailed during the early decades of the twentieth century concerning the origin of the historic beothuk. The first held that the tribe were descendents of prehistoric Indian peoples who migrated to Newfoundland from Nova Scotia. The second hypothesis recognized a remote, but nevertheless apparent cultural relationship between the Beothuk and the historic Labrador Indians. By comparing the Beothuk with the Micmac of the Maritime Provinces and the Montagnais/Nascapi of Labrador and northern Quebec -- who shared a similar geographical environment as the Beothuk -- this thesis study attempted to present whatever affinities in the non-lithic material culture of the Newfoundland Beothuk could substantially be argued as being more closely akin to the Micmac or, conversely, to the Montagnais/Nascapi. As data collecting progressed, parallel trends became apparent in the material cultures of the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi which implied that the majority of the historic northeastern Algonkian cultural traits were not indigenous along the Atlantic coast, but derived from a unitary origin to the west of southern Labrador.

A model emerged during this period of preliminary research which involved a merging of prehistoric Algonkian speaking or proto- Algonkian speaking migrant peoples from an hypothetical 'homeland' northwest of the Great Lakes with an already well-established but small coastal Indian population -- the cultural descendents of the Maritime Archaic. Based in its initial stages on Siebert's distributional study of Algonkian and proto-Algonkian archetypal terms for northeastern flora and fauna (Siebert 1967: 13-47), this model was used to explain the close

linguistic affinities between the coastal Wabanaki and central Algonkian speaking groups as well as to isolate the Beothuk of Newfoundland as a tribe in many ways culturally and linguistically distinct.

Should an influx of Algonkian speaking, or proto-Algonkian speaking, interior-oriented peoples have migrated in the past through territory already occupied by a marine-oriented population, it might be presumed that inter-group conflicts would have ensued, particularly in areas where subsistence resources -- both terrestrial and marine -- were most accessible. With a resident population which was small and distributed in cohesive groups along the Atlantic coast, however, gradual assimilation might have occurred with subsequent changes in the language and culture of the coastal group.

Existing lithic and bone archaeological evidence, while not directly supporting the model, did not contradict it. The multitude of problems, which would have undoubtably arisen from an in depth comparison of prehistoric lithic items with bone or iron historic functional counterparts, made such a comparison impractical within the confines of this study. Emphasis was placed, instead, on prehistoric sequences reconstructed from lithic evidence. The hiatus in the archaeological record for Newfoundland from the last occupation of Port au Choix and smaller prehistoric sites along the northeastern coast by Maritime Archaic peoples, to the first evidence for the appearance of the Beothuk on the island did not necessarily indicate the extinction of the former cultural group. Future investigation of lithic and bone evidence from sites in Newfoundland may well substantiate a continuous Indian occupation of the island from the Late Archaic to historic times.

Map 1



Montagnais/Nascapi Bands of the Labrador Peninsula in the 1920's. (Speck 1931: 565).

An eastward expansion of interior-oriented Shield-related peoples and ideas may have assimilated the resident Indian inhabitants of coastal central Labrador, with the resulting amalgamation of peoples moving down the Labrador shore and, in time, crossing into Newfoundland. Most importantly, it may have been Indian peoples such as these who were ancestral to the historic Beothuk. Eastward migrations into the Labrador Peninsula had not yet been completed by the early historic era; other influxes followed, this time to fill the cultural void left by the demise of the Maritime Archaic tradition. The culture of these Algonkian or proto-Algonkian people was strikingly homogeneous, as evidenced by the nature of the items in the Montagnais/Nascapi museum collections discussed in the following comparative study. It was this cultural homogeneity, which according to ethnohistoric accounts persisted well into the early years of the European fur trade, that led the author to search for vestiges of an older, coastal tradition which differed from the general background of Algonkian material culture, stylistic design and magico-religious beliefs.

CHAPTER ONE

AIMS AND METHODS

The confusion surrounding the origins of the extinct Beothuk of Newfoundland and their cultural affinities with geographically-contiguous tribes in the Maritime Provinces and Labrador has encouraged much speculation from amateur and professional ethnohistorians alike. Speculation, however, was primarily restricted to the Indians of the historic period, as a broad hiatus existed between the known prehistoric sequences in Newfoundland and the first written evidence for the presence in the province of an indigenous historic tribe. Primary historic sources ranged from 'first-hand' accounts dating from the time of Jacques Cartier around 1534, to dissertations concerned with probable causes for the disappearance of the tribe just prior to 1830. Late-Victorian writings on the subject were often little more than recitations of information from literary sources compiled before 1830, with the addition of 'hindsight' inspired mainly by tales buried deep in the memories of a then fast-fading generation. In addition to the stories of sightings and personal encounters with the Beothuk, there was the opportunity of examining the remnants of the Beothuk material culture in the museum in St. John's.

Yet the tales and scanty artifactual evidence told little of the nature of Beothuk culture prior to the coming of the Europeans -- a fact which became painfully evident the more one read the late-Victorian accounts. Too often the subject appeared to have been enshrouded in

mystery, where the Beothuk artifacts were relegated to little more than primitive remains of a stagnant culture which was brutally, but nevertheless inevitably exterminated by a more powerful 'race' of humanity. To view the elimination of the Beothuk as a kind of victory for a superior 'race', rather than a technologically advanced one was too callous for the educated Victorian mind to admit. Instead, a belief, blatantly espoused in L. H. Morgan's *Ancient Society* (Morgan 1877), prevailed in the eventual extinction or, conversely, in the gradual cultural assimilation of 'primitive' peoples into a vaguely-defined sphere of 'civilized' European culture. 'Civilization' in this context was synonymous in many less-analytical Victorian minds with the spread of a primarily white, Anglo-Saxon economic and value system.

It was upon the above basis of humanitarian interest that the Beothuk Institution was founded in St. John's in the autumn of 1827. Patronized by wealthy individuals in Britain who had the time and inclination to reflect upon the ultimate fate of the Newfoundland tribe, the Institution was able to sponsor two expeditions to the headwaters of the Exploits River. These expeditions were designed to discover, if possible, the tribal remnant whom Shanawdithit and her two female relatives reported to have left behind them in the interior when they were apprehended in the spring of 1823 wandering, half-starved, along the shores of Notre Dame Bay. But it was already too late; the searches ended in failure. Shanawdithit's two relatives died soon after they were brought to St. John's, and Shanawdithit, reputed to be the last of the Beothuks, herself succumbed to tuberculosis in 1829.

Plans for the civilizing of the Beothuk having been shattered

by the realization that few, if any, of the Indian peoples remained to reap the benefits, the Beothuck Institution turned its attention towards collecting as much cultural material on the tribe as possible, hoping thereby to preserve for posterity whatever data could be gained from literary or artifactual sources before such information was lost, forgotten, or in the case of the decaying relics of Indian occupancy in the interior, completely destroyed. But because of the geographic restriction of the tribe in late historic times to the area about the headwaters of the Exploits River, written accounts of encounters with the Beothuk were one-sided. The Europeans constantly remained the outsiders, with only rare instances of person-to-person intercommuncation to lend emphasis to any description of Beothuk culture. There were subsequent attempts to gain additional data through an intensive examination of the existing items of Beothuk material culture, but even this undertaking led almost immediately to insurmountable difficulties in artifact interpretation because of the scarcity of evidence.

Building upon the academic foundations previously laid down by the Beothuck Institution,[1] James Patrick Howley compiled available ethnohistorical data concerning the Beothuk and in 1915, after nearly forty years of labour in this field, published *The Beothucks or Red Indians, The Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland.* This book still remains the most complete anthology of literary source material relating to the Beothuk tribe. Only one major document discovered during the 1950's in Liverpool, England, and now in the collection of the Newfoundland Public Archives, St. John's, was not included in

Howley's collection. This was *The Pulling* or *The McDonald* (or *Liverpool*) *Manuscript* written about 1792. It presented incidents concerning the Indians both in the Newfoundland interior and at sea, where the Beothuk were sighted *en route* in canoes from the Bay of Exploits to the Funk Islands.

Aims. Although the primary historical accounts were interesting from an historical perspective, they provided only sporadic insights into Beothuk culture -- scarcely the firm basis necessary for an intensive anthropological study. The main problem lay in the fragmentary nature of the information capable of being derived from the literary sources. Furthermore, most comparisons drawn between Beothuk and mainland Indian material culture were impressionistic, rather than categorical. No attempts were made at comparing classifiable divisions based upon specific artifact attributes.

There seemed to be several additional factors which recommended a research project concerned primarily with a categorial analysis of material culture items from three geographically-contiguous, historic tribal entities -- the Beothuk, the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi. First, such a study focused upon the possible movements in the past of Indian peoples and/or ideas into and within Newfoundland. Second, it placed emphasis upon the tangible, and hence the most easily described and categorized, aspects of these peoples' cultures, without ignoring the wealth of substantive information to be gained from a close examination of the ethnohistorical writings. Third, it allowed for a broad interpretative approach toward evidence of Beothuk techniques of artifact manufacture, as it introduced a

variety of manufacturing techniques resident in examples of workmanship from the three, geographically-contingous tribes. Such a study thus transcended the primarily introspective attitude taken toward Beothuk artifactual evidence, and provided a categorical range of native technical skills for comparison. Fourth, the study dealt with ethnohistorical artifacts made by historic Indian peoples living in similar environmental conditions and known to have followed the same basic subsistence patterns. None of the three tribes in historic times were agriculturally active and all three pursued a hunting and gathering way of life with greater or lesser reliance on marine resources. The number of functional categories investigated was restricted by a general knowledge of the limitations on the hunting and fishing methods available to historic Indian peoples living in the Northeast.

Finally, the study attempted to open up new interpretative channels for a revision of cultural relationships already recognized among the three tribal entities in the Northeast. Linguistic affinities were perhaps the most thought-provoking, with the Nascapi and Montagnais languages clearly related linguistically to the central-Algonkian speaking Cree group, and the Micmac language with closer linguistic affinities to the coastal-Algonkian speaking (or New England type) Indians; the Malecite, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy and Abenaki. (Bloomfield 1946: 85-128). The Beothuk maintained an isolated position among surrounding tribes due to a lack of comparative linguistic evidence -- the sum total of words from extant Beothuk vocabularies did not exceed four-hundred, and

bore little or no resemblance to words of similar meaning from either the central-Angonkian or coastal-Algonkian vocabularies. Because of this absence of comparative linguistic data from Beothuk vocabularies, one of the major aims open to the study was to place special emphasis upon information derived from an examination of artifactual evidence which tended to substantiate or, conversely, to undermine theposition of the Beothuk as a tribe in many ways *culturally* as well as linguistically distinct from geographically-contiguous Algonkian peoples to the southwest and northwest.

Method. The actual work of exploring the possibilities of the comparative study began in the early spring of 1975 with a preliminary survey of the ethnohistorical Beothuk and Montagnais/Nascapi collections at the Newfoundland Museum, St. John's. Copies of accession cards were obtained for both these collections and an attempt, mostly founded on trial and error, was made to establish functional categories which would cover the entire range of artifactual material for the two major historic Indian tribes represented in the museum's collection. Work progressed slowly as categories were selected, applied and maintained, or rejected depending upon their worth as comparable, and thus workable, units. The number of functional divisions was kept to a minimum because of the great visual dissimilarity between the Beothuk and the Montagnais/Nascapi items. This became apparent after cursory examination of both collections in the Newfoundland Museum.

Meanwhile letters were sent to twelve major museums throughout Canada and the northeastern United States, and to the British Museum

overseas. Estimates on the size of collections and, where possible, inventories of Micmac, Montagnais/Nascapi and Beothuk ethnohistorical artifacts, if any, were requested. The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, the National Museum of Man, Ottawa, and the British Museum complied almost immediately by sending photostatic copies of their complete accession files for the three Amerindian tribal groupings. The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York, replied that it had not yet completed revision of its cataloguing system, and hence a prepared inventory of its extensive Micmac, Montagnais/Nascapi holdings was not immediately available. The Director instead suggested that a first-hand investigation be carried out on the ethnohistorical collections both on public display and in storage.

The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, sent a small inventory of Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi ethnohistorical artifacts, and although the list was reviewed and categorized according to function, the museum was not visited during the course of this study. The Assistant Curator of the Peabody Museum of Salem estimated the Salem institution's number of Micmac ethnohistorical items to be around two hundred, with about forty Nascapi and two hundred Malecite artifacts. The New Brunswick Museum, St. John, New Brunswick, housed an ethnohistorical collection of Micmac and Malecite holdings similar in size to the collections for these two Angonkian tribes possessed by the Peabody Museum of Salem.

The Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, and the Yarmouth County Museum, Nova Scotia, presented an inventory of the Micmac items in their possession. The Micmac material on display at the Citadel Museum,

Halifax, was also examined and catalogued according to function. The McCord Museum, Montreal, Quebec, lacked a resident ethnographer on its staff, and therefore could not give an estimate of its Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi holdings; photographs of its Beothuk items were obtained for study purposes.

The revision of functional categories. The location and extent of the major collections of Micmac, Montagnais/Nascapi and Beothuk ethnohistorical artifacts having been determined, the next task was to revise and correct the inadequacies in the functional categories tentatively formulated at the Newfoundland Museum earlier in the spring, this being the basis for all further research. The copies of the accession files from the National Museum of Man, the Royal Ontario Museum and the British Museum were carefully studied in the light of the functional range of the ethnohistorical artifacts represented and the following comparable categories were adopted and subsequently used for the purposes of this study:

1. Weapons and Tools
2. Caribou Drift Fences in the Northeast
3. Receptacles and Storage Containers
4. Transportation
5. Clothing and Body Ornaments
6. Dwellings
7. Items with Religious, Ceremonial or Totemic Associations
8. Games and Musical Instruments

Some overlapping occurred in the above system of categorization, especially where the functional context of an item could not be

satisfactorily determined, or where an object may have had a spiritual significance as well as a functional use. To compensate for this contemporary accounts were sought wherein Europeans described the use of specific implements by the Indians. Furthermore, items of different functional categories sometimes appeared in collections as related components of a single contextual phenomenon. One such context was the burial complex, where the use of gravegoods in early historic times was universal to all three tribal groupings. To explore more fully the possibilities of a comparison of burial practices among the Micmac, Montagnais/Nascapi and Beothuk, a special chapter (Chapter Eleven) was devoted to the formulation of a distinct contextual category concerned with items which contributed to a knowledge of each tribes' attitudes toward death and afterlife.

Throughout the months of June, July and August, 1975, ethnohistorical collections were examined at the following museums: (1) The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York, (2) The Peabody Museum of Salem, Massachusetts, (3) The National Museum of Man, Ottawa, Ontario, (4) The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario, (5) The New Brunswick, St. John, New Brunswick, (6) The Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, Nova Scotia, (7) The Citadel Museum, Halifax, Nova Scotia, (8) The Yarmouth County Museum, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, (9) The Micmac Museum, Copper Kettle Burial Complex, Caribou Landing, Pictou Landing, Nova Scotia and (10) The Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, Newfoundland.

From two days to two weeks were spent working at each museum depending on the size of the collections to be examined and their

accessibility in storage. As stated previously, familiarity with a museum's cataloguing system was a priority, followed by the organization of artifactual material into functional categories. Special time and effort were reserved for the preparation of drawings and photographs to illustrate detailed aspects of comparative procedures. Additional information concerning the acquisition of major ethnohistorical collections by a museum could usually be obtained either from the accession files or from personal communication with the museum staff. On the basis of this knowledge the most suitable ethnohistorical collections were described under their donors' names according to size, approximate chronological age and geographical origins. Size alone was not at all indicative of a collection's usefulness; the ability to isolate items according to definite strictures on the range of tribal, chronological and regional variability represented within a collection was a much more important criterion in the context of this study.

As with so many projects, lack of time and money were major obstacles. The study demanded a great deal of flexibility of approach but most important, it required that each comparative procedural step be worthwhile to avoid what Binford and Binford cogently referred to as the "partitioning of our observational universe into irrelevant analytical units." (Binford and Binford 1968: 25).

Another problem concerned a pattern of regional differentiation in the local materials and techniques of manufacture used by Indians northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This division was also marked by the presence of a difference in dialect between the Montagnais

Indians of the mountainous and coastal regions of southeastern Labrador and northeastern Quebec, and the Nascapi Indians, or Nenenot, of the Labrador interior and northern Barren Grounds of the Ungava Peninsula. Yet, in design and form, the ethnohistorical artifacts made by these two historic tribal entities displayed so great a degree of similarity that, following Speck's lead (1935), material culture items from both Indian groups were placed within the generalized, but primarily arbitrary, confines of a single cultural unit.

There were other complications arising within the same general body of difficulties concerning regional variation in working with a number of different museum cataloguing systems each with a varying degree of informative value. Where copies of a museum's accession files for the Beothuk, Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi ethnohistorical collections could be obtained, attempts were made at plotting the range of artifactual variation represented by the material evidence from a single tribal grouping. It became evident early in the study that lack of sufficient data made an intensive investigation of geographical variation within a single cultural group impractical. Often individual ethnohistorical artifacts, and occasionally even entire ethnohistorical collections had indistinct geographic origins. Except in areas were climatic conditions determined the availability of a specific substance for use by Indian peoples in fashioning items of their material culture, or where other pertinent factors such as the presence of dialect divisions within a tribal group tended to reinforce arbitrary geographical boundaries, the work involved in tracing regional variations in form and technique proved to be of a

highly speculative nature.

What were ideally required for the study were comparative artifactual categories representing 'pure' models of tribal workmanship--an impossible goal. Both in prehistoric and historic times minor changes in a tribe's material culture occurred continuously as a result of inter-tribal exchange and the adaptation of cultural ideas as well as trade items and spoils of war. Major impact was made during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by European trade, European settlement and missionary endeavours, with ensuing modifications in the kind, quantity and quality of the objects produced by the Indians. Where ancient beliefs and traditions were eradicated by the spread of Christianity and European custom, the objects and stylistic designs which represented the presence of these intangible aspects of Indian culture either disappeared completely and were forgotten by the Indian people themselves, or were transformed into a purely decorative *genre* of art form. Many designs, however, are still linked indivisibly in the minds of many Indian craftsmen with a more abstruse feeling of tribal identity -- of separateness from the surrounding European community.

The persistence of specific Indian design patterns cross-cutting a number of functional categories was observed frequently in the collections and demanded that at least as much emphasis be placed independently upon stylistic design as upon the functional attributes of an object. A close examination of stylistic art forms for the purpose of categorization inevitably led one to the threshold of stylistic interpretation, which required a more subjective attitude

of inquiry towards the material evidence than that demanded for the formulation and description of comparative functional categories.

An attempt was made to reduce the dangers of speculation inherent in a loosely-organized, interpretative approach to Indian stylistic design patterns by continual references to available enthnohistorical source materials, to anthropological writings dealing either entirely of in part with Micmac, Montagnais/Nascapi and Beothuk culture, and to reports and monographs prepared by specialists working on a particular aspect of northeastern North American art. Although the functional categories formulated during the course of this study remained fairly constant, the stylistic categories tended to fluctuate according to the nature of the interpretative emphasis placed upon them. Yet, because art reflects ideas, it was felt by the author that avoidance of the wealth of comparable material resident in artistic design, merely because of fear of academic contention with intangible aspects of Indian culture, would be a deliberate neglection of cultural elements often crucial to tribal identity and cohesiveness.

The comparative lack of ethnohistorical literary source material on Beothuk religious belief, legend or custom required the formulation of broad stylistic categories in which to place items believed representative of aspects of the tribes' intangible culture. The presence or absence of geometric, linear and representational design patterns, in both two and three dimensional form, was examined and used as a base from which to construct a 'model' or interpretative

framework for the final and perhaps the most difficult part of the study.

Once the comparisons among ethnohistorical collections had become fairly advanced the functional and, to a lesser degree, the stylistic categories were projected 'back in time' to mark apparent functional and stylistic divisions among Maritime Archaic assemblages from sites in Newfoundland, Labrador, northern Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces. Immediately the study acquired a new perspective, for what formerly had appeared as a discouraging absence of comparable traits among the ethnohistorical tribal collections began to acquire a distinctive value as 'negative evidence' -- in which there were observable similarities between items in Maritime Archaic categories and Beothuk categories which could not be lightly disregarded. Although the *primary* aim of this thesis project was not to attack or substantiate existing hypotheses as to Beothuk origins, a tentative model was formulated concerning the possible movements of Indian peoples and/or cultural ideas into Newfoundland. This model is discussed fully in the final two chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

ENVIRONMENT AND THE PEOPLE

A marked division persisted in historic times between the primarily land-oriented Montagnais/Nascapi and the Micmac and Beothuk, who followed a seasonal round of hunting activities in the interior during the winter and exploited littoral and marine resources during the summer. To investigate the nature of environmental adaptation in each historic tribal region, areas were first surveyed in terms of floral and faunal resources. Second, the proportion of exploitation of terrestrial resources to marine resources was noted for the three tribal entities. Finally, ethnographic arguments concerning examples of specific forms of environmental adaptation were examined and compared in some detail.

The Nascapi of the Hudsonian biotic province. Although Indian peoples speaking a Nascapi dialect historically inhabited regions of southern Labrador and northern Quebec, the majority occupied the plateau north of the Labrador Height of Land. The plateau ground cover included mosses, lichens, horsetails, sedges, grasses and occasional stands of dwarf willow and alder. These merged into taiga flora inland from the coast where black spruce became the dominant conifer species. White spruce grew on better-drained land, whereas Balsam fir, tamarack, willow and alder were found in lower valley regions. Paper birch was present along protected riverbeds, but it rarely attained a size large enough to make its bark useful for the

manufacture of utensils or coverings. Sphagnum mosses, Labrador tea, dwarf birch, lichens and berry bushes covered the plains and rolling hills.

In 1930 the Nascapi hunting grounds ranged approximately two hundred miles west of Davis Inlet. This territory, shown on Map 1, contained the Davis Inlet, Barren Ground and Ungava bands to the northeast, and the interior Petisikapau, Michikamau, Kaniapiskau and Nichikun bands. The only other major Nascapi-speaking group, the Lake St. John band, lay outside the Hudsonian biotic province. (Speck, 1931).

The Barren Ground physiography was composed of mountains, rolling hills and windswept plains, cross-cut by rivers and dotted with lakes. The Nascapi travelled quickly from one stand of forest to another, for the Indians depended upon the trees for firewood and construction materials for their tents. Winter temperatures in the interior could drop suddenly as low as -50°C. The air was dry and lakes froze rapidly by the end of November, becoming highways for travel and transport.

The arctic caribou (*Rangifer Tarandus Caboti*) was the most important subsistence animal. In late historic times the caribou hunt took place in the winter when the herds were feeding on the open Barren Grounds. But possibly this was not the case in the past when the Nascapi may have spent the entire year in the interior without once venturing to the coast, unless the caribou were forced in that direction by unusual frost conditions,[1] wolves or other environmental circumstances which made the caribou's food supply inaccessible to the animals. Other economic species included the

porcupine, marmot, black bear, snowshoe rabbit, otter, muskrat, beaver, lynx, red fox and, occasionally, the wolf and weasel. In times of scarcity the mink was eaten in addition to being hunted for its fur, but the Nascapi generally considered small rodents, mice and lemmings, as unpalatable.

Because of a lack of vegetable food sources which could mature in the short growing season and poor soil conditions, the variety was restricted, although blueberries, cranberries, raspberries, bake-apple berries, partridgeberries and marshberries grew in abundance during the early autumn. The Nascapi therefore maintained a primarily carnivorous diet throughout the winter and spring months. During this season the caribou provided almost everything needed for physical survival; its bones and antlers compensated for the lack of wood as a material for carving utensils and tools in the northern regions, its hide was used as a covering for tents, canoes and articles of clothing, bags, thongs and mats.

Interior lakes and rivers provided brook trout, lake trout, whitefish and northern pike, which were caught during the winter through the ice. Willow ptarmigan, spruce grouse and common loon were also part of the Nascapi diet. Migrating birds such as Canada geese and black ducks were exploited as they flocked together in the spring and fall along rivers and lakes.

The harp seal and the hood seal inhabited the waters off the Labrador and northern Newfoundland coasts, although the latter rarely came close to shore. The ring or jar seal was available throughout the year. Another exploitable marine mammal was the

harbour seal, which avoided pack ice and was frequently seen in inlets and bays. The walrus once ranged as far south as the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but in late historic times was sited northwards from the Strait of Belle Isle. Both the walrus and whale were of minimum economic importance to the Montagnais/Nascapi, as the Indians lacked the hunting technology necessary to kill and land large marine mammals.

The Nascapi as an interior-oriented people. The problem concerning the marine adaptation of the Labrador Nascapi during the late nineteenth century was a pertinent one. The Indians on the Labrador coast hunted the harp, hood and jar seal and fished the arctic char, cod and the Atlantic salmon. Capelin, which swarmed along the shores for a short period each summer, was used mainly to feed dogs. Seal, in addition to providing skins for footwear and other clothing articles, was similar to capelin in having meat considered fit only for canine consumption. That neither seal meat nor capelin were regarded as a food source suggested that the intensive exploitation of marine resources was not a traditional subsistence activity.

Georg Henriksen (1973) maintained that the Nascapi began to exploit marine resources under the pressure of modern European economic standards and a reduction in local interior resources. The apathetic attitude of the Nascapi at Davis Inlet towards seal hunting was only one example among many which Henriksen presented as substantiation for his thesis that the Nascapi were basically land-oriented hunters. (*Ibid.*: 82). Henriksen further regarded the

Eskimo sled and dogs and the harpoon for hunting sea mammals as recent acquisitions by the Nascapi, though Indian/Eskimo contact occurred long before the adoption of these Eskimo traits into Nascapi material culture. Antagonism between the Nascapi and the Eskimo persisted into the first decades of the nineteenth century. This feeling of mutual dislike and scorn was reinforced in the legends of both peoples, and instances of Indian/Eskimo warfare were recorded in the early Moravian mission reports. Henriksen's study pointed out that it was only when major changes in the interior environment prevented the year-round exploitation of local resources that the Nascapi came to the coast and adjusted to the unfamiliar surroundings by 'borrowing' aspects of marine hunting and fishing technology from the Eskimo, whom they formerly despised. This shift from self-sufficience also opened channels for an increased reliance on European raw materials, manufactured goods and food supplies. The scarcity of archaeological evidence for historic Indian occupation in the Davis Inlet, Voisey Bay and Fort Chimo regions prior to 1850 (Lee 1967: 21- 4) seemed to support Henriksen's hypothesis that European goods and supplies available at the Moraviah missions and from the Hudson's Bay posts were a major attraction in bringing the Nascapi to the coast.

Southern Labrador and interior northern Quebec. The eastern woodland caribou *(Rangifer tarandus caribou)* ranged throughout the coniferous forest south of the Labrador Height of Land. In addition to caribou, the same animal and fish species hunted by the northern Nascapi were also exploited by the Montagnais of southern Labrador and the Mistassini of northern Quebec, though the beaver was

more prevalent in the latter tribal region. Southwest of Lake St. John, moose was the most important economic animal (Peterson 1966: 329). Eels were taken in the rivers along the Gulf of St. Lawrence coast.

Much of the region was dominated by black spruce. Where fire had denuded patches of the countryside there was a low ground cover of shrubs, berry bushes, mosses and lichens. Swamps lay along the borders of lakes.

Where the boreal forest thinned out into broad open stretches, green alder, dwarf birch and paper birch relieved the monotony of the dark colours of the spruce trees. It was from the bark of the paper birch that the historic Montagnais fashioned many of their household receptacles, the coverings of their wigwams and their canoes. Other trees within the climax forest included tamarack, white spruce, balsam fir, willow, and the common juniper.

Cultural affinities northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence: the direct historical approach. Basing his statements on data collected from Indian informants, Tanner maintained that the Labrador population "were separated out from the mass of Central Algonkian peoples at a relatively late period and then during the wanderings of the Indian peoples were pushed farther and farther to the east and north-east." (1947: 575). According to Tanner a combination of external forces; pressure from the Iroquois to the southwest, occasional Micmac penetration into the area from the southeast and the attraction of European goods at the trading posts and Christian aid at the missions, served to coerce the bands and bring them to the coast. In his estimation it was probable that over time "the Indians adjusted their

habits and customs to the peculiarities of their new environment and developed differences in their mode of living which have become sufficient to classify them into different territorial bands." (*Ibid.*: 586).

Speck and Heye isolated Seven Islands, Godbout, Bersimis, the Papinachois region along the Manicouagan river and districts about Escoumains, Tadoussac and Chicoutimi as band areas where the "typical Montagnais" dialect was spoken. (Speck and Heye 1921: 9). The Indian peoples at Mingan, Romaine, Natashquan, St. Augustine, Eskimo River, Hamilton Inlet, Nichicun Lake and Waswanipi Lake were closer to the Barren Ground Nascapi in their manner of speaking. Yet, the simplicity of accepting this division based on dialect differences was undermined by Speck's and Heye's own warning that "dialect, however, is no criterion of culture." Instead, they advised that a study be made of band "material culture, art, and mythology" before any system of regional cultural classification be established on the basis of dialect. (*Ibid.*: 10).

An examination of individual historic band 'culture' proved much too complex and time-consuming to be worthwhile within the context of this broad, comparative study. Apart from the multitude of problems associated with trying to trace probable migration patterns of different groups in the past, there were even greater difficulties in attempting to isolate late-historic cultural trends according to the degree of European acculturation exhibited by each band.

Blumberg and Martin (1964: 263-73) compared blood types from a cross-section of Montagnais and Nascapi peoples whom the Government

had resettled at Schefferville, northern Quebec. Though the test results showed a range of genetic differences between the two Indian groups, both scientists regarded the polarizing influence of the fur trade and the Montagnais' greater admixture with the French as the major factors of differentiation. No evidence was found to support the existence during prehistoric times of a dramatic physiological difference between one or the other group.

For the purposes of this study it was thus decided that the Montagnais and Nascapi would be classified as sub-groups of an ancient and widespread cultural tradition, thoroughly accommodated to interior environmental conditions and to the exploitation of resources indigenous to the North American circumboreal zone. It was hoped that broad linguistic boundaries in Labrador would correlate with cultural boundaries, and that the term "Algonkian" would suffice to cover every major aspect of this cultural expression.

The Micmac of the Canadian biotic zone. Whereas a balance between man and nature was achieved in the interior by the Montagnais/Nascapi, the Micmac traditionally extended their cultural horizons to the coast. Black spruce was the dominant conifer species along the shores of the Maritime Provinces, although inland the forests were mainly mixed coniferous/deciduous. Included in the forest complex were white spruce, white pine, yellow pine, tamarack, juniper, eastern hemlock, paper birch, yellow birch, white ash, mountain ash, mountain maple, elm, basswood, oak and beech. Willow and alder grew in the swampier regions along with stands of white cedar.

Historically, the main exploitable faunal resources were the moose, beaver, porcupine, black bear, marten, snowshoe rabbit, muskrat, fisher, lynx, bobcat, weasel, otter and racoon.[2] The woodland caribou was hunted until the mid-nineteenth century when the species ceased to inhabit the area. The spruce grouse was available throughout the year. Ducks, mergansers, and the Canada goose were seasonally abundant along the rivers and lakes. Vegetable foods, in addition to blueberries, cranberries, raspberries and bake-apple berries which usually grew along the coast, included fiddlehead ferns, wild Indian pear and edible mushrooms.

Seals, particularly the harbour seal, and porpoise frequented the many bays and inlets along the maritime coast. Indians were known to have hunted small whales, probably the pothead or blackfish, from their canoes. Available anadromous species were the shad, Atlantic salmon, gaspereau, lamprey and striped bass, as well as the catadromous eel. The major inshore marine species of fish included the cod, herring, mackerel, flounder, sea trout, pollock, hake, capelin, squid, sculpin and swordfish. Among the littoral resources there were lobster, crab, oysters, blue mussels and several species of clam, scallop and periwinkles. A large number of freshwater fish were also present; brook trout, lake trout, whitefish, sturgeon, gar, northern pike, yellow perch and burbot.

Hoffman (1961) maintained that the early ethnohistorical sources from 1497 to 1550 "all point to the conclusion that fish, sea mammals, and other maritime products were basic to the Micmac economy, and that hunting activities became important and essential

only during three months of the winter." Hoffman further attributed the breakdown of this prehistoric subsistence pattern to the introduction of the fur trade which demanded that the Indians hunt fur-bearing animals throughout the coldest months of the year when the animals' coats were at their best. In Hoffman's words (1961: 214), "The removal from the sea at this time (which was contrary to the ancient practice) greatly reduced the subsistence base, resulted in infrequent conditions of famine, and caused social disorganization and reorientation."

The coastal Indians were involved in marine fishing from prehistoric times as was evident from an account written in 1497 by Lorenzo Pasqualigo (Biggar 1911: 20-1), who based his description on John Cabot's voyage earlier in the same year:

> ...they [Cabot and his crewmembers] affirm that the sea is covered with fish which are caught not merely with nets but with baskets, a stone being attached to make the basket sink in the water...

References to seal and whale hunting with spear and harpoon also were numerous in the early literary sources concerning the activities of the coastal Algonkian peoples. In 1605 James Rosier described a whale hunting event among the Etechemin, a group of coastal Indians in what is now the state of Maine, where the huge sea mammal was struck with a "bone made in the fashion of a harping iron fastened to a rope which they made great and strong of the barke of trees." (Rosier 1605: 35). A century and a half later l'Abbé Maillard's account of a Micmac *skaiase* or 'welcome feast' told how the host was regaled by the general company concerning the feats of his grandfather, who had been an expert seal hunter. (Maillard 1755).

Localized aversions to certain littoral food sources existed among the Micmac. Lescarbot wrote in 1607 that the *Souriquois* (the southwestern Micmac) were hesitant to eat mussels, although the Indians eventually did so on seeing the Frenchmen partake of them first. (Biggar 1928: 225-6). Such anomalies in the exploitation of littoral and marine resources among the native peoples of the Maritime Provinces and the Gaspé Peninsula served to make the picture more complex, although they might have arisen from experiences where a certain kind of shellfish caused food poisoning among the Indians. In the past, as in the present, it was necessary that great care be taken to establish, especially during the summer months, that shellfish could be safely eaten.

The Beothuk and the subsistence resources of Newfoundland. The Beothuk were as well adapted as, or even better than the historic Micmac in the exploitation of marine resources. There was literary evidence that the tribe hunted whales (Howley 1915: 249-50). probably the pothead and beluga. Whitbourne reported in 16[illegible] that Indian peoples indigenous to the northwest coast of Newfoundland aided the French fishermen in landing and processing whales. (*Ibid*: 20). The Indian's participation in this European industry inferred that they were working on the basis of experience gained from a long history of whale hunting within their own culture. According to Shanawdithit the tribe also set great store on lobster, seal meat and seal oil. Her ability to remember when seal hunting and mussel collecting were a major part of Beothuk subsistence activities indicated that the tribe must have continued to exploit littoral and

marine resources extensively well into the first decades of the nineteenth century.

The interior region around Red Indian Lake was similar in climate, topography and floral and faunal representation to the Hudsonian biotic zone of southern Labrador and northern Quebec, except that an important economic animal species, the porcupine, was not found on the island. The woodland caribou was the main terrestrial subsistence resource. Black spruce was the dominant forest tree, though there were stands of pine. Berry bushes crowned the hills and open spaces, while lichens covered the exposed rocky outcrops and ledges.

That a marine-oriented people culturally related to the historic Beothuk inhabited the northern and eastern coasts of Newfoundland since prehistoric times was feasible according to the early ethnohistorical sources. In 1539 Paul Crignon wrote of a "cruel and austere race ... between Cape Race and Cape Breton," and a more peaceful people further to the north and south of Cape Race:

> This land [the latter region] is more sparsely inhabited than the coast mentioned above, and the inhabitants are more human and more friendly than the others. There is much fishing for codfish, as on the other coast. And here no one has seen any houses, villages, or castles, except for a large wooden enclosure which was seen in the Baye des Chasteaux. The inhabitants live in small huts and houses which are covered with tree bark, and which they build to live in during the fishing season, which begins in spring and lasts all summer. They fish for seals, *marsouini*, and certain sea birds, called *margaux*, which they catch among the islands to dry. They make oil out of the fat of these fish. When the fishing season ends with the approach of winter, they return with their catch in boats made of bark of certain trees called *Buil*, and go to warmer countries -- we know not where. (Hoffman 1961: 170)

The historic picture was complicated by an account written by Andre Thevet in the mid-sixteenth century which inferred the presence of two groups in Newfoundland; an interior Indian population and a maritime people (Thevet 1878: 438-44). Thevet's work must be approached with a degree of caution since it has been discovered that more than once serious errors occurred in his writings. (Biggar 1901: 237- 8). He was a personal acquaintance of Jacques Cartier, however, and had recourse to literary sources no longer extant. Thevet's description was particularly thought-provoking as it mentioned the presence of an interior people having skin-covered drums and being essentially warlike.

The combination of evidence from these diverse ethnohistoric accounts presented a highly confusing portrayal of the Indian population(s) of Newfoundland. Yet it was evident that by the sixteenth century there were indigenous peoples inhabiting the island who were well adapted to the environment in which they were living. The historic Newfoundland Indians were a marine-oriented group, possibly with even greater facilities for exploiting the resources of the open sea than the historic Micmac.

It further appeared that, whereas the Montagnais/Nascapi gradually became more dependent on marine resources and European goods and services for their livelihood, the Micmac became more terrestrially-oriented -- a trend they have not reversed. European technology, settlement, customs and values had disastrous consequences for all aspects of traditional Indian culture everywhere in the Northeast. For, the original cultures were founded upon, and

consequently maintained, an awareness of natural environmental surroundings which was necessary for peoples entirely dependent upon hunting, fishing and gathering for a way of life. It is to be hoped that the intensive comparative study of Micmac, Montagnais, Nascapi and Beothuk ethnohistorical artifact collections in the following chapters will substantiate the above statements, as well as provide some useful generalizations concerning possible cultural affiliations and inter-tribal relationships.

CHAPTER THREE

TOOLS, WEAPONS AND DOMESTIC EQUIPMENT

The comparison of the tools, weapons and domestic equipment housed in the museum collections demanded that items introduced through European trade be placed to one side. To include articles which, though made by the Indians themselves, were definitely based on European prototypes would have meant lengthy descriptions of objects which had little or no comparative value to the study, as they were not culturally diagnostic in the context in which they appeared. Tools and weapons made of iron, but which conformed to standards of workmanship set by the Indians themselves are discussed under their appropriate sub-headings.

The effect of European technology upon historic Indian material culture. The historic Indians rapidly adopted European manufactured items which proved more durable and efficient than those which they had been using prior to contact. Iron tools, weapons, particularly guns, and domestic equipment including knives, axes, lance points, scissors, needles, fishhooks, traps, files, awls, chisels, large metal kettles, spoons and ladles became an important part of the material culture of the historic Micmac and Montagnais. By 1672 Nicholas Denys, who operated trading posts in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and the Bathurst region of New Brunswick, reported that iron had completely replaced bone and stone as the raw material for pointing Micmac arrows, spears and harpoons. (Denys 1908: 443).

In late historical times the Micmac and Montagnais in particular suffered the stigma of being associated with a technologically 'backward' culture by the European settlers, who tended to measure cultural 'worth' by the quantity, variety and efficiency of agriculture or industrial production. Yet in spite of this stigmatic pressure, the availability of a wide range of iron and copper manufactured tools did remarkably little to modify the restricted range of functional tools and hunting equipment used by these peoples since prehistoric times. The Indians accepted into the material culture only what was of an immediate and obvious benefit to the hunting, fishing and gathering way of life to which they were traditionally accustomed. The Micmac and Montagnais remained seasonally semi-nomadic into the mid-nineteenth century in spite of government attempts to have them settle permanently on alloted reservations. To peoples whose lives centered about the hunt and where mobility was paramount to ensure a good supply of game, large numbers of material possessions outside of a restricted core of implements needed to furnish the basic necessities of life presented a burden rather than an asset.

Major sub-divisions selected during the study for the category of weapons, tools and domestic equipment. Sub-categories of historic tools, weapons and domestic equipment chosen for the purposes of this study included: (I) tools for basketry, woodworking, bone-working and barkworking, (II) tools for the preparation of hides and furs for clothing, shelter and trade, (III) domestic implements, (IV) fishing equipment, and (V) weapons for defence and for hunting terrestrial and marine mammals. There was also a small sub-category

of tools, which had a specific function within a manufacturing sequence, such as snowshoe needles and netting needles.

I. Tools for basketry, woodworking, boneworking and barkworking.

(a) Basketry tools. The origin of certain tools remained enigmatic; for instance splint gauges may have developed from early European functional prototypes. Or, conversely, they may have been modifications of prehistoric tool types adapted for a related but slightly different purpose, such as cutting thongs. (Rogers 1967: 46). The ability to interweave slender branches and stems, rushes and root materials into a lattice-like surface was basic to the construction of the eel pots, fish wiers and large carrying baskets used throughout the Northeast. Employment of tools in these procedures would have been minimal, necessitating only the presence of a stone hammer to split the wood and a sharp bone or stone knife to trim the wicker materials. (Speck 1940: 124).

Neither the Montagnais/Nascapi nor the Beothuk made splint baskets, although receptacles manufactured from interwoven or braided rushes, lengths of splint root or flexible unseasoned branches were present among these tribes since prehistoric times. The large numbers of splint gauges collected within the Maritime Provinces pointed clearly, however, to the European promotion of the basketry industry among the Micmac and Malecite. The splint gauge was similar in form to a medium-sized house painter's brush without the bristles, from 20.0 cm to 25.0 cm in length, and from 10.0 cm to 12.0 cm in maximum width. (Plate 1a). A set of sharp tangs, with their cutting edges parallel to one another, projected downwards in a row along the

underside of the blunt end of the board like tiny saw teeth. The wood strip was fed against these teeth from behind or from above through a slot in the board. The emerging splints of ash or cedar wood corresponded in width to the distance between each of the parallel tangs (from about 5.0 mm to 8.0 mm in width). Lengths of splint spruce root used as lashings on bark receptacles were also trimmed in this way.

The need for a sharper and more precise edge on the tangs of the splint gauge than was possible either with bone or stone undermined any assertion that the historic form of splint gauge was in use among the Micmac before the coming of the Europeans. Gauges, lacking cutting edges, used to determine the mesh widths of nets, the height of canoe gunwales and the regularity of snowshoe webbing (the last being in the form of a bone or antler 'punch' to space the webbing the required amount) were made by most historic northeastern Algonkian peoples, however, and undoubtably had prehistoric functional prototypes.

(b) Woodworking tools

The crooked knife in the Northeast. One tool used for a variety of woodworking and barkworking purposes was the crooked knife. Though manufactured universally by the historic mainland tribes, its presence among the Beothuk could not be definitely ascertained. Prehistoric origins for this instrument have been suggested, including among them a hafted beaver incisor modified to produce a blade with a cutting as well as a chiselling edge (Tuck 1971:348) and a curved ground blade made of the thin rib-bone of a young caribou or

moose inserted into a cleft in a wooden handle. No hafted beaver incisor knives were encountered in the ethnohistorical collections though a single unhafted specimen, modified as a gouging implement, was located in the Beothuk collection at the Newfoundland Museum.

Another view, particularly appealing to the author, maintained that the historic knife form may have arisen from a stone, bone or incisor blade hafted in an antler handle. The elevation of the haft suggested the expansion of the antler towards the upward curve of the first brow tine just above the root. The blade would have been mounted in the root end. Speck, in his book on the Penobscot, illustrated two iron knife blades mounted in antler hafts. (1940: 37-fig 6, a and b).

There were also instances in the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi tool inventories where a small rib-bone had been ground into shape and hafted, although not in the traditional manner of the crooked knife blade. The bone blade of the latter type of knife was inserted into a deep notch cut down from the distal end of the straight wooden handle and either lashed in place with thonging materials or rivetted with wooden pegs or nails. An example located in the Heye Foundation Museum of the American Indian, New York, was collected by Frederick Johnson in the 1920's from the Micmac settlement at Conne River, Newfoundland (Plate 2).

Micmac crooked knives. The iron or steel blade of the crooked knife fashioned from a heated and beaten file was sharpened on one longitudinal edge, blunt on the opposite, and curved upwards, or sideways towards the distal and about 5.0 cm from the hafted neck

of the blade. The distal end was left blunt. (Plate 1 b-f, Plate 3). The cutting edge was unserrated and sometimes slightly bevelled, but always extremely sharp. On the upper side of the wooden, sub-rectangular handle there was a long, narrow notch cut to a depth to admit the blade and permit it to be firmly hafted with the cutting edge parallel to the underside of the handle. Black lashings included *babiche* thongs, twisted sinew thread and, on late-historic examples, commercial twine, copper wire and even electrician's tape.

Montagnais/Nascapi-crooked knives. A second manner of hafting was more frequently found among the Indians of Labrador and northern Quebec than among the Micmac. Here the proximal end of the blade was set in a wide groove cut along one side of the handle, and the narrow butt end, generally the tang of the file, bent at right angles and inserted in a hole gouged in the groove to prevent the blade from pulling forward in the lashings when in use. (Plate 4). The handle was cut obliquely downwards from the upper edge of the butt end to about mid-way along the bottom to facilitate the grasp of the closed hand on the haft as the instrument was drawn towards the body. This oblique cut was made to the right or left depending on whether the user was right-handed or left-handed. The upper side of the handle butt was elevated, sometimes quite steeply, to allow for a firmer downward grip, while the underside of this sweep, if not terminated obliquely, was rolled under in a simple carved ornament. Such stylistic elaboration, combined with certain formal and technical resemblances to the European farrier's knife, have been

implicated as tentative evidence for the historic development of the crooked knife from a European prototype (Robert McGhee, personal communication). The improbability of the farrier's knife being widely used north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence nevertheless conflicted with the distribution of the crooked knife in that region. It also was unlikely that a European knife type would have completely replaced a prehistoric type devised for as ancient a skill as woodworking and barkworking. More probably, the use of European materials in fashioning the tool modified the shape of a multi-functional prehistoric knife into its present knife form.

Comparison of Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi crooked knives. The overall shape of the historic crooked knife was similar for the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi collections; thus both were obviously derived from the same prototype.

Though more Micmac specimens of crooked knives exhibited a steeply curved handle than the examples from Labrador and Quebec, the percentage was probably not significant. Many of the Micmac crooked knives from the Maritime Provinces testified to the pride which their manufacturers took in carving star designs, animal shapes and intricate cross-hatched and geometrical patterns into the wood of the handle. These designs had no symbolic significance other than their makers' desire to depict naturalistic shapes and stylistic renderings which were important components of Micmac traditional artistic culture. One crooked knife in the Heye Foundation collected by Frederick Johnson at Eskasoni, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, had an elaborately worked wooden handle with an elongated

polished animal form -- possibly an otter (?) -- set on the upper-side near the butt end of the knife and facing backwards from the blade. (Plate 5).

The Micmac as skilled woodcarvers. The Montagnais and Nascapi crooked knives did not exhibit the same degree of careful incision or ornamental carving as those of the Micmac. It was evident from only a cursory survey of decorated wooden objects from the Maritime Provinces that the Micmac were generally more accustomed to detailed wood carving than the Montagnais and the Nascapi. That a tradition of wood-carving among the Micmac preceded European contact was supported by Marc Lescarbot's assertion that the "savages have the industry both of painting and carving, and do make pictures of beasts, birds and men as well as in stone as in wood, as prettily as good workmen in these parts ..." (Biggar 1928: 167). Conversely, there appeared to be a trend towards a reduction in detailed wood carving among the native peoples north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In collections from Labrador and northern Quebec heavy wooden implements such as mallets, snow shovels, ice chisels, snow scoops, bowls, cups and ladles testified to the use of wood as a material selected almost entirely to make highly functional objects subject to heavy wear, or as a substitute for bark in regions where bark was scarce. That the Micmac also manufactured such heavy, utilitarian wooden implements was not overlooked, nevertheless it was doubtful whether the Montagnais/Nascapi ever exhibited the former tribe's tendency towards elaborating the simple planes of wooden

objects for decorative purposes other than by simple geometric incisions or the application of painted designs to the wood.

Knives similar to the mainland crooked type classified as of Beothuk manufacture. Judging from the existing tools of their material culture, woodworking did not seem to have been a specialized occupation among the Beothuk tribe as it was among the coastal Wabanaki. Nor were there accounts in the ethnohistorical literature of persons observing ornately-carved wooden objects manufactured by these people. Bone was the chief artistic medium of this tribe.

There were two curious examples of hafted knives in the Beothuk collection at the Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, which may have been used for whittling or carving purposes. The first measured 22.3 cm in maximum length, 3.0 cm in maximum width, with a crudely fashioned sub-rectangular handle 9.7 cm long. The blade, 1.3 cm in maximum width with little variation throughout its length, was modified from a European straight knife blade. It was broad, but slightly curved towards the distal end. The handle was elevated at the upper butt end; the underside of the haft cut away sharply about three inches back from the point of insertion of the blade to coincide with an unique hollow in the upperside. (Plate 6). This was probably done to facilitate handling during use. The blade of the knife was lashed to the handle with European twine. Exact geographic origins for the knife were unrecorded; the only substantiating evidence for the association of the tool with the Beothuk tribe lay in the presence of smear stains of red

Plate 1

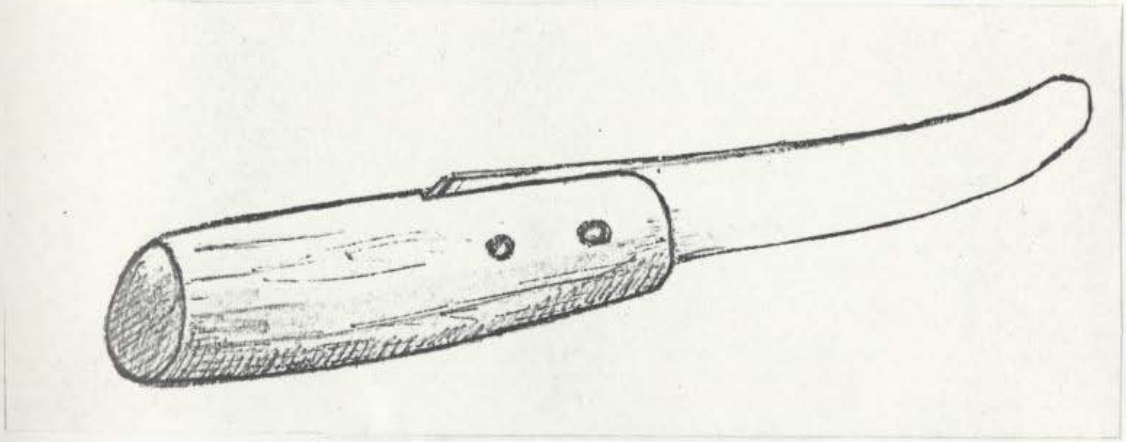


Three Micmac crooked knives and a splint gauge,

Nova Scotia Museum collection.

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee, Anthropology Department, St. Mary's University, Halifax

Plate 2



Micmac splitting knife made from rib bone hafted in a wooden handle.
Frederick Johnson collection.

Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

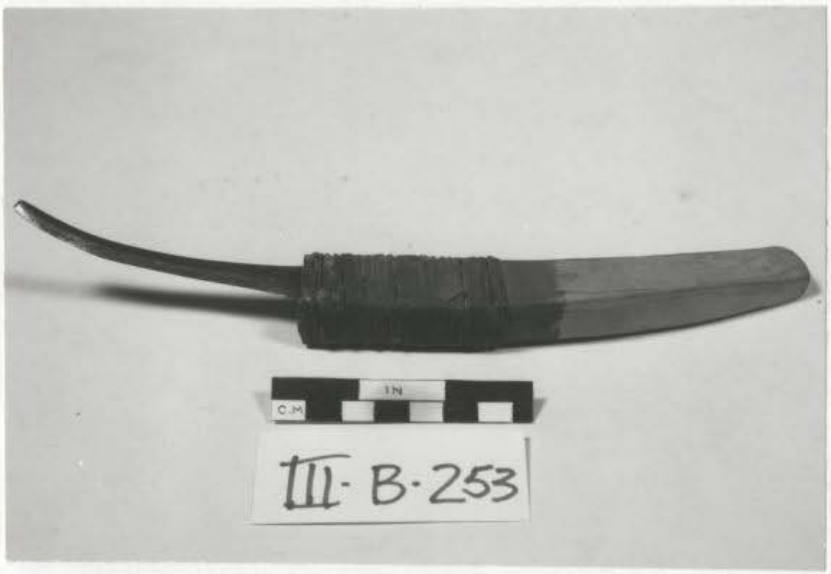
Plate 3



Micmac crooked knife, side view
Nova Scotia Museum collection

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee, Anthropology Dept., St. Mary's University, Halifax

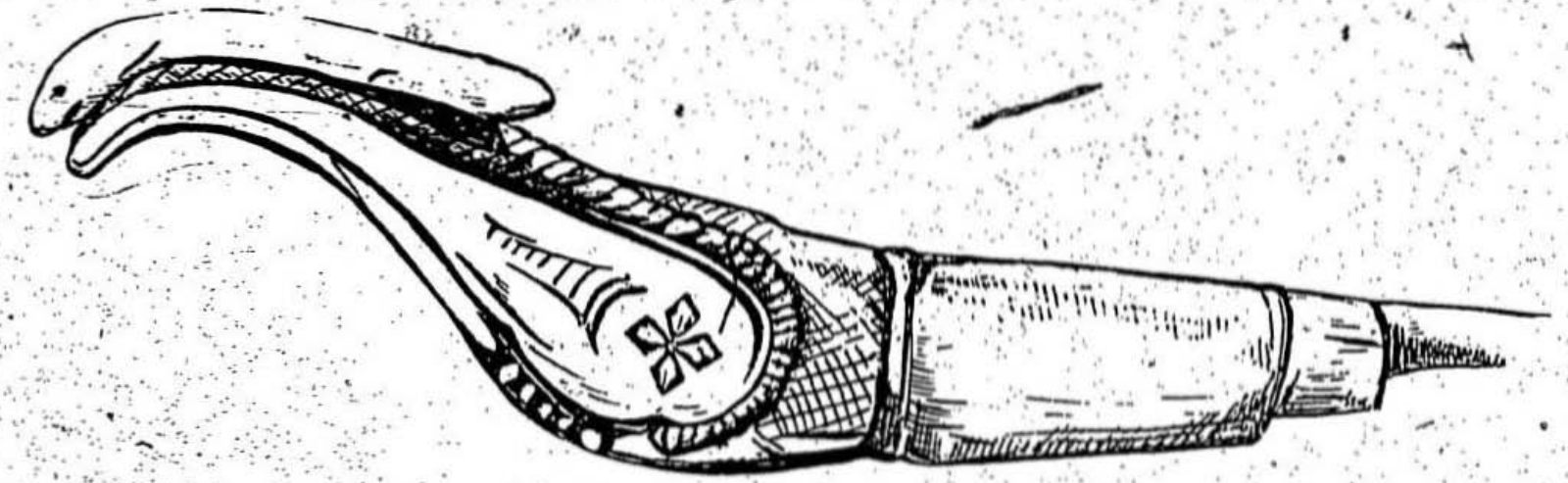
Plate 4



Montagnais/Nascapi crooked knife

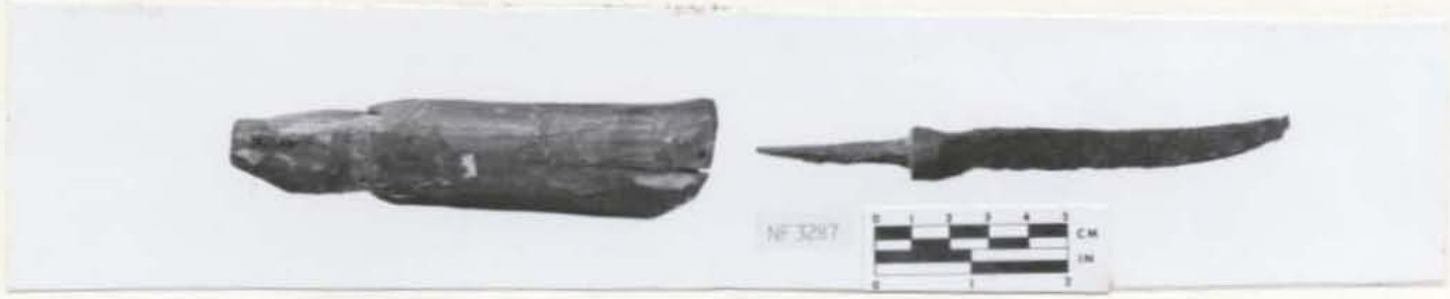
Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 5



Micmac decorated crooked knife with carved handle
Frederick Johnson collection
Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

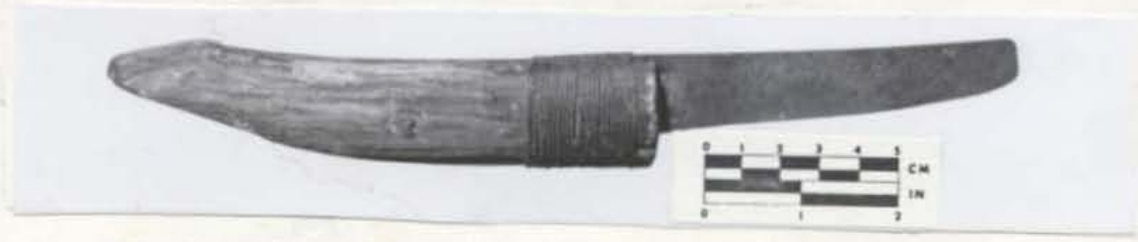
Plate 6



Splitting knife, reputedly of Beothuk origin

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 7



Splitting knife of doubtful origin, accessioned as Beothuk

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

ochre along the wooden handle.[1]

The second hafted knife blade in the Beothuk collection was closer in form to the majority of traditional crooked knives made by the mainland Indians, and therefore did not exhibit the same independence of design as the knife described first. The curved, blunt-tipped blade, 15.0 cm long and 2.5 cm in maximum width, tapered only slightly towards the distal end. Its tang was set into a wooden handle and bound in place with European cotton twine. The knife measured 26.5 cm in total length and had a haft approximately 3.0 cm in diameter. Similar to the haft on Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi crooked knives, it was almost cylindrical and elevated slightly towards the butt end with a sloping cut along the underside. (Plate 7). The handle was unadorned and originally polished, though presently in poor condition with the wood dry and badly splintered.

Whether or not the second knife was actually made by the Beothuk remained debatable. It could also have been obtained by the tribe during their scavenging forays in the vicinity of the Micmac settlement at Badger's Brook and used by the Beothuk, or it could have been incorrectly accessioned as Beothuk, when it might have been fashioned and used by the Micmac or Montagnais. It bore no distinguishing marks or stains of red ochre which might aid in identifying it as a Beothuk artifact. There was also a hole, about 4.0 mm in diameter apparently *drilled* through the handle just below the base of the groove cut for the insertion of the knife blade. This hole was plugged with a small, solid wooden cylinder which camoflaged the hole when inserted. A small hole drilled through the

handle for a cord and toggle attachment was fairly common on crooked knives from the mainland and further weakened the probability of the knife being a Beothuk implement.

Conversely, the crooked knife might have been an important component in the tool kit of every major Indian tribe in the Northeast, including the Beothuk. There were at least six iron artifacts classified as narrow, unhafted knife blades on display in the Beothuk exhibit of the Newfoundland Museum. None exceeded 12.5 cm in length, 2.5 cm in width, and 5.0 mm in thickness, and all had slender tanged proximal ends to serve as hafting devices. Several specimens of this type exhibited a slight 'crook' in the blade near the tip. This peculiar characteristic, combined with evidence for the widespread distribution of the crooked knife in the Northeast, supported the tentative proposition for the development of the historic implement from a bone or beaver-incisor prototype in use as early as Archaic times.

Axes, adzes, chisels and wood scrapers among the Micmac. European trade items, primarily iron-bladed axes, rapidly superseded the prehistoric bone, stone and antler woodworking tools among the Micmac of the Maritime Provinces, although prior to the seventeenth century hafted stone axes, adzes, chisels and several types of stone knives and stone and bone endscrapers were in use along the northeastern Atlantic coast. Denys described a group of Micmac repeatedly burning and then scraping away the charred core of a large tree stump to make a wooden kettle, where the tools used were "stones and

huge pointed bones, as large as the thumb ..." (Denys 1971:2). That this woodworking technique was universal to the north-eastern coastal tribes might be inferred from Champlain's account of the activities of a band of Indians in what is now Massachusetts where a dug-out canoe was hollowed out of a log first by burning and then by scraping away the charred material with stones which to Champlain and his men, resembled their musket flints. (Grant 1967:66). Stone, antler and bone woodworking implements had greatly declined in numbers by the time the first detailed ethnographic accounts were written about the Labrador bands. As elsewhere, iron and steel quickly replaced stone, although bone, antler and wooden tools, particularly mallets with a handle and one flat pounding surface, persisted until recently. The simple wooden mallet and stone or bone wedge was used to loosen bark from trees before attempting to remove it.

Beothuk axes. The Beothuk were notorious for stealing iron implements from the European coastal settlements to provide metal from which to fashion their own tools and weapons. Yet, whether or not this source furnished all the Indians' needs for woodworking tools remained questionable. Possibly the Newfoundland tribe continued to work stone for this purpose. Although no positively-identified representative examples of Beothuk stone or bone woodworking implements were present in the ethnographic collections, there was one reference in an article in the *Liverpool Mercury* published in the spring of 1819 to stone hatchets being sighted inside of a Beothuk

manateek by a man who claimed to have personally viewed the items. (Howley 1915:100).

Woodcutting equipment in the Beothuk collection in St. John's was represented by a hafted cast-iron axe head, obviously of European manufacture and, more important, a miniature axe with a small forged blade apparently wrought by the Beothuk themselves. The latter axe measured 16.5 cm in maximum length and 7.5 cm in maximum width across the head. The head was double-ended, flattened on one end and pick-like on the other end. Both axes were smeared with red ochre.

Neither the historic Micmac nor the Montagnais/Nascapi worked metal to the same extent as the Beothuk except for the modifications of files into crooked knife blades and the cold-working of iron, by the Micmac in Nova Scotia into flat adze blades and choppers. (Harper 1956:15). Trade either furnished the quantity of iron tools and weapons desired or, as on the Barren Grounds of northern Labrador and in other fairly isolated regions north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Indians continued to make the traditional antler, bone and wooden implements which sufficed to carry on the necessary round of activities until iron tools and hunting equipment could be procured from the European traders.

(c) The awl, a combination tool

Micmac awls. Another important instrument in barkworking, boneworking, hideworking as well as woodworking was the awl. Awls were common to all three tribes, though they differed substantially

in form from each cultural area. Micmac awls in late historic times were usually pointed with iron or steel; often a nail flattened on two sides with a chisel cutting edge. Micmac awls ranged from 12.0 cm to 20.0 cm in total length. They generally had a cylindrical or sub-rectangular polished wooden handle, at least three times the length of the blade, and from 2.5 to 4.0 cm in diameter. According to Wallis and Wallis, prior to the introduction of iron the Micmac manufactured awls out of the ulna of the marten as the bones of these animals were conveniently "small, sharp at one end and nearly flat at the other." (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 76). Heavier awls were reputedly made from the split legbone of a caribou or moose, as well as the sharpened tines of the antlers of young deer.

Montagnais/Nascapi awls. Awls manufactured by the northern Nascapi often had a flaring T-shaped or nearly crescentic handle to conform in shape to the downward pressing movement of the palm on the tool when in use. The implements varied in size, the largest were equipped with a thick piercing blade of antler, bone or metal, and were capable of being subjected to harsher treatment when employed for gouging purposes than the majority of Micmac awls. Bone, antler and metal awls were also made by the Montagnais. Most of these tools had cylindrical or sub-rectangular handles much like the Micmac awls, although examples with expanding or flared handles were also observed. Awls, rather than drills, were used by both the Micmac and the Indians of Labrador and northern Quebec for gouging the holes in snowshoe frames for the selvage thongs. For making

holes in hide, unhafted bone or antler perforators with narrow, slightly flattened and smoothed working ends were manufactured by both the historic Montagnais/Nascapi and the Micmac.

Beothuk awls. There were no examples of hafted Beothuk awls and no awl blades of bone. Only one narrow iron instrument, apparently made from a nail with flat sides and a rectangular cross-section, was located in the collection at the Newfoundland Museum. This awl-like implement had a blunt proximal end and a distal end tapering to a sharp point. The maximum length of the object was 10.0 cm, the maximum width 5.0 mm, and the maximum thickness 2.5 mm. Approximately 5.0 cm from the distal end there was a small circular hole for the insertion of a rivet, peg or thong to secure the blade of the awl when hafted. The presence of the peg-hole as a hafting device on early historic mainland speciments was rare, and probably denoted European influence. Its use by the Beothuk therefore raised pertinent, but unanswerable questions concerning unrecorded European/Beothuk contact and trace exchanges prior to the eighteenth century.

(d) Drills in the Northwest. Simple bow drills were reputedly unknown to the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi before instruments of this type were introduced into the Maritime Provinces and northern Quebec and Labrador by the European fur traders. Among the pre-historic peoples of both geographic areas soft stone was probably bored with a triangular piece of harder, siliceous stone, the drill head being biconvex in cross-section and hafted to a straight stick

handle which could be rotated rapidly between the palms of the hand. The comparative isolation of the Beothuk may have prevented this tribe from adopting the use of the bow drill in late historic times, although this remained uncertain. That other forms of stone drills were made by the Beothuk was also unknown, although it was readily apparent that on the majority of perforated bone pendants and other bone, wood and iron objects, holes were biconically gouged rather than drilled. Modified beaver incisors, siliceous stone splinters, and, historically, nails and pieces of broken glass may have been used by the Beothuk, and probably the mainland tribes as well, as sharp incising tools to inscribe abstract linear and geometric designs on bone, bark and wood.

II. Hideworking tools

(a) hide scrapers or fleshers. Until recent times the Nascapi, the interior Montagnais and the Mistassini Cree continued to manufacture bone and wooden tools for hide-working; no other historic Indian tribes in the Northeast preserved such a distinctive range of equipment for preparing and utilizing hides. The tools of this industry were based on prehistoric archetypes, for there was no apparent evidence of 'borrowing' from European sources in the manufacture of any of the bone, wood or antler hideworking tools. Unhafted scrapers made from the tibia bones of beaver and bear north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence were present in collections both at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Heye Foundation.

Mistassini and Montagnais fleshers. The type of flesher most frequently represented in ethnohistorical collections from interior northern Quebec and southwestern Labrador was made from a caribou or moose metapodial, where the leg bone was cut in half diagonally to produce a bevelled edge on the distal end of the half to be used. The proximal end of the bone was completely severed through and ground until a flat, smoothed surface was achieved. Part of the marrow was removed so that the cavity formed was deep enough to fit snugly over a spike of wood projecting from a chunky cross-section of black spruce pole, about 9.0 cm in diameter and from 18.0 to 20.0 cm in length. Otherwise, the leg-bone was cut longitudinally and one half section of it bevelled sharply at the distal end and truncated squarely at the proximal end. The bone flesher was then lashed securely with sinew thonging to a wooden tang projecting from a cylindrical spruce block of the kind described above. The bevelled edge of the bone tool in both instances was finely serrated. Usually a strip of hide or cloth was wound around a groove encircling the wooden weight for suspension purposes. The flesher was used with a fleshing post, which stood vertically about 1.2 m in height and measured from 8.0 cm to 13.0 cm in diameter. The Indian hung one end of the untreated hide, flesh side out, over the upright post and pressed the other end of the hide against his abdomen while assuming a sitting position. The flesher was grasped by the bone section just below the wooden block and the serrated edge run down the hide to remove the extraneous fleshy material. (Rogers 1967:40-1).

Nascapi fleshers. To the north, in the Barren Ground region, a simple form of bone flesher was widely manufactured and used. The lower end of a caribou tibia was truncated squarely and then bevelled at a gradual angle to produce a sharp, chisel-like cutting edge. A hafted wedge-shaped blade for the same purpose was made of a spatulate piece of bone, iron or steel about 15.0 cm long and 13.0 cm wide. The slightly-tapered butt edge of the blade was fitted into the marrow cavity of the truncated proximal end of a caribou legbone and secured with sinew lashings. Sometimes the Nascapi fashioned a wooden handle, generally of a heavy, bulbous form, but occasionally nearly cylindrical. The butt end of the flat, spatulate blade was anchored in a deep notch cut from the base of the haft to about one-quarter the length up the side. (Plate 8). A loop of stout thong, large enough to fit comfortably over the wrist of the user, was almost always attached to the butt end of the wooden handle.

The fleshing process was completed with bone scrapers formed of split caribou or moose longbones with one transverse edge sharpened. To remove harder portions of flesh the hides were scraped with the edges of small scoop-shaped instruments made of bone or the brow plates of caribou or moose antlers.

Micmac skinning and fleshing tools. One Micmac informant interviewed by Wallis and Wallis described a practice of inserting a hollow tube of telescoped Canada goose quills through a slit in the lower hind leg of a slain animal and inflating the skin up to

the flanks by blowing in air. (Wallis and Wallis 1955:40). Wallis and Wallis implied that the historic method of loosening the hide prior to skinning may have been introduced first by Europeans. (*Ibid.*: 40-1). Conversely, hollow tubes, made of the wing bones of the Canada goose, in the Maritime Archaic artifactual collection from Port au Choix, Newfoundland, have been cautiously attributed to a similar purpose, though a wide range of functional alternatives for the wing bone have also been suggested. (Tuck, unpublished ms.: 73). No archaeological or historic evidence for such a skinning technique could be located from north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Micmac informants interviewed by Wallis and Wallis in 1950 related that a stone fleshing knife "furnished with a wooden handle" and called a *ka'e guk* was manufactured by the Micmac in pre-contact times. (Wallis and Wallis 1955:41). This knife may have been similar in shape to the fleshing and skiving knife, the *ulu*, used by the historic Labrador Indians and the Eskimo. (Rogers 1967:42). But nothing was known of the dimensions or manner of use of the Micmac implement.

That bone fleshing and beaming (hair-removing) instruments were made and used during the early seventeenth century in the Maritime Provinces was recorded by Nicholas Denys who wrote that "they [the Indians] stretch them [the hides] and pull out the hair with bone instruments made on purpose, somewhat as do those who prepare a skin for conversion into parchment." (Denys 1971: 8).

The Micmac chine knife. The major form of fleshing tool

found in late historic Micmac collections was the chine knife. This hide-working implement differed radically from the chisel-like fleshing tools and crescentic-bladed *ulus* prominent in Montagnais/Nascapi collections in that it had a metal blade set medially and at right angles to a narrow, crescentic-shaped wooden handle. The instrument, which varied in size, measured from 30.0 cm to 60.0 cm in length, 8.0 cm to 13.0 cm in width, and 5.0 cm to 8.0 cm in thickness. The handle rose in a gentle curve from both ends to a low hump in the middle, and the blade affixed to a narrow transverse block of wood set in a groove in the bottom of the haft. The two ends of the handle were knobbed or rolled back in a carved ornament.

Comparison of formal affinities between the Micmac chine knife and the Mistassini mounted axe head. The closest formal and functional parallel to the Micmac chine knife in use among the Indians northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was the iron axe head mounted transversely near one end of a long black spruce pole, about 2.0 m in length and 6.0 cm to 8.0 cm in diameter. The poll of the axe head was set in a cut in the pole and lashed in place. For the remaining 18.0 cm between the axe head and the end of the pole, the stave was reduced to 4.0 cm in diameter and functioned as a handle. Although the mounted axe head was a much longer and heavier instrument than the chine knife, and was operated between two people across a hide stretched horizontally on a drying rack, the principle behind the use of it was the same.

The mounted axe head flesher had a restricted geographical range northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. There was no ethnohistorical evidence that hideworking instruments with a blade mounted transverse to the haft were made by the historic Montagnais/Nascapi. A tool similar in shape and function to the Mistassini implement "having a metal blade set in perpendicularly near the end" was described by Speck for the Penobscot. (Speck 1940: 130-1). Both the Mistassini and the Penobscot fleshers may have been developed from the same prehistoric prototype, the substitution of a flat metal blade or axe head for a stone or bone blade being a historic modification. The Micmac chine knife thus could have represented a smaller variant of the basic design, but with the blade set medially. Formal parallels between the European wood plane and the Micmac hide flesher were considered, though the Indian implement probably predated the former in North America.

(b) Bone beamers in the Northeast. The bone beamer was made from a caribou femur or radius by slicing out a sizeable sub-rectangular section from the back of the legbone and then hollowing out the interior marrow cavity. The exposed longitudinal edge of the cut on one side (or both sides) of the section was then bevelled sharply inwards towards the marrow cavity and polished. Finally the distal and proximal ends of the longbone were smoothed to provide convenient grasps for the hands when one was working on a hide. The tool was pushed away from the body. The beamer plucked the hairs from the skin but did not, in any way, damage the

surface of the hide. (Plate 9).

(c) A comparison of Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi bone and antler hideworking tools. Bone and antler hideworking tools, which had long ceased to be manufactured in the Maritime Provinces prior to the twentieth century, still persisted among the Micmac of Newfoundland in 1914. (Speck 1922). The bone beamers and scrapers examined by Speck were identical to Montagnais/Nascapi bone hideworking implements. Furthermore, Howley's description of the bone flesher and the bone beamer, which he observed in use by the Newfoundland Micmac, could just as aptly have been applied to the bone and antler hideworking tools in museum collections from northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. (Howley 1915: 337). Small scoops, often of antler brow pates, for scraping grease from hides stretched upon frames for drying, were made by the Badger's Brook Micmac of Newfoundland in the same way as the Labrador Indians. Yet, more than any other single factor, this remarkable similarity in the late-historic hideworking technology on both sides of the Strait of Belle Isle may have been due to the high incidence of Micmac and Montagnais intermarriage in Newfoundland. (Speck 1922: 34). Montagnais hunters who remained on the island to marry Micmac wives may well have continued to manufacture the same split log-bone beamers and chisel-like fleshers which they had been accustomed to see in use among their own tribe.

Whether or not the Micmac of the Maritime Provinces and the Montagnais/Nascapi shared an identical prehistoric hide-working technology was impossible to determine from a comparative survey of

the ethnohistorical items alone. The two historic traditions were, however, definitely related. First, the same basic tools, the longbone scraper and beamer, were represented in both regions. Second, the tanning process employed by the two tribes was the same. The hides, after being thoroughly scraped, were subjected to treatment with a mixture of putrified animal livers and brains with additions of wood ash or other tempering material and animal grease. Fur peltries were stretched on special racks, oval or semi-rectangular in circumference, formed from poles lashed together with *babiche* thongs. The pelt or hide was perforated at regular intervals along its edges and stretched by strips of rawhide *babiche* being passed through the slits and pulled taut on the wooden frame.

(d) Hideworking tools among the Beothuk. It was unfortunate that no ethnographic data remained on the tools or techniques used by the historic Beothuk in processing hides and furs. In 1914 Speck recovered a bone artifact from a living site on the shore of Red Indian Lake which he described as a "perfect bone implement for removing the hair from caribou skins..." (Speck 1922:34). It was the only Beothuk fleshing instrument observed at first-hand during the course of the study. (Plate 10a). This implement, presently in the Beothuk collection at the National Museum of Man, Ottawa, was made from a longitudinal section of split caribou long-bone, possibly a radius, sharpened slightly on one beaming edge. It exhibited nothing of the distinctive workmanship or technical sophistication of the beamers and weighted fleshing devices made

by the Indians of northern interior Quebec and the Labrador Peninsula. In form and technique of manufacture the tool was indistinguishable from most of the caribou-bone beamers acquired by Speck from the Badger's Brook Micmac settlement the same year. It was therefore conjectured that the Beothuk possessed much the same tool inventory as the Montagnais/Nascapi, in spite of the lack of artifactual evidence. But in opposition to Speck's observation that all Beothuk bone and antler implements were "distinctly Algonkian in character..." (*Ibid.*: 44), it seemed most probable, considering the fundamental necessity of such an activity as hide-working in the Northeast, that the basic tradition may have been well developed during the Archaic period or even earlier.

III. Domestic Articles. Fire-making and the preparing of meat for storage were two occupations carried out in or near the dwelling. A comparative examination of fire-making kits and meat pestles provided the following information.

(a) Fire-making kits in Newfoundland and northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The use of metallic crystals, particularly radiated iron pyrites and limonitic nodules, for percussion striking was apparently the major means of producing fire among the Beothuk and the Algonkian-speaking peoples north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. W. E. Cormack, who reported the presence of iron pyrites in what he believed was Mary March's tomb, was the first to ascribe this method of fire-making to the Beothuk. (Howley 1915: 193- 4). Iron

pyrite fragments recovered by Jenness (Plate 10b) and Devereux supported Cormack's assertion. (Jenness 1929: 36; Devereux 1970: 30). Lloyd further stated that blue jay down was used as tinder, information he alleged to have received from John Peyton. (Lloyd 1875b: 226).

Le Jeune in 1634 described an almost identical fire-making procedure among the Montagnais:

> For a wick they [the Montagnais] use the skin of an eagle's thigh, covered with down, which takes fire very easily. They strike together two metallic stones, just as we do with a piece of flint and iron or steel; in place of matches they use a little piece of tinder, a dry and rotten wood which burns easily and continually until it is consumed. When they have lighted it, they put it into pulverised cedar bark; and by gently blowing, this bark takes fire. (Thwaites 1897: VI, 217).

The Montagnais also occasionally worked the fire drill, though according to Le Jeune it was not an indigenous practice:

> They have still another kind of fuse. They twist a little cedar stick, and this friction causes fire, which lights some tinder; but as I have never seen them use this fuse, which is more familiar to the Hurons than to the Montagnais, I will say no more about it. (*Ibid.*: 217).

Rogers recorded the use of the metal and flint strike-a-light among the Mistassini as late as 1910, where birch fungus, or 'punk', provided portable containment for the fire once it was lit. (Rogers 1967: 23). The flint and steel technique historically replaced the ancient percussion method northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

(b) Firemaking among the Micmac. Both the fire drill and the strike-a-light were equally well known to the historic Micmac. The fire drill "consisted of two sticks of different degree of hardness. The notched one, of softer wood, was held parallel to the ground,

between the knees, and the harder stick was then inserted into the notch and twirled." (Wallis and Wallis 1957: 3). Wallis and Wallis also recorded an origin myth concerning the discovery of the fire drill. (1955: 396).

Piers reported a method of producing fire where a piece of white quartz was struck against a larger core of crystalline chalcedony or agate. Sparks thus produced were introduced onto a bed of dry rotten wood and blown until they caught fire. Fire was contained in birch punk. (Piers Notes: Printed Matter File, Nova Scotia Museum).

(c) Comparisons. The percussion technique of producing fire has existed since late Archaic times, or earlier. Pyritic crystals and 'hammerstones' -- or rounded igneous stones which, when in association with metallic crystals, were used as a basal core for striking off sparks -- have been recovered from the Archaic burials at Cow Point (Sanger 1973) and from Port au Choix. (Tuck, unpublished ms.: 157). Pyrite crystals, limonitic nodules and igneous striking cores have been found on Archaic sites from the central Arctic eastwards to the Atlantic coast, and may well have been the most ancient fire-making method in the Northeast.

Fire drills were well documented for the Iroquois and the southern Algonkian-speaking tribes, from which the technique may have spread eastwards and northwards along the coast to Nova Scotia but not as far as Newfoundland. The practice of regarding fire as a 'lendable commodity' which had to be returned once 'borrowed'

recorded by Piers among the historic Micmac, was probably a concept derived from the Iroquois to the southwest. (Piers Notes).

Meat pestles. All three tribes were known to have de-boned, dried and pounded caribou or moose meat into storable quantities for the winter. Stone mauls and pestles of an enlongate shape, flattened on one end and capable of being grasped firmly in the hand have been recovered from archaeological sites both north and south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Stone mauls for the extraction of bone marrow have been surface collected at Beothuk sites. (Speck 1922: 24). One such maul recovered from a Beothuk occupation site was examined in the ethnohistorical collection at the National Museum of Man.

A distinctive form of bone, antler or stone conical pestle, with a flat striking base and a groove cut around the distal end for attachment of a suspension thong, represented in the Montagnais/Nascapi collections may have reflected a relatively late and geographically localized modification of an ancient functional type.

Two other domestic traditions common to tribes on both sides of the St. Lawrence, as well as in Newfoundland, were roasting meat on wooden spits over the open fire (Denys 1971: 1-2; Howley 1915: Plate XXXIII; Cooper 1946: 298) and the boiling of water by dropping heated stones into a container of cold water. (Denys 1971: 17; Howley 1915: 230; Cooper 1946: 298). Both apparently belonged to an ancient core of material culture traits which were also shared by the historic Beothuk. Yet, whether or not this core was associated with the major historic language groups, or whether it predated the coming

of Algonkian-speaking peoples to the coast remained the moot problem.

IV. Fishing Equipment

(a) The Montagnais/Nascapi

Gill nets. The three historic tribes diverged in the variety of fishing apparatus represented in the ethnohistorical collections, though the Montagnais/Nascapi possessed the widest range of traditional equipment. Indians northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence manufactured gill nets of twisted *babiche* lines, or of commercial netting twine obtained from the trading companies, tied with a simple weaver's knot. Large nets measured 30.0 m in length and from 2.0 to 3.5 m in width. (Rogers 1967: 85).

The netting mesh measured 5.0 cm to a side. (*Ibid.*). Dimensions were calculated according to a net gauge, a thin, rectangular piece of bone or wood, 5.0 cm in width and approximately 7.0 cm in length. Dry wood net floats were attached to the upper selvage edge of the net by strands of willow bark, *babiche* or, in late historic times, commercial twine and were often charred to make them lighter and more impermeable. Small stone sinkers were lashed to the lower edge of the net to weigh it down in the water. Gill nets and floats of a similar type were also made by the Newfoundland Micmac, but their presence may be attributed to Montagnais influence from Labrador. There was no ethnohistorical evidence that the Micmac of the Maritime Provinces made or used gill nets.

The flat netting needles used to weave the nets ranged from 10.0 cm to 20.0 cm in length and from 2.5 cm to 5.0 cm in width.

Needles were made of wood and bone. They were sharply pointed at the distal end and had a shallow concave or bifurcate base. The upper half of the central portion of the needle was cut out and removed to admit the strand of *babiche* or other netting material, leaving a frame of wood around the perimeter of the instrument. A long, flat wooden spike protruded from the centre of the base almost to the top of the removed interior area.

Whether or not gill nets were a prehistoric item northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence has occasioned much debate. Rogers maintained that, whereas the historic needle and gauge were European-introduced, hand-tied *babiche* nets may have been aboriginal. (*Ibid.*: 96). Both Hind and Speck reported the presence of gill-nets made of skin thongs. (Hind 1963:2, 102; Speck 1926: 278). Willow bark provided an alternative material for this purpose. (Skinner 1911: 27).

The Montagnais obtained nets from the French as early as 1634 (Thwaites 1897: VI, 309). Nets were available during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from the Hudson Bay Company. (Rich 1945:297). It seemed most probable that, because of the rapid adoption of trade nets by these Indians, the making of nets from woven hide or bark strips was an ancient cultural tradition. But the netting needle made by the historic Montagnais/Nascapi was almost identical to the needles used by European fishermen along the Atlantic coast since early contact times and undoubtably influenced by them, though a pre-contact form may have existed, perhaps similar to the lenticular needle employed for webbing snowshoes. Snowshoe needles manufactured

by the Labrador Indians and the Micmac were about 8.0 cm in length and 2.0 cm in width. The needles were rounded at both ends and had a small central hole wide enough to permit a length of the *babiche* thonging to pass through.

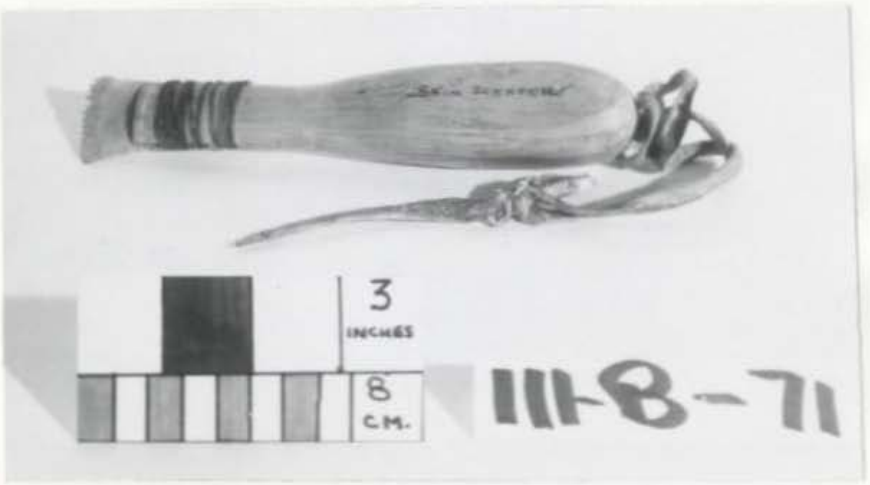
Montagnais/Nascapi composite hooks. Composite gorge hooks equipped with barb attachments were made and used until the last two decades by the historic Montagnais/Nascapi. These hooks varied in length from about 6.0 cm to 11.0 cm in maximum length and from 3.0 cm to 5.0 cm in maximum width, depending on the angle at which the barb was inserted into the shank. The wooden or bone shanks were narrow, rarely more than 1.0 cm in diameter, rounded and expanding slightly in cross-section toward the base. Most were bipointed and were grooved near the distal end for a line attachment. Lines were made of twisted *babiche* or sinew and occasionally braided. The barb was made of bone or, in late historic times, of a galvanized nail. It was inserted into a bored hole so that the barb pointed away from the base and formed an acute angle with the length of the shank. (Plate 11) The barb was secured in place by sinew, whipped about the barb and the shank and knotted. Several examples of bone or antler composite hooks were observed where the barb was carved continuous with the shank. There was one hook of the above type in the Newfoundland Museum which was carved in the shape of a fish. Possibly the manufacturer of this implement wished to exert some measure of sympathetic magic on his prey and so entice it to come to the hook.

Ice fishing northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Ice fishing was associated with a specific assemblage of equipment among the Montagnais/Nascapi. Not only were gill nets and lines taken on a winter fishing expedition, but also a snow shovel and ice chisel to clear and penetrate the ice surface. It was the *form*, however, rather than the *function* which made the Montagnais/Nascapi ice fishing assemblage distinct in the Northeast. The ice chisel, fashioned from a spruce pole about 1.2 m long, 5.0 cm in diameter and equipped with a sharp, conical bone or metal point set into a socket hole at one end of the shaft, was formally similar to the ice chisels used by the Eskimo to the north.

The Montagnais/Nascapi wooden snow shovel had a straight wooden handle about 1.8 m long, with a slightly spatulate shovel head continuous with the handle and sub-rectangular in shape. The head was approximately 50.0 cm in length and 20.0 cm in width. (Plate 12). Indian craftsmen rarely departed from a rigorous set of traditions governing the size and shape of the shovel. On the Barren Grounds where wood was scarce, snow scoops were made from a single brow pan of caribou antler lashed to the end of a spruce shaft. (Plate 13). The shaft portion of both the snow shovel and snow scoop were usually decorated with painted designs.

The Montagnais/Nascapi shielded their eyes from the glare of the sun's rays on the snow while out hunting or ice fishing by wearing wooden snow goggles. The goggles were made from a single piece of spruce wood carved into a narrow, rectangular shape. The face piece was shaped to sit comfortably on the bridge of the nose and conform

Plate 8



Nascapi scraper

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 9



Nascapi beamer

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 10

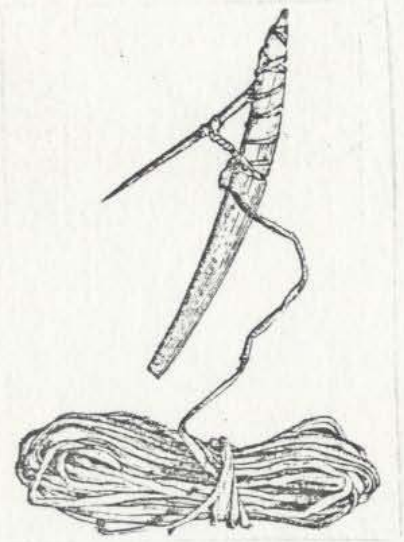
Beothuk artifacts
a. longbone beamer, b. pyrite crystal, c. bone harpoon, d. bilaterally-barbed bone point, e. incised decorated bone piece

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Plate 10



Plate 11



Nascapi fishhook and line
From Turner (1894: 321)

Plate 12



Nascapi wooden snow shovel

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 13



Nascapi snow scoop, unhafted brow pan of caribou antler

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

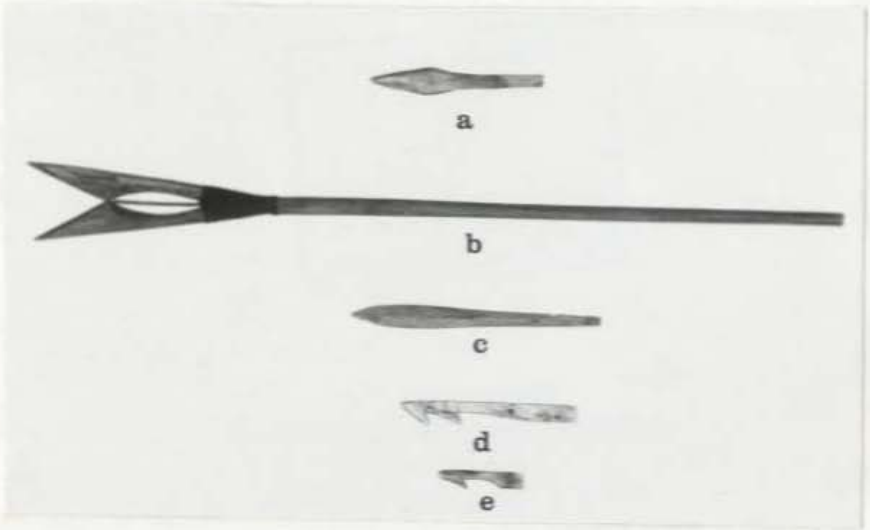
Plate 14



Nascapi snow goggles

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

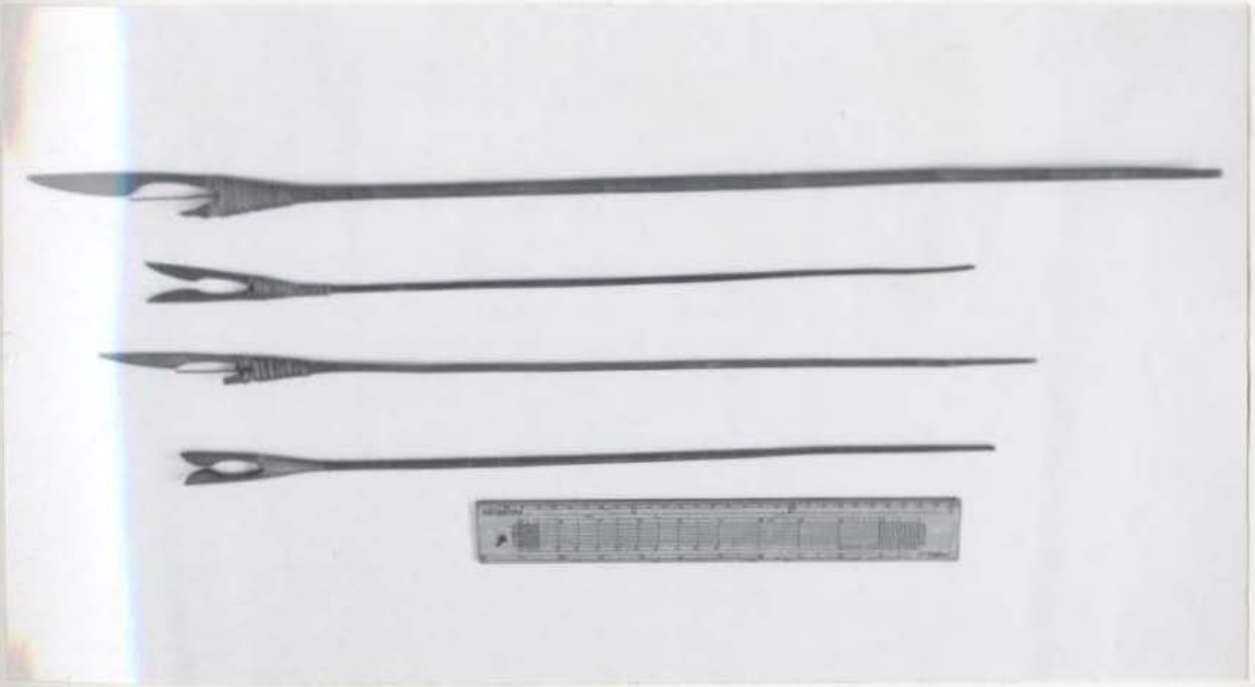
Plate 15



Micmac leisters, spears and harpoons from Badger's Brook, Newfoundland
a. single-barbed bone harpoon, b. double-barbed bone harpoon,
c. antler spear, d. leister, e. antler spear

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 16



Micmac leisters from the Maritime Provinces
Nova Scotia Museum collection

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee, Anthropology Dept., St. Mary's University, Halifax

to the curvature of the face. There were concave hollows behind the eye slits to permit the free action of the wearer's eye lids, and hide thongs were attached to either side of the goggles to be knotted behind the wearer's head. (Plate 14).

No evidence, artifactual or literary, indicated that either the Micmac or the Beothuk manufactured wooden snow shovels, snow scoops or wooden goggles of the same shape and dimensions as the Montagnais/Nascapi implements. The geographical restriction of these forms of winter hunting equipment to areas northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence implied that the historic Montagnais/Nascapi culturally 'borrowed' these items from the Eskimo.

The Montagnais/Nascapi fish spear or leister. Montagnais/Nascapi fish and eel spears were double-headed and each head, of iron in the ethnohistoric collections, was bilaterally barbed. A second form of leister more frequently observed in museum inventories from southern Labrador and the Maritime Provinces had a central piercing point of bone, wood or iron flanked on either side by two flat, curved wooden rods. The shaft was usually of spruce. In 1634 Le Jeune wrote that the leister used by the Montagnais about Quebec was "composed of a long pole, two or three fingers thick, at the end of which they fasten a piece of pointed iron, which is provided on both sides with two little curved sticks, which almost come together at the end of the iron point." (Thwaites 1879: VI, 311).

(b) The Micmac

Brush wiers, nets of intertwined, flexible rootlets and bark, and eel pots of woven wood splints were constructed by the historic Micmac (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 28), though no record of their existence was found in the museum collections. The tribe also manufactured oblong, bipointed bone gorges perforated at one end, which was slightly larger in diameter than the other end. A line of twisted yellow birch twigs was attached to the gorge in such a manner that any tension on the line would cause the bone to pull sideways and act as a toggle. No composite hooks were located in the historic Micmac inventories.

Leisters. The Micmac leister was technically similar to the implement Le Jeune had seen used by the Montagnais in the seventeenth century. Two types of leister point were observed during the course of study. The first was rounded in cross-section and tapered along its length to a sharp point, and the second had a wedge-shaped piercing edge and was hafted in the shaft so that the flat faces of the wedge conformed with the flat surfaces of the wooden flanges on either side of it. (Plate 15b and Plate 16). The bone, wooden or iron points differed considerably in maximum length and diameter. The wooden flanges extended several cm in length beyond the central point and were concavely curved. Shafts were approximately 4.0 m long and 5.0 cm in diameter. Thongs of sinew, *babiche* or split spruce root secured the point and the two flanking flanges in place. Apparently the leister and brush wier persisted as the major fishing equipment

traditionally used in the Maritime Provinces. The Micmac inventory of fishing apparatus was not modified in any way by the early introduction of European nets.

(c) Beothuk. The Beothuk were known to have speared fish. (Howley 1915: 268). Several unilaterally- and bilaterally-barbed bone spearheads were illustrated in Howley (*Ibid.*, Plate XXIV), however the geographic origins of these items remained obscure. It was probable that most spearheads used to take fish and eels were fashioned from iron by the historic Indians. (Devereux 1970: 57-58). Although nets, hooks and lines were stolen from the European fishermen along the northwest coast (*Ibid.*: 92- 7) there was no artifactual evidence that nets, lines, hooks or even wiers existed prior to European contact. Furthermore, it was not known whether or not the Beothuk made lenticular netting needles, but because they manufactured snowshoes, it was therefore probable that they had some form of netting tool similar to the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi.

V. Hunting tools and weapons. Many forms of traditional hunting equipment underwent little modification before they were superseded by more efficient European implements and ceased to be made. Certain unusual conditions prevented their complete demise until relatively late times in areas isolated from European settlement where guns were scarce and expensive. Small animals such as hares, squirrels and ground fowl could be taken almost as easily with a blunt arrow as with a gun, with much less damage to the meat and the fur or plumage.

Montagnais/Nascapi bows and arrows. Northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence the bow and blunt arrows continued to be used by the Indians well into the first decades of the twentieth century. The bow, constructed of tamarack, boxy fir, or black spruce wood, measured approximately 1.7 m in length and 4.0 cm in width across the grasp. In thickness the bow ranged from 1.3 cm to 2.0 cm. Most bows were only slightly tapered at the ends and did not vary in thickness throughout their length. Bowstrings were composed of twisted caribou thonging and one bow could have double or even triple thongs tightly rolled. Montagnais/Nascapi arrows were about .7 m long. Most of the arrows measured approximately 1.0 cm in diameter with very little variaton throughout their length except for a bulbous knob beginning 9.0 cm to 12.0 cm from the distal end and about 4.0 cm in maximum diameter. (Plate 17). A slender spike-like wooden point frequently projected about 2.0 cm beyond the termination of the knob, but often was missing in museum collections because of its tendency to become brittle and break off once the wood became dry. Hardwood was reputedly preferred but spruce appeared to be the most common material for the manufacture of arrows. The arrows were fletched with three ptarmigan, three split Canada goose, or three split black duck feathers. The bases of the quills were inserted into three narrow grooves equally-spaced about the basal circumference of the shaft, cemented in place with coniferous tree gum and then whipped about the tip and base with fine sinew line.

Micmac bows and arrows. Micmac bows were often made of fir (Piers Notes: Printed Matter File, Nova Scotia Museum), but white ash

and maple were used as well. The bowstring was fashioned from a single twisted caribou thong or flank sinew. Arrow shafts observed in the ethnohistorical collections were of hardwood, though Denys wrote in the late seventeenth century that those he saw among the Indians were of cedar. (Denys 1971: 15). Arrows were fletched with woodpecker feathers split longitudinally and trimmed (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 32). Split Canada goose feathers also served the same purpose. Lescarbot maintained in 1607 that eagle tail feathers were highly prized by the Micmac and that one feather could fetch the corresponding worth of one or even two beaver skins. (Biggar 1928: 244). All the arrows examined in the museum collections had three split feathers fetched near the base, yet according to Wallis and Wallis three additional feathers were attached "six inches from the head of the arrow..." (1955:32). Feathers were inserted into grooves cut in the shaft and gummed in place with coniferous resin. They were not secured at either end of the quill with sinew thread as they were among the Montagnais/Nascapi, the Micmac lashing only the quill bases. No parallel to the Micmac practice of fletching three feathers about the upper shaft of the arrow was located in the Montagnais/Nascapi collections.

The Micmac manufactured blunt arrows as evidenced by a set of six in the Nova Scotia Museum. (Plate 18). They also fashioned finely-made arrow points of bone. Several examples of arrows collected by Frederick Johnson from the Conne River Micmac settlement, Newfoundland, in the 1920's had flat, triangular bone points about 1.3 cm in maximum width and 2.5 cm in length. There was an expansion

in the diameter of the shaft approximately 3.0 cm from the point of insertion of the head. (Plate 19). This expansion in the diameter of the shaft on other than blunt arrows was also observed on Montagnais/Nascapi arrows.

Beothuk bows and arrows. The Beothuk Indians fletched their arrows with two strips of Canada goose feathers. (Howley 1915: 33). The shafts of the arrows were about 1.0 m in length and, judging from the fragments of broken shafts in the collections at the Newfoundland Museum and the National Museum of Man, were about 1.2 cm in diameter. The Beothuk were reported to have used blunt arrows, (*Ibid.*: 212) though no artifactual evidence has been preserved to support this assertion. Bows were mainly of hardwood, reputedly maple and mountain ash but softwoods such as boxy fir and black spruce were also used. They were about 1.7 m in length and, according to Cartwright, were fashioned with precision. With the exception of the grasp, the inside of the bow was "cut flat, but so obliquely, and with so much art, that the string will vibrate in a direction coinciding exactly with the thicker edge of the bow." (*Ibid.*: 33). This might have meant that, except in the mid-section of the bow where the hand gripped the stave, the bow was thinner in cross-section on one edge than on the other. The ends of the bow therefore would not be interchangeable in use, as the stave was held with the arrow set against the thicker edge. Cartwright further considered the Beothuk arrow shafts to be manufactured of pine and commented on their admirable straightness though, as among the Nascapi, the Montagnais and the Micmac, arrow straighteners do not seem to have been used in their

construction. The Indians of northern Quebec and Labrador and the Micmac of the Maritime Provinces, as already discussed, preferred to make their arrows from hardwood when it was readily available, but which would have weighed more heavily than pine. Neither the Micmac nor the Montagnais/Nascapi bows in the museum collections exhibited an oblique cross-section, which apparently was a technical sophistication either developed independently by the Beothuk, or a manufacturing skill which had been lost among the majority of historic tribes in the Northeast. This peculiarity of manufacture, however, could not be detected on the existing fragments of Beothuk bows.

By the late seventeenth century iron had completely replaced stone and bone among the Beothuk as the material for fashioning projectile points. The iron point, as stated by Cartwright, was "a two-edged lance, about six inches [15.2 cm] long." (*Ibid.*: 33). Buchan, who journeyed up the Exploits River in 1811, noted that the blade of the Beothuk arrow was "shouldered, but not barbed." (*Ibid.*: 86).

Iron implements classified as projectiles in the Newfoundland Museum collection ranged from 10.0 cm to 15.0 cm in maximum length, and less than 0.6 cm in maximum thickness. The points were lanceolate to triangular in form, remarkably flat in cross-section and each exhibited a narrow tanged base from 5.0 cm to 10.0 cm long depending on the maximum length of the projectile.

The Beothuk iron projectile points did not differ substantially in shape from the historic Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac weapons, most of which were obtained by barter from the trading posts. Yet whether or not the Beothuk acquired European arrow and spear points

through early trade contacts with the French could not be determined from early ethnohistorical sources. The form of the iron implements from which the Indians fashioned their weapons may have been primarily responsible for the shape of the points. Most of the existing Beothuk projectiles were made from square nails or spikes. The tangs on these items had four longitudinal faces which tapered to a flat, beaten head.

Weapons of warfare in the Northeast. Although wooden shields were carried in war both by the Micmac (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 33) and the Montagnais/Nascapi (Thwaites 1897: V, 95- 6), there was no evidence that the historic Beothuk made shields. Wallis and Wallis (1955: 33) stated that the Micmac on occasion poisoned their arrows, a practice not recorded in early accounts concerning the Indians north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence or in Newfoundland.

Spears for hunting large terrestrial mammals.

Montagnais/Nascapi spears. Montagnais/Nascapi spears were poorly represented in the museum collections probably because of their unwieldy size and the difficulties of transporting them. The following dimensions therefore were primarily derived from Turner's description of the caribou spears he observed among the Nascapi near Fort Chimo. (Turner 1894: 317). The most distinctive feature of the Montagnais/Nascapi spearhead was the long, non-tapering shank about four-fifths of the length of the projectile point, which was usually from 25.0 cm to 30.0 cm in maximum length. The head, lance-

olate, triangular or diamond-shaped, was always flat in cross-section. The wooden shaft was 1.2 m to 2.4 m in length and had a diameter of approximately 2.0 cm. The distal end of the shaft had a deep hole bored in it for the insertion of the shank of the head which, when fitted in place, was secured with shippings of sinew line. Because iron heads were manufactured from file blades or metal spikes, the shank tapered more than the bone examples and had a rectangular cross-section. (Plate 20). The shanks of most caribou spearheads, however, varied little in thickness throughout their length. Smaller points of the same general shape were made of bone or iron and inserted into arrow shafts similar to the blunt-ended type except without the terminal knob on the distal end.

Micmac spears. One of the most disappointing aspects of the study was the inability to locate sufficient ethnographical or artifactual evidence on the form and dimensions of caribou and moose spears used by the historic Micmac of the Maritime Provinces to compare with similar hunting weapons made by geographically-continguous tribes. Wallis and Wallis failed to mention the use of spears for hunting large terrestrial mammals. Denys stated that the Micmac tracked moose in the wintertime with lances made of beech wood "at the end of which they [the Indians] fixed a large pointed bone." (Denys 1971: 24). A tendency among the Micmac to point their spears with long, narrow heads with contracting stems, rather than lengthy tangs, was indicated by the presence of two antler spearheads acquired by Speck from the Micmac of Badger's Brook, Newfoundland,

which presently form part of the Micmac collection at the National Museum of Man. These two implements were lanceolate in form, round in cross-section, and had contracting stems which were one-third to one-half the maximum length of the entire projectile. (Plate 15, a and c).

Beothuk caribou spears. In a drawing by Shanawdithit of a Beothuk caribou spear (Howley 1915: opposite 248), the tang was almost one-half the length of the projectile point when hafted. Yet the tang on the single iron spear or lance point in the Newfoundland Museum was more than six times the maximum length of the projectile point. (Plate 21). The triangular head of the existing specimen was small with excurvate sides and rounded basal edges. Similar to the Beothuk arrow points, the caribou spearhead was probably made by seating the head of an iron spike until it was flat and grinding the edges to a sharp point; hence the rectangular cross-section of the long, tapering shank. The spearhead was 40.0 cm in maximum length, 2.0 cm in maximum width and 1.0 cm in maximum thickness. According to Shanawdithit's drawing the tang of the projectile was inserted into a notch or hole bored in one end of a long wooden shaft as were the Montagnais/Nascapi spearheads. (Plate 22).

Hunting decoys in the Northeast. Decoys of various kinds were made by all three historic tribes though it was impossible to ascribe specific types of decoys to an Indian group on the basis of ethnohistorical evidence alone. Wallis and Wallis stated that the Micmac were adept at coaxing seals to the shore by setting out decoys made of

stuffed sealskin or charred pieces of driftwood that resembled a seal's shape (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 29), and it was likely that the Beothuk seal hunters employed similar methods of allurement. Both the Micmac and the Labrador Indians deceived caribou and moose by wearing the animals' skins over their shoulders and holding a pair of antlers close to their heads. Antlers were sometimes set on solitary rocks where the barrenness of the landscape permitted a panoramic view of the scattered decoys which from a distance and in silhouette looked very much like animals themselves.[2] Water fowl were often tempted to alight near floating decoys, carved from wood or constructed of brush. There was even an account of men fishing off the Newfoundland coast being lured into the range of Beothuk arrows by following what they thought to be game birds, but which were in actuality Indian sea-bird decoys attached to lines. (Howley 1915: 270).

Beaver hunting

Beaver hunting by the Montagnais/Nascapi. The Montagnais/Nascapi in late historic times captured the greatest number of beaver in deadfall traps scented with *castoreum*, a musk-like substance extracted from the testicles of the mature animal. Attending traps was only one of several hunting methods used northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence for taking beaver.

During the winter a net was set under the lake ice directly in front of the opening of the beaver lodge. By a sudden hammering

action on the roof of the lodge with a wooden staff, or 'beaver sounder', the hunter frightened the animal out into the net lying across its route of exit. When a beaver was captured the 'sounder', or spruce pole with a knobbed bone butt on the striking end, was employed to kill the animal by a sharp blow at the base of the skull. Bag-shaped nets of woven *babiche* held open at the mouth by cord attachments to a spruce pole on either side were set under the ice by spreading the two poles apart until they were vertically parallel, and there was enough tension to hold the net in shape. The opening was closed by a draw-string device where a hide thong, continuous with the selvage circumference of the net, was passed through a bone or metal ring and operated from the ice surface by pulling on the length of the thong. The Montagnais/Nascapi also fashioned a gaff-like instrument from wood, bone or iron. This weapon was circular in cross-section and had a single blunt unilateral barb at one end. The function of this implement was to restrain the beaver under the water. According to Le Jeune the Montagnais carried a combination ice chisel and 'beaver sounder' as well as the restraining pole when beaver hunting under the ice:

> [The Indians used] ... a long club in their hands, armed on one side with an iron blade made like a carpenter's chisel, and on the other with a whale's bone ... They sound the ice with this bone, striking upon it and examining it to see if it is hollow; and if there is any indication of this, then they cut the ice with their iron blade ... If the water moves, they have a curved stick which they thrust into the hole that they have just made; if they feel the Beaver, they kill it with their big club ... (Thwaites 1897: VI, 301).

Le Jeune also described the harpooning of beaver by the Montagnais:

> [The Montagnais throw a dart, with barbed teeth] against the Beavers, and hold the end of the string [attached to the point], letting it go to the bottom of the water where the wounded beaver dives; and, when it has lost blood and become weak, they draw it back by this string, of which they never let go until they have their prey. (*Ibid.*: V, 61).

No evidence for a parallel practice among the northern Nascapi could be located in the literary sources.

Beaver hunting equipment among the coastal tribes. No evidence of a parallel usage of beaver nets was recorded for the historic Micmac and Beothuk. The Micmac frequently broke into the lodge and speared or, more recently, shot the beaver inhabitants. Lescarbot wrote that the Micmac killed a beaver by striking the animal's head with a staff. (Biggar 1928: 212).

The Micmac speared beaver in the water with a bone or antler spearhead, equipped with a single unilateral barb. The barb was small, approximately 2.5 cm in length and 2.0 cm in width. The shank of the projectile, which was circular in cross-section, expanded from the base of the barb to a maximum diameter of about 4.0 cm before tapering gradually to a rounded base for hafting. (Plate 15e).

Nicholas Denys wrote that during the early seventeenth century the Micmac took salmon and beaver with "a bow and an arrow which has a harpoon of bone at the end, made like a barbed rod, like that which was used in fishing the sturgeon, but smaller." This instrument had a "cord to which it is attached at one end, and the Indian took hold of the other". Once the beaver had been hit with the arrow "the harpoon, which has teeth, holds in some part of the Beaver from

which it cannot be drawn out." (Denys 1971: 24). Denys' description implied that this harpoon had several, or a row, of barbs along its length like 'saw-teeth', a feature not observed on harpoons in the ethnohistorical collections.

Comparison of beaver-spearing equipment both northwest and south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. During a cursory survey of the prevalance of beaver spears in collections from both sides of the Gulf of St. Lawrence it appeared that the penchant to manufacture spears for this purpose diminished towards the Mistassini territory of interior northern Quebec. Rogers, writing of the Mistassini Indians, stated that "formerly beaver were taken with bows and arrows and deadfalls..." without any mention of the use of a spear. (Rogers 1973: 44). In this region the most frequent way of killing a beaver was to draw it out of its lodge and give it a rapid blow at the base of the skull with a staff. The beaver spear and the beaver harpoon, described by Le Jeune, may have been introduced weapons among the Indians of Labrador and northern Quebec, who adopted the implements from the coastal peoples.

Marine hunting equipment

Montagnais/Nascapi harpoons. The whale and seal harpoons were not an independent development in the material culture of the Nascapi near Fort Chimo, but were indicative of a technical skill 'borrowed' from the historic Eskimo. (Turner 1894: 314). Nascapi harpoons had a lanceolate to triangular iron blade, with barbed

rather than rounded shoulders, which was inserted into a narrow groove cut in a biconvex bone socket and rivetted in place. (Plate 23). The socket for the foreshaft was round in cross-section. Unlike the Eskimo whale hunting weapon, the Indian harpoon lacked a head which was detachable from the bone foreshaft, and had a circular wooden disk fitted about the shaft near the butt end, instead of a bladder float. According to Turner the harpoons measured from eight to ten feet [2.4 m to 3.0 m] in length (*Ibid.*), although no dimensional comparisons with harpoons from the ethnohistorical collections were made during the course of the study. The possibility that the Nascapi failed to manufacture toggling harpoons with detachable heads because they were not traditionally familiar with the use of these hunting implements for hunting marine mammals cannot be overlooked, and may be another important segregating factor between the historic Labrador peoples and the historic Beothuk, who were apparently long familiar with such hunting equipment.

From its general absence in ethnohistorical collections, the seal spear did not seem to have been an instrument widely in use among the Montagnais/Nascapi living along the Quebec and Labrador coast, probably because of the early introduction of the gun into these areas. An iron spearhead for taking seal on display at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, had two lateral barbs flanking the base of a central point, which was roughly triangular in shape, flattened in cross-section and finely bevelled along the piercing edges. The barbs formed an acute angle with the shank of the spearhead, which was apparently not detachable from the shaft of the spear once the

head was hafted. No ethnographic data could be obtained concerning this implement and it seemed probable that, like the harpoon, the seal spear was an introduced weapon, or possibly a functional modification of some form of interior hunting instrument.

Micmac sea-mammal harpoons. An antler or bone weapon of the same basic design as the Micmac beaver spear, but longer and equipped with double unilateral barbs, was made for hunting seals. (Plate 15d). Apart from these implements, marine hunting equipment was poorly represented in the historic Micmac collections. Certainly there was little ethnohistoric evidence to suggest that the tribe were once highly marine oriented, as indicated by the early literary accounts. The only sea-mammal spearing apparatus employed in the Maritime Provinces during late historic times was the porpoise spear. Wallis and Wallis maintained that this spear was "really a gaff, the sharp part made of iron, about a foot [about 30.0 cm] long and barbed at one end, and at the other fitted into a light spruce shaft of eleven feet [3.3 m] or more." (1955:31). Although no examples of Micmac porpoise spears were examined in the museum collections, and as the ethnographic description was by no means clear, it seemed probable that the weapon was European influenced in its design rather than a modification of a pre-contact form.

Beothuk sea-mammal-hunting weapons. The Beothuk manufactured a seal harpoon, *ā-ā-duth'*, distinct from those made by every other Indian tribe or historic Eskimo group in the Northeast. According to Shanadithit's drawing, the iron blade of the weapon approximated

an equilateral triangle in shape and was set in a bone socket. (Howley 1915: opposite 248). A length of thonging material, possibly of caribou or moose sinew as was used among the coastal Wabanaki tribes, was secured to the harpoon head, which appeared to be of a toggling type. But, unlike the historic Eskimo toggling harpoon there was no bone foreshaft, the head being hafted directly to a twelve-foot [3.7 m] wooden shaft. Nor was there evidence of a wooden disk drag or bladder float attached along the length of the harpoon. (Plate 24). Another peculiarity of the Beothuk harpoon was the presence of a notch cut in the underside of the shaft near the butt end of the implement through which the harpoon line may have been passed to keep the cord taut, and thus maintain the head in place while spearing the mammal. Neither the historic Eskimo nor the coastal Nascapi harpoons exhibited this feature.

The general accuracy of Shanawdithit's drawing was supported by a complete harpoon head and one bone socket in the Newfoundland Museum collection and one bone harpoon head, not examined at first hand, in the British Museum. A self-pointed bone harpoon head with two tandem line holes was located in the Jenness collection at the National Museum of Man. (Plate 10c).

The triangular blade of the iron-tipped head in the Newfoundland Museum was about 2.0 mm in thickness and finely bevelled along both sides of the cutting edges. The blade width was greater than the blade length, the width being 4.1 cm and the length 2.4 cm. The stem or tang of the blade was inserted, and thereby concealed, in a

notch cut in the slightly protruding neck of the biconvex bone socket and whipped about with sinew. The bone socket was lozenge-shaped in cross-section and had slightly flaring, bilateral spurs. The maximum length of the harpoon head was 10.7 cm, the width at the base of the bone socket 2.8 cm, and the maximum thickness of the socket 1.0 cm. The incomplete bone head in the same collection conformed well with the above dimensions, the maximum length being 7.3 cm, the maximum width 2.9 cm and the maximum thickness 1.25 cm. The socket holes of both heads were narrow, oblong slits, the ends of which formed depressions in the flanking bilateral spurs. Both heads also had two parallel line holes equidistant from the base and sides, bored obliquely into one face and meeting at an obtuse angle at a point approximately mid-way through the head. A single circular hole bored through from the opposite face penetrated the former two holes at the above junction and formed a convenient and secure means of attachment for the toggling line to the socket. (Plate 25).

The rectilinear socket hole of the Beothuk harpoon head contrasted sharply with the socket holes of the historic Eskimo harpoon heads, which were round in cross-section to fit securely over the end of a bone foreshaft. Howley considered the Beothuk harpoon to be related to the historic Eskimo weapon (1915: 248), yet the peculiar socketing arrangement suggested a much earlier association of the Beothuk with the Dorset peoples, who were known to have made self-pointed bone harpoon heads which had bilateral basal spurs flanking a rectilinear socket hole. Jenness maintained (1929:137- 8) that cultural contact between the ancestors of the historic Beothuk and the Dorset could have

occurred during the first centuries A.D. along the northern shore of the Strait of Belle Isle or even on Newfoundland. Dorset culture flourished in Newfoundland until 500 A.D., after which time it diminished and finally disappeared from the island, although it persisted in areas of Quebec until as late as 1400 A.D. The lack of a bone foreshaft in Shanawdithit's drawing indicated that the distal end of the wooden shaft must have been tapered and chisel-shaped to permit its insertion into the narrow socket hole. Dorset harpoons heads were hafted with a bone foreshaft, as were the historic Eskimo weapons. The absence of a Beothuk foreshaft combined with the presence of the distinctive triangular iron cutting blade indicated that, even though the form of the Beothuk harpoon had obviously been influenced by Dorset prototypes, the Beothuk had continued to modify the weapon according to their own cultural preferences. That the Beothuk in late historic times rarely, if ever, departed from this traditional design of harpoon, was strongly supported by the close affinities between the weapon depicted by Shanawdithit and the harpoon heads housed in the museum collections.

Comparisons. It was therefore evident from this comparative study of tools and weapons that there were a restricted number of implements necessary for the basic industries of woodworking bone-working, barkworking, hideworking, and the hunting of birds and fur-bearing terrestrial mammals in the Northeast. The apparent sophistication of certain aspects of the hideworking technology maintained by the Mistassini and Montagnais, such as the presence

in the ethnohistorical collections of weighted fleshers, possibly were attributable to the persistence of specific tool-making skills which in other areas were not recorded or had not survived the drastic changes which have taken place in traditional material cultures during the historic period. Conversely, they might represent regional manifestations of independently-developed techniques of tool manufacture.

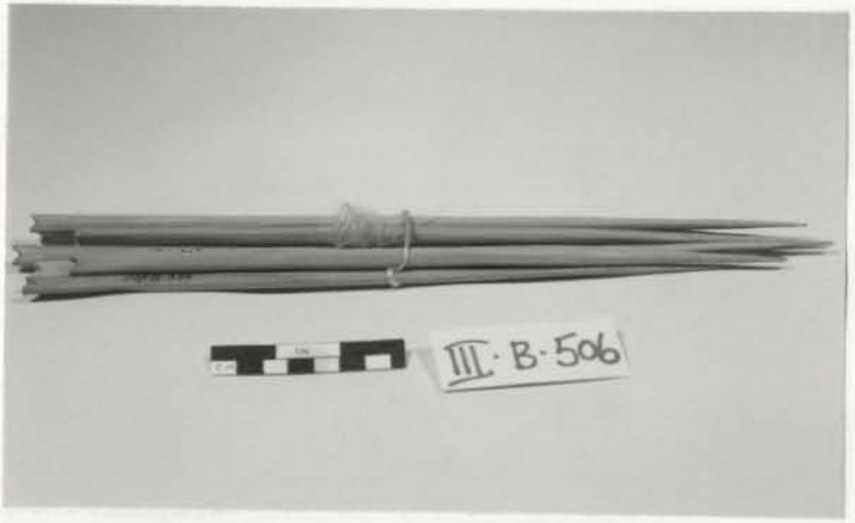
Certain tools, particularly the Indian crooked knife, had an extensive geographical distribution in the Northeast, although whether or not the Beothuk of Newfoundland made a knife similar to the most frequently-observed historical form was not confirmed. References both to hafted splitting knives and drawing knives in the ethnographic literature relating to this tribe (Howley 1915: 16, 306), as well as the presence of at least two slightly-crooked iron knife blades in the Newfoundland Museum, inferred that the Beothuk possessed some type of multi-functional drawing knife which would have been a necessity in the manufacture of such basic items as weapons, tools, snowshoes, bark and wooden containers and canoes.

A major division was defined between the historic Indians of Labrador and the coastal peoples of the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland in the type of equipment used for fishing, and hunting beaver and marine mammals. Whereas nets comprised an important part of the material subsistence culture of the Montagnais/Nascapi as early as the seventeenth century, harpoons, leisters and lines were the only equipment used for the same purpose by the historic Micmac. Seal and whaling harpoons were introduced hunting weapons among the

Montagnais/Nascapi and were related in form to the harpoons of the Eskimo to the north. By contrast, unilaterally-barbed spears and harpoons with detachable heads were more frequently encountered in Micmac tool assemblages and formed an important part of the ancient maritime tool tradition in the Maritime Provinces.

Whether or not the Beothuk Indians shared this tool tradition remained uncertain, for no unilaterally-barbed bone or antler hunting weapons recovered from surface finds in Newfoundland could be confidently attributed to their manufacture, and apparently this historic tribe did not make iron implements of this type. The Beothuk seal harpoon differed from those made by other historic cultures of the Northeast and showed definite evidence of Dorset influence in its design. Tentative proposals that cultural exchange occurred between the Beothuk and the Dorset, suggested first by Jenness, were particularly noteworthy as they implied that the Beothuk were essentially marine-oriented as early as the first centuries A.D. or even earlier, and may have been subjected to external cultural influences which did not affect either the ancestors of Montagnais/Nascapi or the Micmac because of their geographical location. Most important, it was inferred that an ancestral strain of the historic Beothuk were at one time a fairly isolated marine-oriented people, who inhabited the coast of southern Labrador and/or Newfoundland for a long period, perhaps even hundreds of years, before the first ancestors of the historic Montagnais migrated eastwards toward the Strait of Belle Isle.

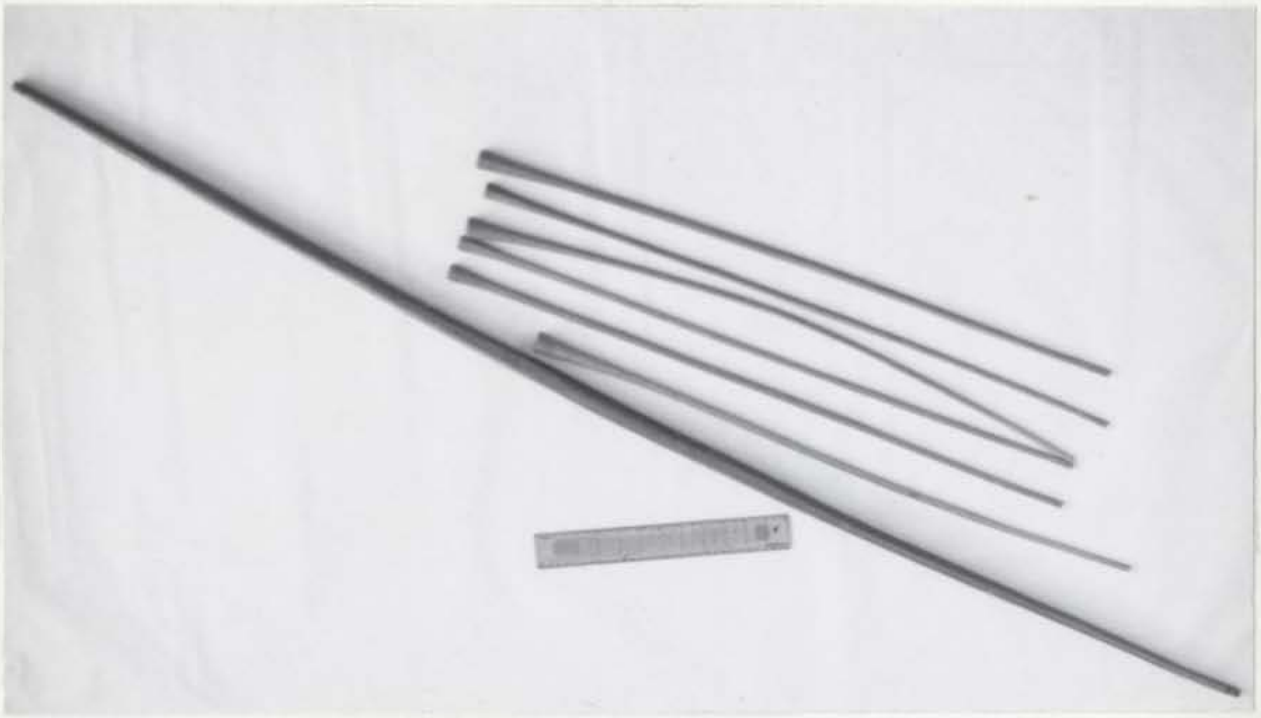
Plate 17



Montagnais/Nascapi blunt arrows

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

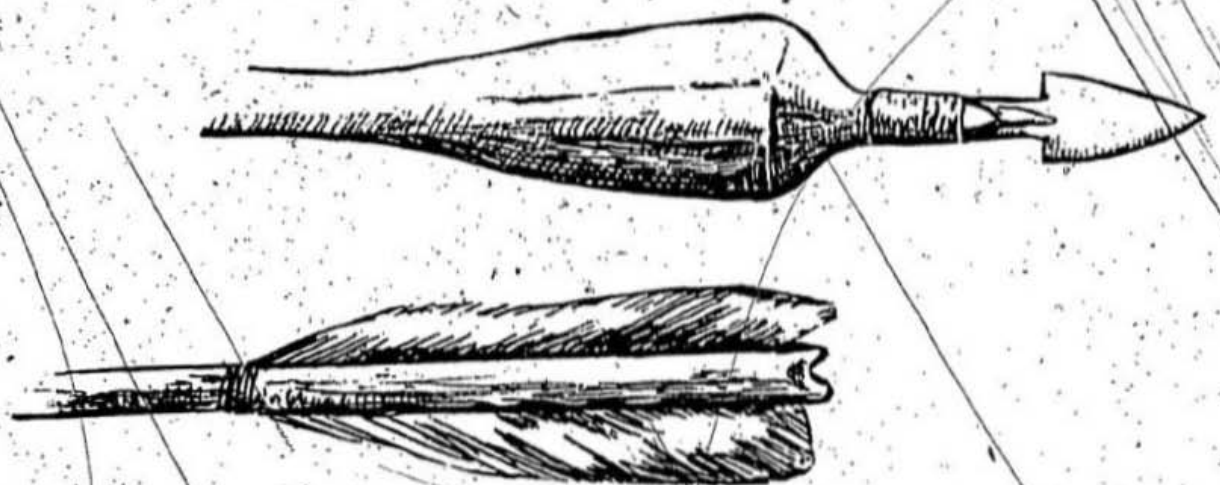
Plate 18



Micmac bow and six blunt arrows
Nova Scotia Museum collection

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee, Anthropology Dept., St. Mary's University, Halifax

Plate 19

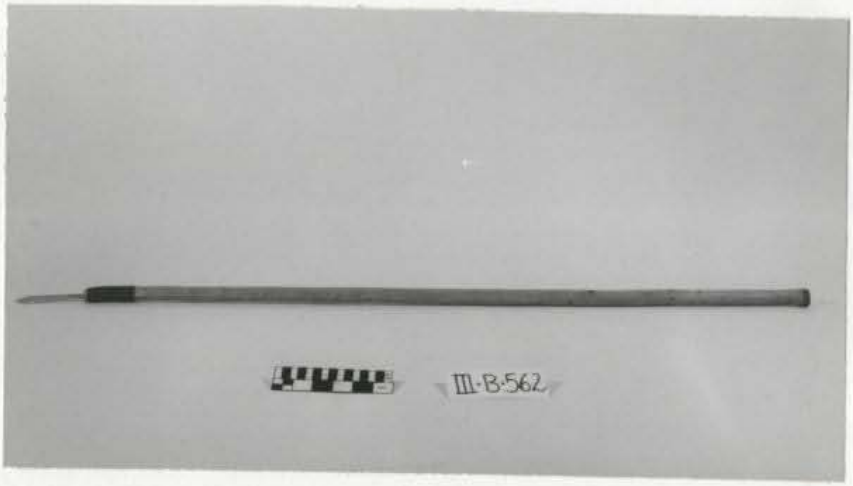


Detail of Micmac arrow from Conne River, Newfoundland
Frederick Johnson collection

a. bone point and manner of hafting, b. manner of fletching

Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

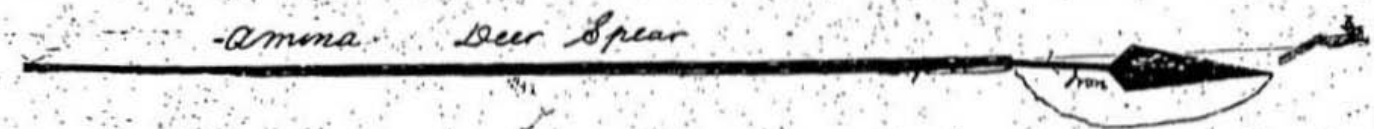
Plate 20



Montagnais/Nascapi spear

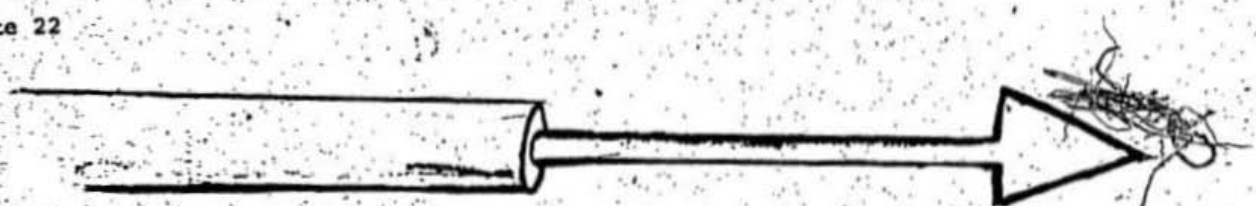
Photograph courtesy of National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 21



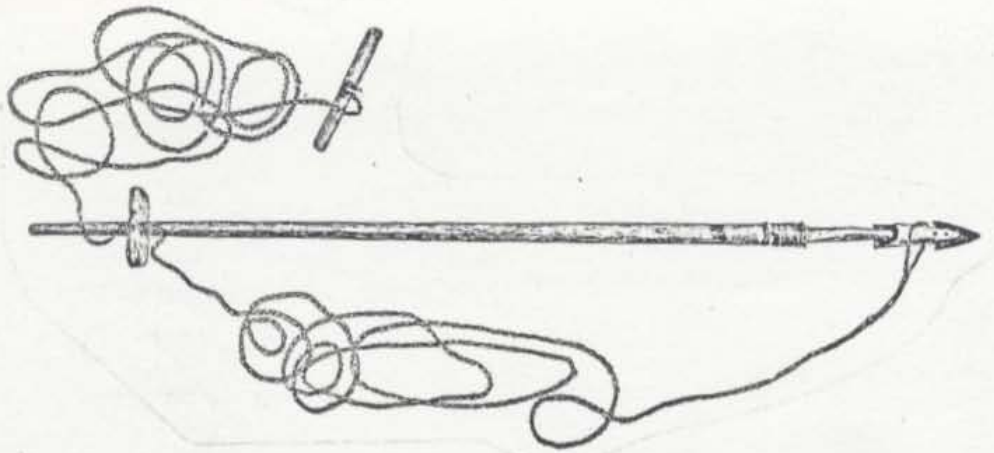
Shanawdithit's drawing of a Beothuk caribou spear, *amina*
From Howley (1915: opposite 248)

Plate 22



Manner of hafting on Nascapi spear

Plate 23



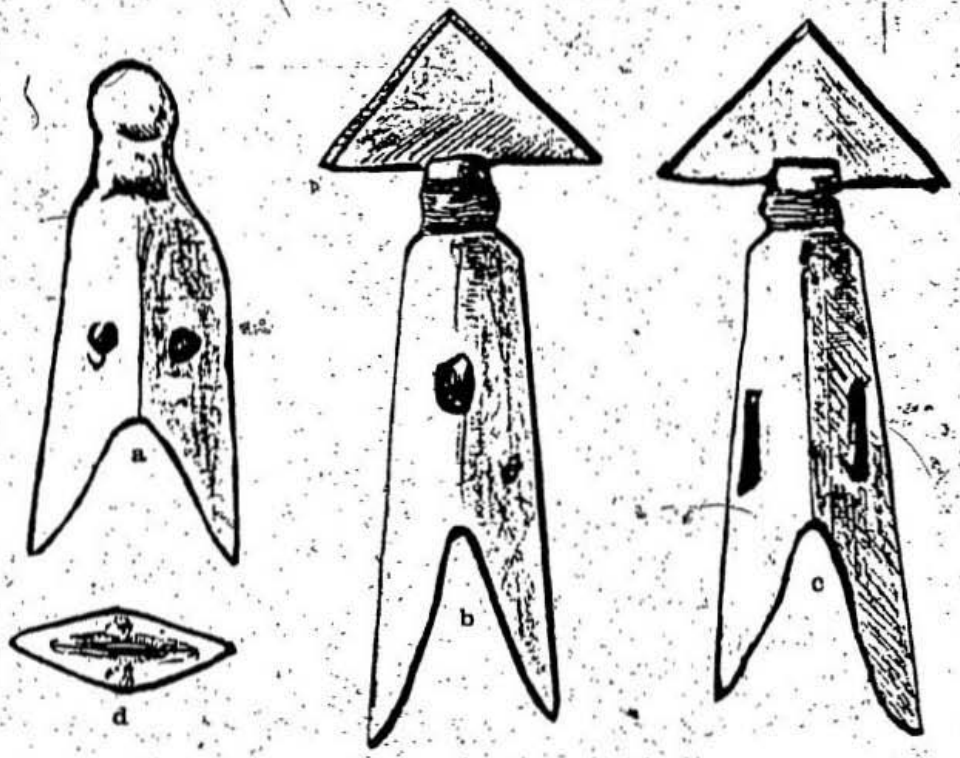
Indian harpoon from Little Whale River, Labrador Peninsula
From Turner (1894: 314)

Plate 24



Shanawdithit's drawing of a Beothuk seal harpoon, *ā-ā-duth*
From Howley (1915: opposite 248)

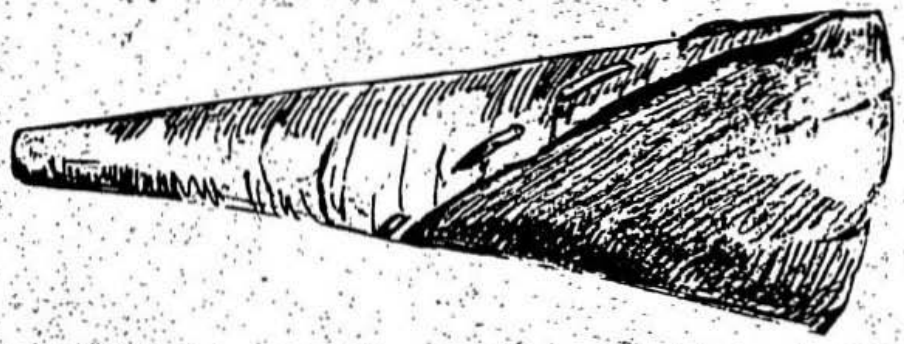
Plate 25



Beothuk harpoon heads, actual size
a. bone socket, b. iron-tipped bone harpoon head showing parallel line holes, c. iron-tipped bone harpoon head, reverse side, d. basal view showing rectilinear socket hole

Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 26



Micmac moosecall
Nova Scotia Museum collection

CHAPTER FOUR

CARIBOU DRIFT FENCES IN THE NORTHEAST

The presence or absence in the Northeast of a large-scale caribou hunting technology associated with the construction of timber and brush barriers, or drift fences, could not be ascribed solely to cultural factors. Environmental conditions primarily dictated whether or not a communal technological trait, once introduced or developed, was to be adopted by an entire tribal group. As subsistence was of paramount importance to the Indian hunter, major subsistence activites had far-reaching cultural ramifications involving radical changes in seasonal social organization.

Environment as the primary determinant for the presence of drift fences north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Although culturally and linguistically similar, the Nascapi of northern Labrador and the Montagnais of southern Labrador differed from each other in their seasonal round of hunting activities in ways which also affected their social organization. Speck, Tanner and Leacock recognized this divison as based, not upon cultural considerations, but upon annual climatic and topographic differences in the regions inhabited by each Indian group, and upon the migratory habits of the most important game animal in either area. (Speck 1931; Tanner 1947: 588; Leacock 1954).

In northern Labrador the main economic animal was the arctic caribou which migrated annually to the coast and back again, just before

and just after the months of heavy snowfall. The caribou were numerous; herds ranged in size to several hundred animals. Barren Ground hunters who depended upon concentrations of these animals occurring seasonally within a localized area hunted communally during the fall and spring by following the herds and slaughtering all that could be taken. The moving tide of caribou was stemmed at river fords by brush and timber barriers erected across the migration route. Most caribou were speared from canoes as the herd attempted to cross the water-course through gaps left in the fence.

The Labrador Indians also employed snare lines in the caribou hunt. A three-ply braided *babiche* cord several metres in length was plaited again with two other similar lines to form a flexible yet strong snare. One end of the line was passed through a loop spliced in the opposite end and set so that the noose would tighten should any tension be applied to it. In the following account Tanner described the use of the drift fence and caribou snare among the northern Nascapi; in it he also presented his observations on the similarities between the practices followed by the Labrador Indians and the caribou hunting technology of the Lapp peoples:

> In early October the caribou - *athen* - collect for the rutting-season at places lying beyond the water-divides and round the sources of the George and Kipekak Rivers; the hunters therefore go there and kill many animals; (from the airplane I could see that the country in this area was more closely crisscrossed with deer paths than I have ever seen anywhere else in the world; clearly there are tremendous migrations of the animal). Especially Mishikamau Lake has been a regular autumnal rendezvous of Indians since very old times. Tent poles of all ages, log caches, 'sweat holes', cairns, signal fire places, etc. are still there in great numbers. The country is low and swampy and surrounded on all

> sides by bare mountain summits. In open country rows of branches or brushwood, in forests strong fences forming the sides of an acute angle lead the caribou to an enclosure. In this at certain intervals are openings where snares of babiche are set up, in which the deer [caribou], trying to escape through the openings, is captured. The other animals run blind with fear into the enclosure, where the hunters watch them and kill then [sic, them] with guns or lances. - It is just the same converging rows of brushwood, sticks with a head of peat, piles of stone, etc., which formed the *hangas*, that were in use for the same purpose still a century ago in northeastern Lappland. In the rutting time the bulls are decoyed towards the hunters. (Tanner 1947: 618).

Turner, too, recorded a caribou drive among the Nascapi near Fort Chimo on the Ungava Peninsular where the animals were frightened by the hunters' shouts into plunging along a narrow, bush trail where the Indians had set snares. (Turner 1894: 315- 6).

In southern Labrador encounters with large concentrations of woodland caribou occurred only sporadically, which made the building of extensive drift fences on a seasonal basis impractical. Small game hunting and fishing thus had a greater supplementary importance during the fall and spring than in the northern regions of the Labrador Peninsula. This reliance upon small fur-bearing mammal species all year led to the manufacture of a wide range of deadfalls, spring-pole traps and snares south of the Height of Land, though in late historic times the uniformity of trapping techniques throughout the Northeast may have been encouraged by the spread of the fur trade in the seventeenth century.

Moose hunting in the Northeast. During the winter moose was the major animal hunted in interior Quebec and the Maritime Provinces. Social organization among tribes living in the Canadian biotic zone

was affected by the habits of this animal during the season when it was hunted. Whether or not family hunting territories existed in pre-contact times in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, as they do at present, was uncertain and may have been influenced by the exploitive practices engendered by the fur trade. Speck, however, argued that in regions where northern hunters and gatherers were dependent upon sporadic or solitary game such as moose, there was an increased tendency towards a breakdown into small family groupings during the winter. During times of scarcity each group could support itself better by hunting and fishing exclusively on the territory with which its hunters were most familiar. (Speck 1931: 576- 7). As early as 1691 Le Clercq recorded a system of allotting hunting lands in the autumn at Miramichi to related Micmac family groups -- a power which was vested in the chief. (Ganong 1968: 237). Prior to the coming of the fur trade the need to know the haunts and migration habits of game animals within a restricted territory would probably not have been so pressing during the summer months when the abundance of littoral, marine and vegetable resources would have supported more communal activities. According to Lescarbot, the Micmac "all the spring and summer-time and part of the autumn, having fish abundantly for them and their friends without taking any pains, they [the Indians] do not much seek for other food." (Biggar 1928: 269). The same author stated further that the Indian hunters tracked moose through the snow with dogs, sometimes for as long as three days without rest until the dogs were able to bring the animal to bay and the hunters spear it. (*Ibid*, 270). Le Clercq maintained that the Micmac were able to

trace the path of a wandering moose by following a trail of gnawed and broken branch tips called *pactagane* which the moose ate as food. Where the direction a moose might take was anticipated in advance, snare lines "made of large leather thongs" were set in its path. (Ganong 1968: 274- 6).

The absence of drift fences in the Maritime Provinces. There was no evidence that large wooden barriers were built in the Maritime Provinces for the corralling of moose or other game. The absence was undoubtably due, not to the Micmac's lack of exposure to the techniques of construction -- as wooden pallisades for fortification purposes were recorded historically among the tribe -- but to the solitary nature of the moose. The Micmac built deadfalls for moose and deer similar in principle to the trapping devices made to take bear, lynx and smaller fur-bearing mammals. Two parallel rows of large wooden stakes were driven vertically into the ground a short distance apart and joined together with lashings of yellow birch. A piece of bait of unknown composition was attached by a string device to a suspended log beam which fell once the bait had been taken and either stunned or killed the animal. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 36).

Methods of luring moose out of the woods during the rutting season were the same in regions where the animal was hunted in numbers. 'Moosecalls', or roughly rectangular pieces of birch bark about 30.0 cm long rolled and sewn with split spruce root into a cone shape with a small opening at the narrow end were manufactured by Indians both south and northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. When hunting

from a canoe, the act of trickling a small stream of water over the side of the canoe soon after the call of the cow was given -- a ploy suggestive of the female moose urinating and expected to arouse sexual passion in the bull and bring him to the shore -- was performed by all Algonkian-speaking peoples in the Northeast. (Speck 1940: 39-42). Such practices had evidently arisen and spread among the tribes long before the beginning of the historic period. Environment dictated what resources were available; cultural transmission was responsible for the uniformity techniques of exploitation.

Drift fences in Newfoundland. Moose was not endemic to Newfoundland prior to its introduction in the twentieth century. The Beothuk tribe were communal caribou hunters during the spring and fall, as evidenced by eighteenth and nineteenth-century accounts of timber and brush drift fences running in discontinuous lines along the shores of the Exploits River downstream from Red Indian Lake. In 1768 Lieutenant John Cartwright wrote the following description of the Beothuk drift fences he and his companions encountered on their journey up the Exploits:

> The deer fences we found erected on the banks of the Exploits are situated in places the most proper for intercepting herds of these animals as they cross the river in their route to the southward, on the approach of winter, and against the return of mild weather, when they wander back to the northward. They have the best effect when there is a beach about twenty feet wide and from thence to a steep ascending bank. Along the ridge of this bank the Indians fell the trees without chopping the trunks quite asunder; taking care that they fall parallel with the river and guiding every fresh cut so as to coincide with the fall on the last. The weak parts of the fence are filled up with branches and limbs of other trees, secured occasionally by large stakes and bindings; in short, these fences and our plashed hedges are formed on the same principles,

> differing only in their magnitude. They are raised to the height of six, eight or ten feet, as the place may require, so that, the steepness of the bank considered, they are not found to be forced or overleaped by the largest deer. (Howley 1915: 30-1).

Where the density of tree growth or a swampy area prevented the construction of timber barriers, 'sewels', or slender poles about 2.0 m in height, each with a banner of birch rind attached to the top, were set upright in a row. The poles were slanted so that their bark banners hung free to blow in the slightest breeze and frighten the caribou away from that area. (*Ibid.*: 31). The timber fences and 'sewels' on the north shore of the river ran in a broad bifurcate pattern north and west to funnel the caribou herds, approaching from the mountainous region to the north, through a gap left in the apex.[1] To prevent the caribou from landing on the opposite shore, a fence was built close to the bank on the south side so that the animals would become confused and 'mill about' in the water. The Beothuk either speared the caribou from canoes on the river or shot them with arrows from 'gazes', or crescentic timber and brush breastworks half as high as a man, built at a convenient shooting range from the passages in the fence. (*Ibid.*: 31).

A comparison of Newfoundland and Labrador drift fences. In both Newfoundland and Labrador the size of the caribou herds and the hunters' awareness of the seasonal migrations of the animal determined the form of hunting technology used by the Indians. There were two major differences in the historic Beothuk communal caribou drive, however. First, the Beothuk drift fences were more extensive,

durable and required greater manpower to build. Timber materials were rarely plentiful enough north of the Labrador Height of Land to construct barriers on such a large scale. Because of their length the Beothuk fences testified to a tremendous expenditure of communal energy twice a year; much greater than that necessary to channel the subarctic Barren Ground herds. Second, the Beothuk in late-historic times were more dependent year-round on the caribou for subsistence than the Labrador Indians. Although it seemed reasonable that almost the same fur-bearing game would be exploited in Newfoundland and Labrador, there was no evidence that the Beothuk maintained a system of alloting family hunting territories parallel to the practice of the historic Montagnais. The quantity of caribou taken each autumn traditionally may have supplied the Beothuk with enough subsistence resources during the winter that intensive recourse to trapping was unnecessary.

The failure of the Beothuk drift fences. By 1829 the deterioration of the drift fences in the Exploits River region had prompted W. E. Cormack to write with almost nostalgic awe:

> It was melancholy to contemplate the gigantic, yet feeble efforts of a whole primitive nation, in their anxiety to provide subsistence, forsaken and going to decay.
>
> There must have been hundreds of Red Indians, and that not many years ago, to have kept up these fences and pounds. As their numbers were lessened so was their ability to keep them up for the purpose intended, and how the deer [caribou] pass the whole line unmolested. (*Ibid.*: 195).

Breaks in the line of barriers would have been as serious as wash-outs in the dykes of Holland; caribou may have passed quickly and unexpectedly through gaps many miles from the small Beothuk

encampments, and thus escaped the hunters' spears. From Shanawdithit, Cormack learned that during the early years of the nineteenth century the communal social organization of the tribe broke down in the interior. Under the pressure of European and Micmac encroachment on their former hunting grounds the Indians had to live by fending for themselves in small family groups:

> ...[by 1811] the tribe became scattered and continued dispersed in bands frequenting the more remote and sequestered parts of the northern interior. In the second winter afterwards [1811 to 1812], twenty-two had died about the river Exploits, and in the vicinity of Green Bay: and the third year also numbers died of hardship and want. (*Ibid.*: 227)

From the same informant it was discovered that during the winter of 1819 to 1820 the entire tribe was situated in three wigwams at Badger Bay. By the same time the following year one-half were encamped at Great Lake [Red Indian Lake], the other half on the right bank of the Exploits River. (*Ibid.*: 228-9). The ravages of starvation and tuberculosis were responsible for a depreciation in numbers from twenty-seven in the fall of 1822 to thirteen in the spring of 1823; one plague aggravating the other as weakness occasioned by hunger would have hastened the spread of the disease, while the disease would have reduced the numbers of able-bodied hunters in each group.

Large rodents, bear, lynx, freshwater fish and migrating waterfowl provided alternative subsistence resources in the interior. Yet, to rapidly adapt their basic hunting technology from a large-scale communal activities to small-scale individualized trapping practices must have been difficult. The eventual restriction of the

tribe to the interior about Red Indian Lake, the upper reaches of the Exploits River and several smaller tributary streams may have led to a reduction in the numbers of fur-bearing animals within the area through intensive hunting. Beaver in particular would have been affected; haunts frequented by these animals would have been abandoned as over-exploitation disturbed the natural regenerative cycle. Bottomfeeding freshwater fish and eels may have been taken sporadically through the ice with spears. The most dependable resource was therefore the caribou, and when the drift fences ceased to be serviceable for corralling these animals, starvation was imminent.

The distinctive adaptation of circumboreal traits in Newfoundland. Although the Beothuk were mainly marine-oriented, their construction of drift fences indicated that they were familiar with an interior-oriented hunting technology shared by almost all caribou hunting cultures throughout the northern hemisphere. The practice of channeling herds through gaps in simple brush barriers was probably one of the most ancient hunting activities known to man in the Northeast.

Yet, the presence of large, timber drift fences in the Red Indian Lake region may have been a phenomenon of the late-historic period. Cut off from the sea, the tribe would have had to maximize their exploitation of the resources at hand. Differences in the size, durability and the materials used in the construction of the Beothuk barriers, when compared with the Nascapi fences, were therefore attributed in this study to cultural and historic factors rather than to an inexplicable stimulus for change exclusive to the environment

of interior central Newfoundland. For, as J. H. Steward emphasized:

> Even though the structural characteristics [of a hunting and gathering culture] have a discontinuity with past tradition, and in some cases may have been influenced by cultural contacts, all must have sufficient adaptability to remain viable. (Steward 1968: 321).

CHAPTER FIVE

RECEPTACLES AND STORAGE CONTAINERS

Pottery making in the Northeast. Pottery-making was a technical skill introduced into the Maritime Provinces as a cultural influence from Indian peoples to the south and probably modified by later prehistoric contact with the Iroquois to the west, though the technique did not reach the historic Indian tribes north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence nor the Beothuk of Newfoundland. Conical-shaped, grit-tempered pots with distinctive dentate-rocker or cord-marked designs have been reconstructed from sherds recovered from coastal sites throughout the Maritime Provinces. Yet there was no ethnohistorical record of pottery being made or in use when the first European settlers arrived in this part of the New World. In 1607 Marc Lescarbot wrote that pottery-making among the Micmac ceased when French kettles became readily enough available to fulfil the Indians' demands for cooking pots. (Ganong 1928: 247). It was also notable that, according to Speck, the word *se' ski· dju* for a folded bark container among the Penobscot of Maine literally interpreted meant "earthen container"; thus implying that in the absence of European kettles bark containers may have sufficed where formerly pottery vessels would have been used by the Wabanaki. (Speck 1940: 102-3).

Birch bark receptacles. Birch bark provided the major material for storage containers, plates, basins, water buckets, drinking cups, dippers and small cooking vessels throughout the Northeast, except north of the Labrador Height of Land where large birch trees were

scarce. The coastal Wabanaki and the Montagnais/Nascapi made five major types of birch-bark receptacles, each having a particular manner of construction and each manufactured for a specific function. Because of distinct differences between the containers made by the mainland tribes and the birch bark receptacles recovered from historic Beothuk sites, the Beothuk items are presented separately.

I. Basin with flaring sides. The type observed most often in the museum collections was a shallow bark basin manufactured from a rectangular piece of birch bark cut diagonally inwards from each of the four corners, or occasionally with narrow triangular corner sections completely removed. The sides were bent upwards into a basin shape and the overlapping corner ends either sewn inwards toward each other at the two ends of the receptacle, or folded consecutively back against the body of the basin and sewn in place. A rim of ash or maple withe was lashed to the upper edge of the receptacle with split spruce root. (Plate 27a).

A similar constructional technique was used by the Montagnais of southern Labrador to make a basin which had eight triangular cuts in a circular bark pattern and was rounded or octagonal in finished appearance. Both the rectangular and the octagonal basins varied greatly in size, the largest observed being 60.0 cm in length, 50.0 cm in width and approximately 30.0 cm in depth. Often the base was lightly scored in such a way that its dimensions were determined before any folding of the sides was attempted. Only rarely did the dark surface of the birch bark appear on the inside of a container, for

this darker rind, if present, was often used as a field for 'negative' or 'positive' design patterns. The design was gently incised in the dark outer layer and, as was most frequently observed on Montagnais examples, the surrounding area scraped bare with a sharp-bladed knife to the lighter inner layer of bark leaving the 'positive' design standing in bold dark relief against a constrasting background. Conversely, a 'negative' design pattern was achieved by removing the dark surface within the enclosed, rather than the surrounding, area of the scored pattern. Inscribed geometric or curvilinear design patterns cut into the dark bark were more common on Micmac bark containers than were large areas of solid contrasting design motif.

The type of bark receptacle described above was made by the Micmac in historic times as a food dish, as well as a container for picking berries for which purpose it was often sold to white buyers. One of the largest Micmac bark basins examined in Nova Scotia, at the O'Dell Inn, Annapolis Royal, was made with the white scaling bark still adhering to the outside of the basin. As this basin was too large to be an individual eating dish, was probably used as a carrying receptacle for dry contents. Micmac basins were rarely ornamented. Conversely, the Montagnais hunter decorated, or frequently had a female member of his family decorate, a container of this type with an artistic representation of the form of the animal he wished to hunt. (Speck 1937: 59-60).

II. The uncut pattern. The second type of bark receptacle had no seamed areas, but was manufactured from a single rectangular sheet of bark which had been triangularly folded at the corners so that a basin shape was achieved without the need of cutting the bark. (Plate 27b). The outer corners of the folded bark portions were then sewn inwards toward one another, or 'wrapped' about the basin and secured to the body of the container with lengths of split spruce root. This type of container had either slightly flaring or slightly contracting sides depending on the degree of overlap at the corners. Because it was used only as a temporary receptacle for food and water, it was rare that a wooden rim was attached to the upper perimeter of the bark edge to aid in preserving its shape. Containers of this type were generally small in size, rarely exceeding 36.0 cm in length and 30.0 cm in width.

III. Cylindrical, oval and conical containers. A round-sided cylindrical or oval-shaped bark container, usually with a bark lid, was manufactured by both the Montagnais of souther Labrador and the Micmac of the Maritime Provinces. (Plate 28). Bark which had been loosened and removed whole from a cross section of birch branch provided a bark cylinder without the necessity of cutting or sewing. Examples from Labrador had separate circular or oval pieces of bark sewn in as bases, whereas most Micmac containers had wooden bases perforated around the edge with an awl and whipped to the bark sides with split spruce root. Recent examples had bases which were nailed in place with small tacks.

During the late nineteenth century a market demand developed in

the Maritime Provinces for round and oval bark containers of all sizes for the storage of dry goods, for household effects and for souvenirs. (Plate 27c). The sides and fitted lids of these containers were intricately worked with geometrical quill designs. Patterns were first scored on the outer bark surface and the slender, flexible quills from the underside of the procupine inserted into small holes, punched regularly along the perimeter of the scored design with a small awl. By singeing the quill ends which projected through to the underside of the bark, the tips could be slightly bent and thickened so that they would not pull out. An inner bark or wooden lining encased the quill ends so that the interior of the receptacle presented a smooth finished appearance. Quillworked containers were not made by the historic peoples north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, although in historic times dyed quills were set under the rim lashings of receptacles as a form of decorative ornament.

The Montagnais/Nascapi castoreum. The Montagnais/Nascapi manufactured a small undecorated, cylindrical container to store the *castoreum* or 'beaver scent'[1] carried by the hunter on beaver trapping expeditions. The base was a round wooden disk. The orifice was closed by a wooden plug having a slender thong and toggle attachment for suspension from the hunter's waist belt. No parallels to this container were observed in the Micmac collections.

Conical drinking cups. The Micmac fashioned a bark drinking cup from a roughly circular piece of bark which they cut along the

radius from edge to center and then folded around into a shallow cone shape. A stick handle was notched at one end and the notch fitted over the side of the bark cone and lashed in place with split spruce root. No examples of this type of drinking cup were located from Labrador or northern Quebec.

IV. The flat case. A single piece of bark folded in half lengthways and sewn around two edges made a convenient carrying case for flat objects such as combs and cards. Most of the Montagnais examples were decorated with 'negative' or 'positive' relief designs, whereas the Micmac cases were ornamented with quill work, bead work or moosehair embroidery. (Plate 27d).

V. Basin with contracting sides. The fifth type of traditional bark container encountered in the historic collections was the contracting-sided, square- or rectangular-based storage receptacle with a circular rim and a round fitted lid. (Plate 27e). In size these containers ranged from 5.0 cm in height, length and width, to dimensions of over a metre and of a capacity to hold nearly a bushel of grain. Many had a thong strap looped through the sides for suspension purposes. This type of bark container had a restricted geographical distribution in southern Labrador as "none had been obtained from the population east of Seven Islands and Moisie River, on the Gulf of St. Lawrence coast, or north of Lake Nichikun, which can be regarded as of authentic or habitual manufacture ..." (Speck 1937: 58-9). Because of its distribution

this design of bark container may have been introduced into southern Labrador as the result of cultural contact and exchange across the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Historic Micmac variations of the five basic types. In addition to the five traditional design types presented above there were several variations on these basic forms in the Micmac ethnohistorical collections. Rectangular wooden boxes, often pegged or nailed together were covered in sewn bark casings ornamented with dyed quills. One particular design of rectangular 'box' had high curved ends and was reminiscent of the rectangular bark container of the Mistassini Cree, which also exhibited high rounded ends. But, unlike the latter, and probably due to the influence of trade with European buyers, the Micmac examples were fitted with curved, rectangular rimmed lids which made the container assume the appearance of a miniature trunk. Lid rims projected about 3.0 cm downward from the edge of the lid and were made of a narrow bark strip bound compactly about with split spruce root. Also, there were plain-surfaced rectangular, circular or oval bark containers in the Micmac collections which had two, three or even four tiers of bark strips either quillworked or wrapped about with lengths of split black spruce root. The bark strips were usually sewn to the body of the receptacle to secure them in place permanently, although there were several examples observed where the tiers were removable by sliding them upwards. None of the bark containers in the collections from the Labrador Peninsula or from northern Quebec were made with bark tiers and it appeared that this trait had a

restricted geographical range within the Maritime Provinces.

Quillworked containers. According to Barbeau (1937: 56-7) the precise quillworked designs on the Micmac bark containers sold as souvenirs during the nineteenth century probably originated with the work of the Ursuline nuns at Quebec. Vows of poverty compelled the members of this religious order to seek materials indigenous to the local countryside for decorating articles of devotion. The technique of porcupine quillwork, an ancient means of ornamentation among the eastern Algonkian peoples, thus became subject to French influence. Through the educating activities of the Ursuline nuns from 1639 to 1729 when the teaching of Indian children was an important task, new skills and designs became disseminated eastwards to the Maritime provinces. With the rise of the souvenir trade in the late Victorian era many experimental materials and techniques were introduced to the market. It was also possible that the construction of intricate bark containers ornamented with tiers of bark strips was influenced by the appearance of horizontally-partitioned European boxes for jewellery and sewing materials.

A round container with bark tiers reputedly of Beothuk manufacture. A round bark receptacle approximately 30.0 cm in diameter and 12.0 cm deep housed in the Newfoundland Museum was catalogued as made by the Beothuk woman Demasduit or "Mary March", as she was named by her European captors. This item had three tiers of bark strips encircling a plain-surfaced inner bark lining. The container had a flat lid made of a disk-shaped piece of bark over-

laid by five bark strips wrapped about with split spruce root, as were the tiers on the sides. A small truncated 'stepped triangle' design was superimposed upon the two outermost horizontal lid strips by three short lengths of split root inserted into holes penetrating the lower layer in pyramid formation and at right angles to the direction of the wrapping underneath. (Plate 29). Yet, it was doubtful that the container was of Beothuk design. The split spruce root wrapping on the sides and lid and the presence of the 'stepped triangle' design (a common stylistic *motif* among the coastal Wabanaki peoples) were both extremely suggestive of the continuation in Newfoundland of a technique of Micmac quillwork which, because porcupine quills were unobtainable on the island unless imported from the mainland, may have been carried on in different materials with the same general artistic effect.

Materials and methods used in the construction of bark containers. During the historic period the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi sewed bark with lengths of split spruce root or twisted strands of sinew taken from the flank muscle of a caribou or moose. The plain in-and-out stitch was the most frequent method of joining, and often a strip of wood splint or split root was inserted beneath the line of stitching to reinforce the bark edges and prevent tearing. Wooden withe rims of ashe, maple, yellow birch, or witherod were often attached to the upper edge of the container by a continuous compact wrapping of split spruce root, generally with a stitch at regular intervals penetrating the bark farther down the edge from the rest of

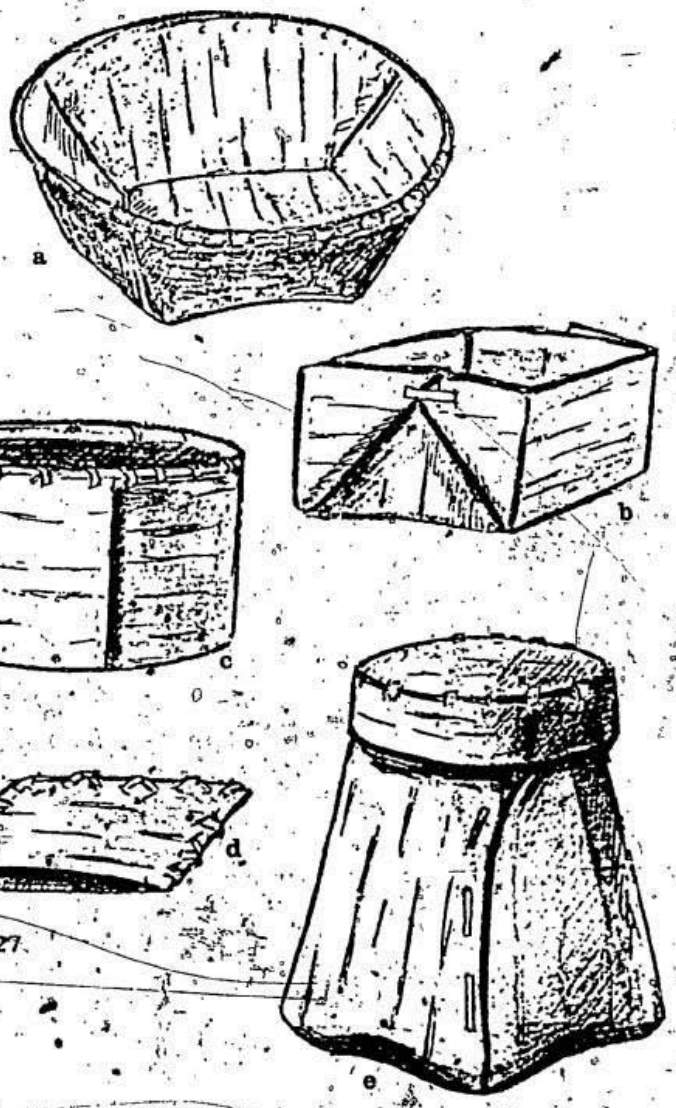


Plate 27

Five types of bark receptacle made by the Micmac and Montagnais
a. expanding-sided, b. uncut pattern, c. cylindrical and oval,
d. flat case, e. contracting-sided

Plate 28



Round birch bark container
Speyer collection

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man

Plate 29



Lid of circular bark box, reputedly made by
Beothuk woman Demasduit or "Mary March"

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 30



Beothuk 'meat' dish'

Photograph courtesy of British Museum, London

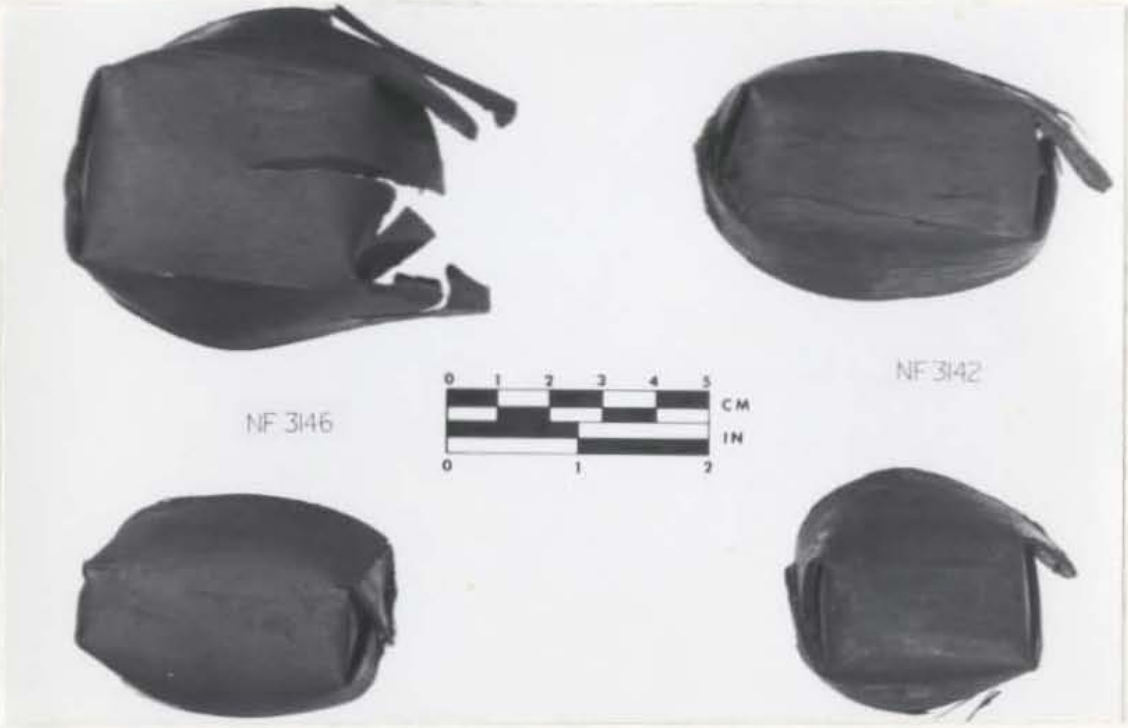
Plate 31



Detail of chevron decorated on Beothuk 'meat dish'

Photograph courtesy of British Museum, London

Plate 32



Basal view of four Beothuk bark receptacles

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 33



Beothuk bark receptacles
a. oval basin, b. 'drinking cup'

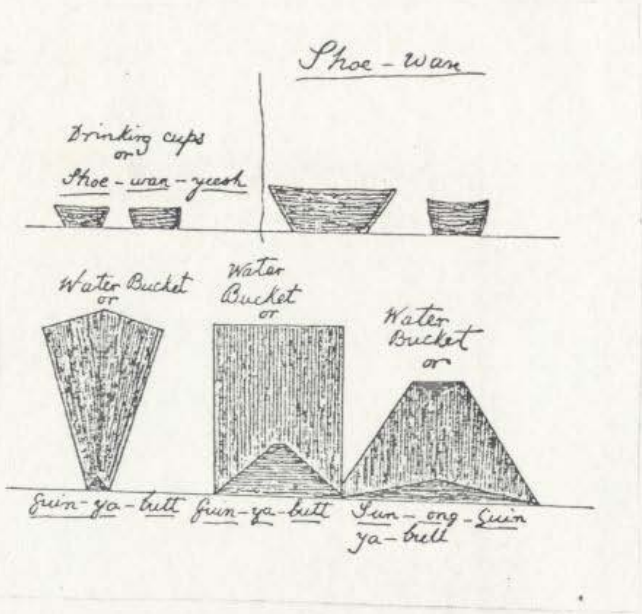
Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 34



Beothuk 'drinking cup' with serrated bark edges
Photograph courtesy of British Museum, London

Plate 35



Shanawdithit's drawing of bark containers used by her tribe
From Howley (1915: opposite 248)

Plate 36



Pine bowl, reputedly of Beothuk manufacture
Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 38



Micmac cloth purse with beadworked floral designs
Nova Scotia Museum collection

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee, Anthropology Dept., St. Mary's University, Halifax

Plate 37



Nascapi decorated knife sheath

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 39



Montagnais infant in baby carrier
St. Augustin, Province of Quebec

Photograph courtesy of Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation, New York

the line. On certain containers the split root only penetrated the bark at every third or fourth wrapping, the others in the sequence merely encircling the wooden rim. A similar technique of spacing the holes along the edge, and thus alleviating strain on the bark, was achieved by wrapping the split root about the rim and through the bark in an open whip stitch. A criss-cross stitch was used where two surfaces came together at an angle, as along the two sewn edges of a 'comb case'. Where the bark edge was subjected to heavy strain the Micmac laid a thin strip of bark along the edge underneath the wooden rim to double the thickness of the sewn edge. The Montagnais/Nascapi bark receptacles did not show this layer of reinforcement.

Beothuk bark containers

Evidence from the museum collections. Of the approximately twenty birch-bark containers in existence classified as of Beothuk manufacture, only two were comparable to types made by surrounding historic tribes. The first, housed in the British Museum, was a straight-sided elliptical bark basin catalogued as a Beothuk 'meat dish'. (Plate 30). This basin was 45.7 cm in length, 15.2 cm in width and 19.1 cm in height. Its corners were cut and folded in such a way as to permit only one overlapping surface at each end. The bark was sewn with split spruce root. Most interesting, there was a chevron pattern worked in two horizontal rows of split spruce root around the upper half of the sides. (Plate 31). The circumference and the reinforcing bark rim had a serrated edge. There was a withe rim wrapped closely about with split spruce root around the

outer circumference. The second example, a small sub-rectangular basin in the Newfoundland Museum, exhibited no cutting in its construction; the projecting side pieces were simply folded at the corners to bring the overlapping sections together at a vertical end seam.

The remainder of the Beothuk containers were divided into two sub-types; (1) narrow, flaring-sided oval basins (Plate 32) and (2) sub-cylindrical 'drinking cups' (Plate 33). The second category was based on the probable function of the receptacles rather than their construction, as the basic constructional techniques exhibited by all existing Beothuk containers were identical. However, the dimensions of the bark cups, being on the average 11.0 cm in height, 7.0 cm in maximum diameter but under 4.0 cm at the base, suggested that the receptacles would only conveniently hold liquid, being highly unstable unless held.

The bases of the containers were rounded on the underside and sub-rectangular in flat view. Because the containers had only two vertical seams, one at either end, the receptacles rapidly lost their rectangular shape in horizontal cross-section above the base and became oval or almost circular in circumference. A short strip of bark protruding upwards behind each vertical end seam served as an extra reinforcing layer and prevented the sides of the narrow containers from collapsing inwards when held. The bark containers in the Newfoundland Museum had undecorated surfaces which were thoroughly stained with red ochre. There were examples, however, which had a jagged edge along the vertical end seam. The bark "meat

dish" and one 'drinking cup' in the British Museum had finely-serrated edges which were remarkably regular in their execution along the vertical seams and around the rim circumference. (Plate 34). The care taken in cutting this geometrical design, simple as it was, closely approximated the precision with which Micmac bark containers were scored for the application of quillwork patterns.

Bark containers recovered from grave sites along the coast of Notre Dame Bay were small in size, under 15.0 cm in length, 10.0 cm in height and less than 9.0 cm in width. The tallest of the sub-cylindrical 'drinking cups' measured approximately 4.0 cm in diameter at the base. It was obvious that the sixteen receptacles found in a burial containing the mummified body of a male child on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay, (Howley 1915: Plate XXXIV) were not representative of the variety of containers made by the historic Beothuk, but were made to serve only an individual's needs. Several sub-rectangular examples under 5.0 cm in basic dimensions were probably non-functional 'models' made especially for inclusion in the grave.

Methods and materials. Sewing, except on the large "meat dish" in the British Museum, was of fine strands of caribou sinew in a simple, but minute, in-and-out stitch, often with a line of sinew running beneath the stitching to reinforce the seam. On several examples the rims and seam edges were overcast either with a whip stitch or a criss-cross stitch. The "meat dish" was the only Beothuk container which had a compact wrapping of split spruce root about the upper circumference similar to bark receptacles made by the

historic Indians of the Maritime Provinces or Labrador.[7] On one or two items where the sinew thread had apparently worn through while still in the Beothuk's possession, the sewing was repaired with lengths of reed or rush fibre.

The uniformity of the bark-working techniques which had been employed during the manufacture of the above containers was supported further by Shanawdithit's drawing of several basic forms of bark receptacles made by her tribe. (*Ibid.*: opposite 248). The upper row of small containers were in block silhouette, and therefore did not present any indication of their construction although in outline they seemed similar to the narrow, flaring-sided oval basins in the museum collections. (Plate 35). The Beothuk term for the larger size of bark basin was *shoe-wan*, the smaller size, functionally classed as 'drinking cups', was *shoe-wan-yeesh* -- a diminutive of the former word. The bottom row of large containers, described in the same sketch as 'water buckets', exhibited triangular dark areas at the base suggestive of overlapping bark corner pieces joined at a central vertical seam. There were three forms of water bucket: the first, *guin-ya-butt*, having expanded sides upward from a narrow base; the second, also called *guin-ya-butt*, with straight sides; and the third, *Sun-ong-guin-ya-butt*, having contracting sides and a small opening. None were cylindrical in cross-section, though it was possible that they may have had oval rims.

Description of Beothuk bark containers from the ethnohistorical accounts. Richard Whitbourne in 1622 described Beothuk containers

as made of "the barkes of spruce and fir trees, round and deep in proportion, like a brass kettle ..." (*Ibid.*: 21). At an Indian encampment on the south shore of Trinity Bay Whitbourne's companions saw three large bark 'kettles' supported on stones in which the Indians were boiling wildfowl. To give an estimation of the size of the containers Whitbourne stated that each could hold "twelve fowls ... every fowl as big as a widgeon, and some so big as a duck." (*Ibid.*) That spruce and fir bark may have been used as the material of construction was not unlikely, as black spruce bark in particular, if not penetrated by limbs, provided a strong and watertight covering. Smaller bark receptacles, also deeper than they were wide, were compared by Whitbourne to "leather buckets that are used for quenching the fire." (*Ibid.*) These were storage containers for dry contents such as the hard-caked granular food mixture obtained by pounding the dried yolks of sea birds' eggs.

Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi wooden receptacles. Prior to the introduction of European iron and copper kettles the Micmac hollowed out large cross-sections of tree trunk by a burning and scraping process. (Denys 1971: 2). Bowls, platters, storage basins and drinking cups were manufactured from birch and maple burls. The Indians of Labrador and northern Quebec made wooden drinking cups from birch burls. These receptacles had a handle, roughly rectangular in cross section and about 12.0 cm in length, projecting from one side. The size of the cup depended upon the size of the burl although most were close to 8.0 cm wide. The handle was perforated with a narrow

rectangular hole for suspension from a waist belt during hunting expeditions. The Montagnais/Nascapi also fashioned a drinking cup from a narrow, rectangular slat of black spruce wood or tamarack which was steamed, bent into a cylindrical shape and then bevelled or gouged around the interior of the base for the snug attachment of a wooden disk base.

Beothuk wooden receptacles. There was no ethnographic evidence that the Beothuk made kettles from a stump or cross-section of tree trunk as did the mainland Indians. The only wooden receptacle classified as Beothuk was a bowl, reputedly taken from a Beothuk dwelling during an expedition to Red Indian Lake in 1819, housed in the Newfoundland Museum. The bowl had a flat bottom and sides which flared outwards from the base. It was apparently hollowed out by a process of burning small concavities into the softer core of a cross-sectional pine block, and then scraping out the charred areas with a pointed implement. There were two short, sub-rectangular lugs carved on either side of the outer rim of the bowl, (Plate 36). Both were curved slightly downwards towards the base. The exterior surface of the bowl was polished smooth, whereas the concave interior was shallow, uneven and even charred in places. The maximum height of the item was 12.5 cm, the maximum width across the lugs, 26.5 cm, and the maximum diameter, 22.8 cm. The lugs on the bowl were distinctive, for although the historic Indians of the Maritime Provinces and the Labrador Peninsula fashioned wooden bowls of a similar shape, no examples have been collected which exhibited handle-like projections

on two opposing sides. This may have been a trait derived from the Eskimo steatite bowls, or, conversely, an ancient Indian trait which no longer persisted among historic coastal groups outside of Newfoundland.

Woven splint and rush containers in the Maritime Provinces, Labrador and Newfoundland. Basketry was introduced into the Maritime Provinces by the Europeans during early historic times, although splint weaving techniques may have reached the area prehistorically from the southwest. The historic Micmac were adept at manufacturing baskets out of coarse reed materials and lengths of split spruce or cedar root. Lescarbot in 1607 recorded seeing provision baskets of rushes and roots among the Micmac at Port Royal. (Biggar 1928: 201). More than half a century later Denys wrote that the Micmac had "bags of flattened rushes which they plaited one within the other." (Denys 1971: 17). A small hemispherical container, reminiscent of the form of pottery vessels recovered from prehistoric sites in the Maritime Provinces, woven from flexible strands of grass fibre was discovered at the mid-seventeenth century 'copper kettle burial' site near Caribou Landing, Pictou County, Nova Scotia. The woven receptacle was 15.2 cm in diameter and 7.6 cm in height.

It exhibited a basic twine weave in which two welf threads twisted together were carried across in such a way that they twined around each warp thread or spine (Harper 1956:16). The construction of the hemispherical basket indicated familiarity with a weaving skill which ensured that the sides would obtain their proper flare:

> The two first stems of fibrous grass went from rim to rim right across the bottom of the basket, they thus formed four warp threads or spines of the basket. To these stems six additional warp threads or stems were bound at the bottom so that the first circle of the weft twining at the bottom of the basket was carried around ten warp threads or spines. As further circles of weft twining encircled the basket, more warp threads were added by bending the lower end of each in the same loop as the warp threads which already existed, but on the next round of weft twining, it was bound separately. (*Ibid.*: 16-7).

Such sophisticated weaving techniques apparently did not reach the Indian peoples north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence prior to early historic times. It was probable that some form of receptacle was woven from flexible strands of split spruce root by the Montagnais peoples, although no examples were observed in the ethnohistorical collections. A single example of weaving among the Beothuk was preserved -- a network of fine spruce rootlets encircling a food packet of dried or smoked fish, wrapped in birch bark and placed in the child's burial on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay. The weft threads were twined around the warp thread to set a mesh size of approximately 2.5 cm to a side.

Carrying and dragging devices. For carrying and dragging purposes tumplines of twisted or braided lengths of *babiche*, split spruce or cedar root, or cedar bark were manufactured by most tribes of the Northeast. Braided caribou or moosehide thonging was used for toboggan and sled lines, and head straps and breaststraps for carrying loads on the back. There was no evidence, however, that tumplines or drag straps were used by the Beothuk, although tumplines were undoubtably made by the tribe.

Hide bags and hide storage containers

I. The hunter's pouch. Similar to bark containers, the bags and pouches made by the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi exhibited affinities in form and design which were more than merely coincidental. Both the coastal Wabanaki and the Montagnais manufactured pouches from the entire skin of an otter or other small fur-bearing mammal on which the opening was a slit cut along the spine large enough to admit the hand. (Thwaites 1879: v., 131; Speck 1940: 128). After the interior of the hide had been cleaned and scraped, the skull was often reinserted in the head. No sewing of seams was necessary.

The persistence of this type of pouch northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was frequently represented by an artistic abstraction of the bag's design. Two small tabs of hide, cloth or tassels of yarn were attached to the bottom corners of oval or triangular bags, a trait visually suggestive of the hind feet of an animal.

It was not known if the Beothuk made a similar kind of receptacle. A single, brief reference to the discovery of a martin skin pouch, containing a few European coins, was the only evidence which could be located on the use of hide containers by this tribe. (Howley 1915: 273).

II. The fire-kit bag. Pouches made of the whole skins of small mammals were used to carry burning punk, or birch fungus, which produced no flame and very little smoke, for lighting fires. The importance of the 'fire' bag to the Micmac was emphasized by Lescarbot in the severe punishment accorded to an Armouchiquois woman who stole the "tinder-box (for without which they [the Indians] can

do nothing)" from Membertou's cabin. (Biggar 1928: 264). The Micmac pouch may have been lined with fine clay or halves of clam shells to prevent the sides of the bag from charring from the burning punk, similar to a Penobscot practice described in 1893 by Nicholar. (1893: 141). No evidence could be obtained on whether or not the Montagnais/Nascapi 'fire' bags were lined in the above manner.

III. Triangular and oval hide bags. The narrow, roughly triangular shape of most Montagnais/Nascapi tobacco bags was similar to that of the hide knife sheath (Plate 37) and although speculative, may have been associated with the latter, as in early historic times almost every hunter wore a sheath either at his neck or on his belt. A cognitive relationship between the knife sheath and the occupation of hunting may have led to an extension of the triangular shape to other receptacles carried on a hunting expedition, among them the tobacco pouch.

Montagnais/Nascapi caribou hide tobacco pouches ranged from 20.0 cm to 40.0 cm in length and were of a truncated oval to a roughly triangular shape. A vertical row of pockets, generally three in number, was made from rectangular pieces of hide sewn along three edges to the hide backing. Among the interior-based peoples of Labrador the tobacco pouch was worn outside of the clothing, either over the shoulder by means of a hide strap from 3.0 cm to 8.0 cm wide sewn to the two outer top edges of the bag, or by a hide flap which tucked under the waist belt. Flat pouches of the same outline shape with a single pocket closed by a hide or cloth flap decorated

with painted or beaded designs were also present in museum collections from the Labrador Peninsula.

Triangular bags were used by the Micmac shaman for storing magico-religious pharaphernalia. The Micmac *sagamore*, Membertou, "hanged at his neck the mark of this [shamanistic] profession, which is a purse triangle-wise, covered with their embroidery-work, that is to say, with *natachias*." (Biggar 1928: 177).

IV. Decorated hide pouches. Oval, triangular or rectangular bags, sewn across the base and up the two sides were made by the Micmac of Nova Scotia, though European cloth and thread replaced hide and twisted sinew in early historic times. Many examples had ornamental curvilinear or floral patterns worked in beads or moosehair embroidery -- the realistic floral designs reminiscent of early French influence. (Plate 38). Denys' account mentioned two types of pouches made by the Micmac during the seventeenth century, the drawstring and the latch-fastening, both types known as *peschipotys*:

> A *peschipoty* is anything which is closed by a string or secured like a purse, provided that the whole does not surpass in size a bag for holding prayer-books. They are made of Marten, of Squirrel, of Muskrat, or other little animals; others are of Moose skin, or of Sealskin; these are of the breadth of the hand and a little longer. One side is turned over the other with a little latchet which makes several turns to close it, in the fashion of our leather paper holders. Those made of skins have strings like the purses, and all those peschipotys serve to hold tobacco or lead for hunting. (Denys 1971: 35-6).

The practice of decorating bags with porcupine and bird quills was not restricted to the Wabanaki. In 1634 Vimont described an encounter with an Indian from northern Quebec who had a "tobacco pouch, from which he [the Indian] drew a smaller one, and from the latter a third,

neatly embroidered in their fashion with rows of purcupine quills. (Thwaites 1897: XVII, 125).

V. Montagnais/Nascapi leg-skin bags. Leg-skin bags, manufactured from rectangular hide strips taken from the metapodial region of the caribou leg, were used as large storage containers by the Indians of Labrador, and northern Quebec. Several hide strips were sewn parallel to one another down the long axes to form the sides of the bag. The base was made of four skins sewn together in such a way as to produce a long, narrow rectangular shape, the width at the ends being about one-third the length. The container's width was increased by inserting two triangular pieces, sewn base to base in diamond shape, into the basal pattern to form a narrow, six-sided polygon. A rim of smoked moosehide was sewn with a gathered stitch around the upper circumference of the bag, which was perforated at regular intervals to admit a drawstring. There were two knob-like hide handles stuffed with caribou hair at either end of the bag. (Rogers 1967: 37-8).

In the late nineteenth century Turner reported that the Nascapi at Fort Chimo used leg-skin bags "to hold the clothing, furs, and other valuables. When on a trip they [the bags] are invariably carried. If the journey be performed on foot the two ends are tied with a thong and the bags thrown over the shoulder." (1894:302). The greater mobility of the historic Nascapi hunters, when compared with the more sedentary Micmac, may have encouraged the persistence in Labrador of large hide bags which were both flexible and light

in weight for the transportation of personal possessions and furs. Neither the large legskin containers nor the simple hide or cloth 'roll-up' bags represented in the museum inventories from Labrador were located in collections from the Maritime Provinces.

VI. Quivers. Little comparative data could be found on the types of quivers used by the three tribal entities. Both the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi made a cylindrically-shaped hide receptacle for arrows which they carried on their back so that the arrows could be reached easily over the right shoulder. According to Wallis and Wallis, Micmac quivers were of otter-skin and were slung low enough that arrow shafts would not catch on protruding branches. (1955:33). A large thong strap sewn to the quiver was passed beneath the right arm and over the left shoulder. A smaller thong secured the first strap to the Micmac hunter's coat so that it would not slip out of position. The Montagnais/Nascapi quivers were made of caribou hide and were sewn to a broad strap worn diagonally across the back and under the right arm. Arrows were often simply pushed downwards through the waist belt. The Beothuk had hide quivers, but the form was unknown. Quivers were mentioned only briefly in the literary accounts concerning the Beothuk. A quiver containing arrows formed part of the gravegood assemblage at the burial site of Mary March. (Howley 1915: 193).

VII. Meat containers. Meat caches were similar among the three tribal entities; frozen meat was preserved during the winter months in underground hollows, which among the Beothuk were sometimes 1.2 m

deep, sub-rectangular in cross-section and lined with birch bark. (*Ibid.*: 190). Among all three Indian groups the stomachs and bladders of large animals, such as the caribou and moose, were inflated and dried as storage containers for grease, meat and vegetable foodstuffs. Both the Micmac and the Beothuk used inflated seal bladders and water-tight receptacles of a single, entire seal-skin to store seal oil and animal grease. (*Ibid.*: opposite 246; Wallis and Wallis 1955:64). Often a simple framework of wooden withes served to preserve the three-dimensional shape of the above containers.

Receptacles for children. A fur-lined hide or cloth sack-like receptacle was made by the historic peoples of the Labrador Peninsula for the confinement and transportation of very young children. (Plate 39). The child was suspended in a bag equipped with hide straps which could be worn over the shoulders of the mother. Small hide or cloth hammocks were also stretched between poles where the child was kept while the mother attended to domestic duties.

The Beothuk woman carried her child on her back, but unlike the Montagnais/Nascapi Indians, she placed the young child in a hood sewn to her cossack. In 1811 Buchan wrote that the only "discernable difference between the dress of the sexes, was the addition of a hood attached to the back of the cossack of the female for the reception of their children." (Howley 1915: 86). No other information could be obtained concerning the dimensions of the carrying sack or the techniques employed in its manufacture, though hoods for the confinement of children were also used by the historic Eskimo. (Robert

McGhee: personal communcation).

The wooden cradleboard was reported in use among the Micmac in Lescarbot's account of 1607. (Biggar 1928: 152). Denys maintained that the making and carving of the cradleboard for the child-to-be was men's work, usually done by the child's father or near male relative. (Denys 1971: 18). Cradleboards in early historic times were often ornately carved and decorated with shell beads or porcupine quillwork (Ganong 1968: 89), although no ornamented boards were examined first-hand in the ethnohistorical collections. One cradleboard, made during the first decade of the twentieth century and housed in the Citadel Museum, Halifax, was made from a U-shaped wooden bracket, about 40.0 cm in maximum width, lashed by *babiche* thongs to a rectangular board so that the bottom of the bracket formed a rest for the child's feet. A narrow slat of wood was attached horizontally to the back of the board and hide straps looped around each end of the crossbar so that the cradleboard could be suspended from above. The transverse bar was located along the length of the board so that, once elevated by the strap, the board hung vertically. There was also a hooking device for securing the lower part of the board to a belt or waist strap. The child was secured in the wooden frame by attaching straps to either side of the bracket and firmly lacing the straps across the child's body. Cradleboards were 80.0 cm long and 40.0 cm wide. The literary accounts of elaborately-carved cradleboards among the Micmac were indicative of the same trend of ornate woodworking exhibited by coastal Wabanaki peoples to the south, particularly the Penobscot of Maine, where

the "care exercised in its [the cradleboard's] construction is said to have been the indication of his [the father's] regard for the offspring." (Speck 1940: 76). This tradition probably reached the Maritime Provinces from the south during late Woodland times and did not spread along the coast to Newfoundland.

Comparisons. A major division existed between the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi as the result of a prehistoric influx of cultural ideas into the Maritime Provinces from the south and west. Pottery and the use of the wooden cradleboard were foremost among the items which did not spread northwards to Labrador or Newfoundland, though the cradleboard was recorded among the Mistassini in late historic times. (Rogers 1967:62).

Similarities observed between the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi bark containers, based solely upon a comparison of late historic receptacles, were probably the result of fairly recent cultural exchange across the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The Beothuk were apparently removed from this sphere of influence responsible for the presence of five distinct historic types of bark containers on the mainland. Beothuk containers in the museum collections exhibited two major diagnostic traits, (1) a single vertical end seam, and (2) no incised decoration on the bark surfaces. There were no immediately-observable parallels in form, construction and design between the Beothuk containers and any one of the five types from the Maritime Provinces and Labrador.

CHAPTER SIX

TRANSPORTATION

Montagnais/Nascapi runner-sleds. The practice of harnessing dogs to runner-sleds and toboggans was not aboriginal. The tandem dog harness was probably adopted from French Canadian fur traders whose knowledge of the dog-sled was influenced by contact with the Eskimo to the north. At Davis Inlet and on the Barren Grounds dogs were harnessed in Eskimo fashion -- a late historic development among the Nascapi. The dog whip made by the Labrador Indians showed close parallels with the Eskimo whip except that the stock was lighter and more slender in form.

The only recorded type of aboriginal runner-sled was the canoe-sled. Rogers described this sled as having "two narrow, rather thin stanchions, one near each end of the runners. They were not individual pieces of wood but part of the runners, being cut from the same piece of wood. The two runners were connected by two transverse crossbars attached to the tops of the stanchions." (Rogers 1967: 106). The canoe was inverted on top of the sled and secured by ropes to the ends of the sled runners. No evidence was located to support the presence of the canoe-sled among the historic Micmac.

A second sled design, with wooden slab runners joined together with six to eight transverse slats equidistant from one another along the sled's length, was similar to the Eskimo *komatik*. In construction the sled was rigid and unyielding, and therefore difficult to manipulate over rough terrain. The wooden slabs were either steamed and curved

upwards in front, or carved to form an oblique angle downwards from the top of the runner. A hide thong was attached as a hauling strap to the front ends of both runners.

The Micmac runner-sled. The Micmac runner-sled, constructed from yellow birch or maple, was large enough to haul half a moose. To manufacture the sled the Micmac bored three holes at regular intervals along the upper surface of the wooden runners and inserted three narrow stanchions into the holes. The upper ends of the stanchions were then let into corresponding holes in two upper bars. Three transverse wooden slats, two set diagonally and one at right angles to the upper surface of the side bars, were placed across the runners and secured with *babiche* lashings at points directly above the stanchions. (Piers Notes: Printed Matter File, Nova Scotia Museum). The lashings were left loose enough to allow the Indian hunter to draw one runner slightly ahead of the other, and so lessen the width of the sled when moving through a narrow passage. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Rand described sleds of almost 3.0 m in length. Each crossbar on these sleds was lashed at either end to the runners by a thong "sunk into a groove to keep it from catching and wearing off." Rand praised the practicality of the flexible sled:

> The whole forms a light, convenient, yielding, yet strong sledge for conveyance through the woods. Such sledges are especially adapted for hunting on snowshoes, and they readily yield to the uneven surfaces, slipping over the snow and windfalls; and even if they capsize, they sustain no injury, the load, being bound on, can be readily righted. This was the *tobakun* of olden times. (1894: 451).

Beothuk sleds. The Beothuk used sleds, for Buchan's account referred to the "marks of the sledges" on which the Indians hauled their caribou meat. (Howley 1915: 123). Whether or not the tracks observed were of a flat toboggan type or of a runner-sled type was impossible to determine from this brief statement alone. Shanawdithit's drawing of a Beothuk "Smoking or Drying House for Venison" (*Ibid.*: opposite 246) depicted two indistinct rectangular objects in the foreground which, according to Howley, may have represented sleds. (*Ibid.*:246). The Beothuk also dragged a *bochmoat*, or sealskin sled. From a close examination of Shanawdithit's sketch of this article it appeared that the sled consisted of a single entire sealskin, cleaned and lined with a wooden framework to maintain the sides rigid enough to hold seal oil, whale oil or grease. The grain of the seal's fur made the skin effective when hauled over a snow surface. Yet, it was a means of conveyance not recorded in early ethnographic accounts concerning the material culture of the mainland Indians. Tanner (1947: 620) observed a Nascapi practice of lining the bottom of sleds with sealskin, a custom probably borrowed from the Eskimo.

The Montagnais/Nascapi runnerless sled or "tabaskan". Flat, runnerless sleds were used by the historic Indians throughout Labrador and the Maritime Provinces. The *tabaskan* manufactured by the Montagnais/Nascapi was made from two wooden slabs, usually of tamarack or black spruce, which had been dressed with a crooked knife to 2.0 cm in maximum thickness. The boards were trimmed to match in length and the front ends steamed and bent to the desired curve. (Plate 40). Often this

curve was fairly steep, rising 25.0 cm to 40.0 cm above the ground surface. The two boards were secured together laterally by a series of five transverse wooden slats set equidistantly apart along the length of the sled and lashed to the two bottom boards with hide thongs. Holes were bored in the planks to admit the thongs, which passed through at four places; at either end of the cross-bar and on either side of the central crevice. Where these hide lashings passed across the bottom of the boards they were let into grooves to prevent them from wearing when the sled was in use. A stout length of *babiche* or twisted caribou sinew was attached to either end of the foremost cross-bar, set transversely along the elevated front edge of the sled, and the cord drawn taut through a basal notch cut in either end of the second bar to prevent the curve from straightening under stress. The thonging was extended along the sides through notches in the third and fourth cross-bars, and wrapped round the ends of the heel bar where it was knotted. The Montagnais/Nascapi runnerless sleds measured approximately 3.0 m in length, close to 23.0 cm in width at the elevated front edge, 35.0 cm across the second bar and from 45.0 cm to 50.0 cm between the second and third bars. From this point back the *tabaskan* tapered in width to a mere 12.0 cm to 15.0 cm at the heel. A hide drag strap several metres long was secured to the ends of the second bar at the base of the curved section.

The Micmac runnerless sled or 'tabagan'. In its shape and construction the Micmac runnerless sled was distinct from its counterpart among the Montagnais/Nascapi. The Micmac *tabagan* was shorter than the latter, measuring from 1.8 m to 2.5 m in length, and wider, with a

maximum width of 60.0 cm. According to Wallis and Wallis the *tabagan* was made from a "single [wooden] slab turned up in the front." (1955: 51). Yet, from Piers' Notes it became debatable that, on occasion, more than one slab was used:

> It [the *tabagan*] is made from thin slabs of Rock Maple, split down from this tree.
>
> A suitable tree is first looked for, in which the branches are conveniently placed. Then an axe is inserted in crotch where a branch arises from trunk, until a slab is stripped down to a cut which had previously been made near the bottom of the tree. Then a similar slab is split off from another branch crotch, a little above; which thus provides a thin slab for the toboggan. Others are then got in the same way, if necessary. (Piers' Notes: Printed Matter File, Nova Scotia Museum).

Comparison of the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi runnerless sled. Compared with the Montagnais/Nascapi *tabaskan* the Micmac sled was functionally inferior. The use of the double boards rather than the single wooden slab north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence may be attributable to the lack of large trees in the northern part of the Labrador Peninsula, but it most certainly had technical advantages as well. First, a construction involving double boards ensured flexibility. Second, because of its narrow, almost wedge-shape, the northern *tabaskan* not only could be drawn through winding trails in the forest, but also be pulled rapidly across open surfaces of deep, fairly soft snow without seriously floundering. Heavy loads placed strategically back from the ends elevated the 'nose' of the sled so that it glided over soft snow rather than sinking downwards, as might a short, wider toboggan or a sled with runners. Such sophistications of sled design marked a people who were highly mobile after the first snows had fallen. That the Micmac may have lost the ability to manufacture or,

more probably, never developed a form of winter transportation which conveyed loads with such speed and ease, may be determined by environmental as well as by cultural factors. The lack of large migrating herds whose seasonal appearances demanded sudden and rapid moves on the part of their hunters, the less rugged terrain and the generally milder winters and nearness of abundant marine resources in the Maritime Provinces may all have contributed to reduce the need for a highly efficient means of winter transportation among the Micmac.

Montagnais/Nascapi snowshoes. Rogers recorded five distinct styles of snowshoes among the Mistassini of northern Quebec; 'pointed', 'elbow', swallow-tail, beaver-tail and bear paw. (1967: 9). The 'pointed' snowshoe had a protruding wooden 'tail', was long, narrow and turned upward at the front. Rogers maintained that this style was introduced historically into the Mistassini district from the region about James Bay. (*Ibid.*). The 'elbow' snowshoe, which ceased to be made after the first decades of the twentieth century, may have paralleled the 'pointed heel' type of snowshoe constructed most frequently by the historic Micmac. Rogers obtained no additional information on the latter type other than it was shaped "something like a tear-drop." (*Ibid.*)

The majority of snowshoes in the Montagnais/Nascapi museum collections were broad with little or no protruding 'tail' section. The hoops were oval to almost circular in circumference, with the maximum width falling just below the toe bar. The swallow-tail snowshoe had a short protruding heel bar (Plate 41), whereas the beaver-tail

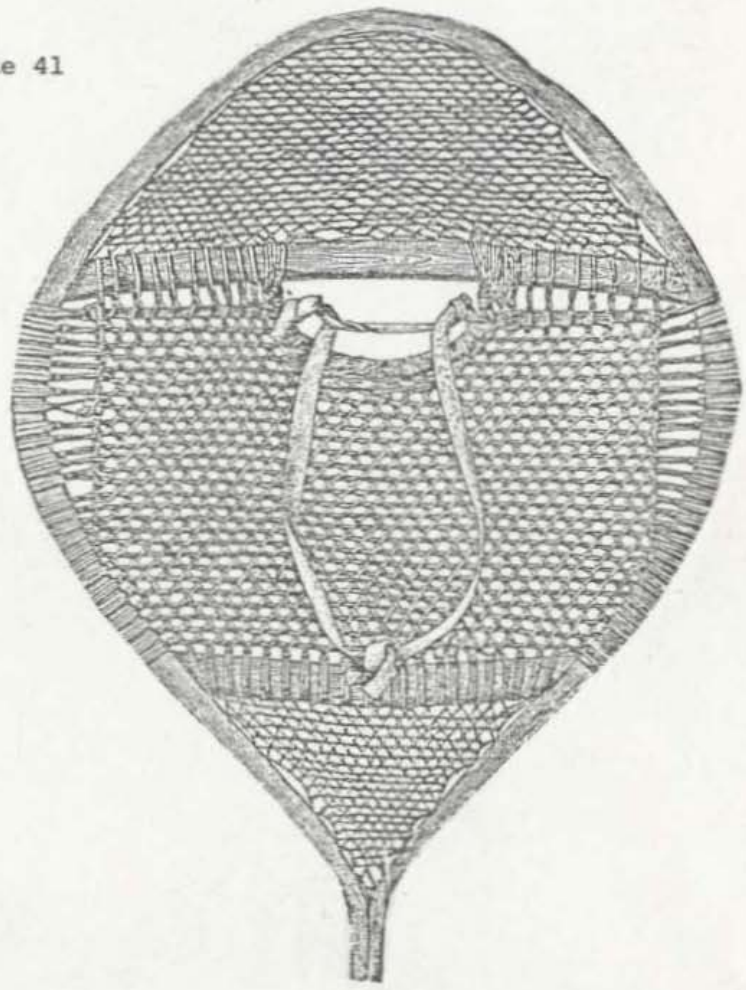
Plate 40



Model of Nascapi toboggan

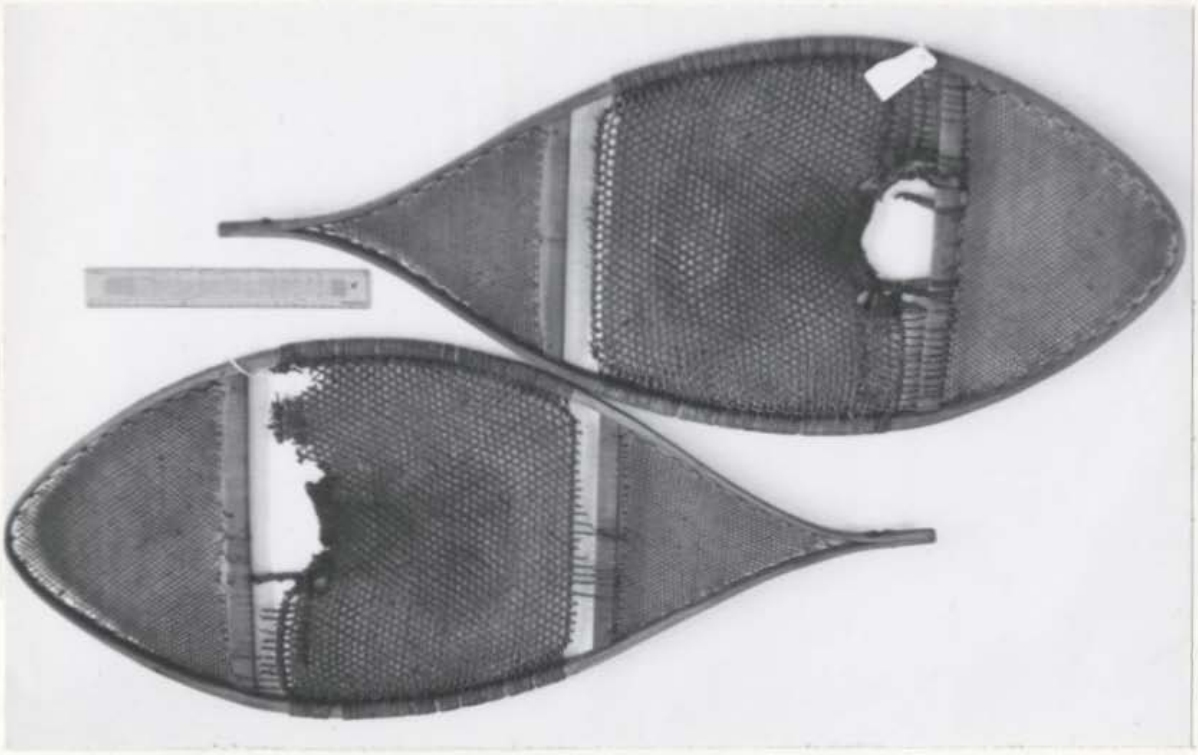
Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man

Plate 41



Nascapi swallowtail snowshoes
From Turner (1894: opposite 308)

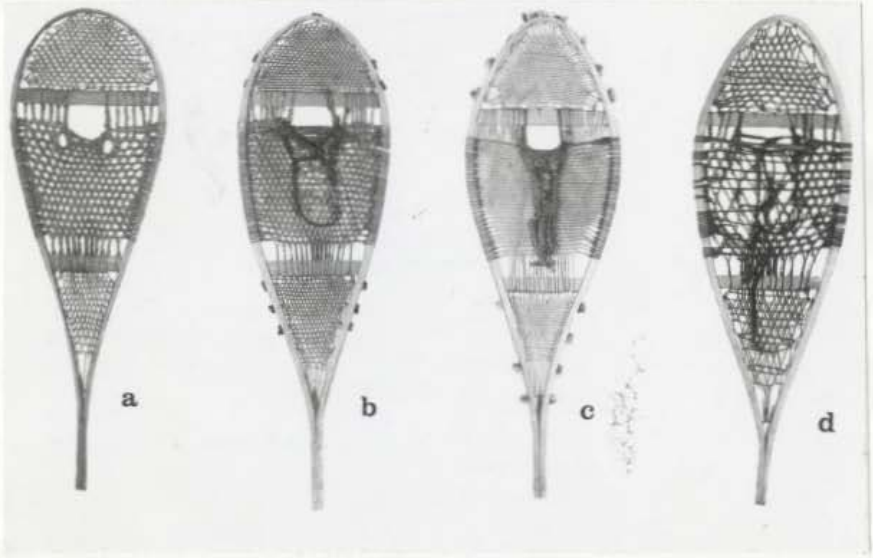
Plate 42



Eastern pointed heel type snowshoes
Nova Scotia Museum collection

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee, Anthropology Dept., St. Mary's University, Halifax

Plate 43



Four Micmac snowshoes
c. shows squared toe

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

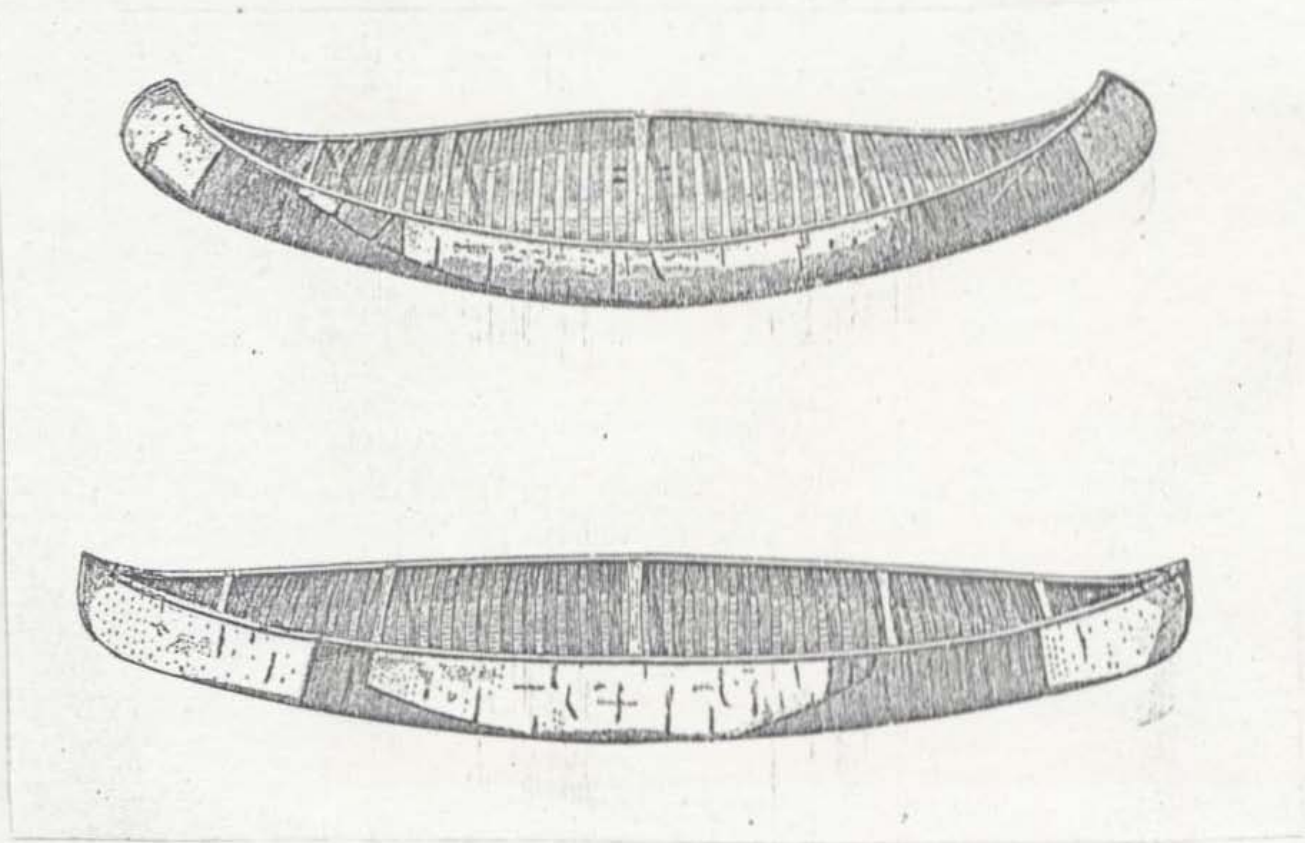
Plate 44



Micmac oval snowshoes
Nova Scotia Museum collection

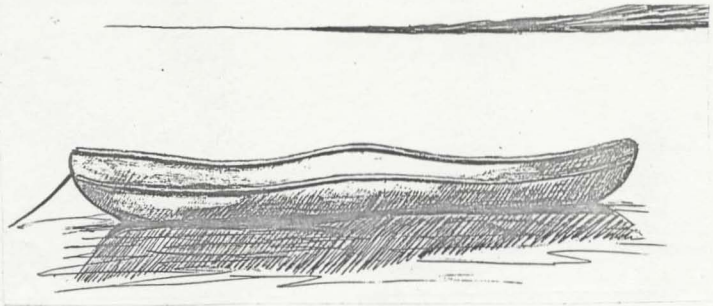
Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee,
Anthropology Dept., St. Mary's University, Halifax

Plate 45



Birch bark canoes from the Labrador Peninsula
a. crooked canoe, b. Nascapi canoe ; from Turner (1894: opposite 304)

Plate 46



Micmac 'rough water' canoe

Drawn from Mechling (1958: Plate 10)

Plate 47



Beothuk canoe model

Photograph courtesy of the Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

type had a rounded projection which was netted at the heel. Snowshoes with broad, oval frames and having a single crossbar were known collectively as bear-paw types. Montagnais/Nascapi snowshoes varied greatly in size depending on the age and size of the wearer, however a large pair rarely exceeded 1.0 m in length and 66.0 cm in maximum width.

Micmac snowshoes. A distinctive characteristic of many Micmac snowshoes was the 'square toe', or almost straight border along the front of the frame. Micmac snowshoes were, on average, much longer and narrower than the Montagnais/Nascapi types (Plate 42). Pairs of Micmac snowshoes of the 'pointed heel' type examined in collections from the Maritime Provinces had protruding wooden 'tail' sections from 12.0 cm to 20.0 cm in length. The longest snowshoes were approximately 1.1 m long and 40.0 cm wide. The maximum width of the frame fell half-way between the toe and heel bars, giving the frame a slender, tapering appearance (Plate 43). One set of broad, oval snowshoes made by a Micmac in 1917 and presently housed in the Nova Scotia Museum, represented a sharing of a design type by Indian peoples both in the Maritime Provinces and in interior Quebec and Labrador. (Plate 44).

Methods of construction. Basic constructional techniques employed by the Montagnais/Nascapi and the Micmac in manufacturing snowshoes were very similar. The hoop, usually but not always of one piece of wood, measured approximately 3.0 cm in width and 2.5 cm in thickness. Hoops were almost always made of birch or tamarack north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Ash, birch and maple were the preferred woods among

the Micmac. Short, narrow grooves were cut in the inner frame surface to admit two crossbars, one at the back of the foot when it was placed on the snowshoe and the other at the toe. When the ends of the frame met at the sides they were joined together by a long lap splice wrapped about with sinew thread or *babiche* thongs. When the ends met at the heel of the snowshoe they were often pressed together side by side and pegged along the length of the 'tail'. An unusual arrangement was found among the Nascapi where a single transverse bar was inserted medially and the ends of the hoop spliced at the toe.

The *babiche* webbing exhibited a hexagonal weave. Welf strands lying between and parallel to the heel and toe bars were secured to the frame by wrapping the ends around the hoop and then knotting them. The sides of the hoop were often thinned slightly on the top and bottom surfaces "to countersink the lacings which passed about the frame to reduce wear on them." (Rogers 1967: 97). A finer *babiche* strand was used for the webbing in the toe and heel sections. The selvage lines along the inner perimeter of the heel and toe were attached to the frame by thongs let through holes gouged in the wood at regular intervals. A semicircular space above the middle of the toe bar was left free of webbing so that the toe of the walker could dip downwards below the surface of the snowshoe at each step. "This," wrote Denys, "was in order that the snow-shoe might not rise behind, and that it might do nothing but drag." (Denys 1971: 15). Hide thongs were secured on either side of the opening above the crossbar and looped around so as to admit the toe of the foot and then be tied about the heel.

Beothuk snowshoes. Buchan described the Beothuk snowshoe as measuring 15.0 inches [38.0 cm] in width and 3.5 feet [1.2 m] in length, excluding the 'tail' section -- dimensions which implied a closer affinity to the Micmac snowshoe than to the Montagnais/Nascapi swallow-tail or beaver-tail styles. An additional wooden tail piece about one foot [30.5 cm] in length also strengthened the comparison with the Micmac type, although it indicated that the Beothuk snowshoe was at least 30.0 cm longer than the snowshoe made for a Micmac adult, while being approximately the same width as the latter.

Lloyd maintained that the Beothuk snowshoe could be as long as 5.5 feet [about 1.7 m] and closely resembled the shape of a tennis racket. According to Lloyd the webbed portion, made of caribou hide or sealskin, was "much less than half the overall length." (1875b: 225). The oval hoop and the presence of the long wooden tail piece combined the most distinctive features of both the Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac snowshoe styles. However, the extreme length of the tail was a major anomaly among snowshoe types in the Northeast. It seemed an unnecessary and impractical extension of the heel, as it must have made walking difficult in the woods where the long projecting tail would catch in the low-lying brush.

Buchan stated that the snowshoe, when placed flat on the ground, formed "a curve with the surface, both ends being elevated." (Howley 1915: 87). Buchan suggested that this construction enabled the walker to accelerate rapidly on a level snow surface. Yet, it also had the disadvantage of reducing the surface area in contact with the snow at any one moment with a resulting loss of traction in deep, soft snow.

Buchan's account may be misleading, and the sides of the frame not curved but flat, with the upward turn occurring in front of the toe bar. Otherwise the hunter would probably have had trouble gaining enough traction in deep snow to draw a heavy load for any considerable distance.

Comparison of Montagnais/Nascapi, Micmac and Beothuk snowshoes. The primary differences between the snowshoes made by the interior-oriented Montagnais/Nascapi, and the coastal-oriented Micmac and Beothuk were in length and in hoop shape. The long, narrow snowshoes manufactured by the coastal Indians permitted the walker to progress quickly over level areas of shallow, crusty snow with sliding, rather than striding movements, whereas the shorter and broader snowshoes of the Montagnais/Nascapi were useful in deep, soft snow because of their extensive contact surface. The beaver-tail style, with the presence of an oval netted area in the heel section, was especially adapted to long-distance travel where stability and traction were of utmost importance. (Rogers 1967: 93).

The long treks across the Barren Grounds in search of the wandering caribou herds demanded that the northern Nascapi transport their families and belongings quickly and safely many miles during the winter months. The dry, cold, continental midwinter conditions of the Labrador interior often made these journeys difficult as powdery snow provided much less traction than the hard, crusty snow of the more temperate coastal regions. Conversely, the need to move young children and domestic effects was much less imperative among the Micmac. Removal to winter hunting grounds, if it were to occur at all, took place in the Maritime

Provinces prior to the months of heavy snowfall when rivers had not yet frozen and canoes could be used for transportation. Snowshoes thus were mainly a necessity for rapid, localized winter travel on moose or caribou hunting expeditions. The general shape and construction of Beothuk snowshoes implied that, similar to the Micmac, this tribe did not travel widely in the interior after the first snows had fallen, but restricted their hunting range until the spring when they again could transport their families and belongings to the coast in canoes.

The construction of Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi birch bark canoes. Highways into the interior during the summer months were the rivers, and the principal means of transportation the birch bark canoe. The materials and techniques used in constructing birch bark canoes were basically the same for the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi. As large a sheet of bark as could be cut from a single birch was obtained for the base and gunwales. The bark was first thoroughly soaked in water, after which it was fitted in an earthen cradle form and strategically weighted with stones to mould the base and sides into their proper shape. (Turner 1894: 305). The Micmac prepared a channel in the ground for the bark, then surrounded the perimeter of this channel with a line of vertical stakes to hold the gunwales in position. The bark was always laid in the cradle so that the white scaling layer formed the outer surface of the canoe.

Where the size of the craft made it necessary to use several bark sheets, the largest piece of bark was laid across the bottom of the channel and bent upwards at the sides. Other bark sheets were

then placed along the upper edges and sewn to the basal section with split spruce root in a simple in-and-out 'canoe stitch'. The Indians superimposed narrow, rectangular bark sections over the rents where the bark had to be slashed to make it bend upwards. Bark was also used to 'piece out' gaps along the gunwales at the bow and stern. Dimensions along the length of the gunwale edge were recorded by notches cut in an upright stick set on the ground. A line was lightly scored along the length of the gunwale in accord with the dimensions determined in the above manner, and before any cutting was done, two rails of wood were placed along the designated line, one on the outside and one on the inside of the bark surface. After the rails were lashed in place the protruding upper edges of bark were trimmed flush with the gunwales. Curved wooden bow and stern pieces, generally of cedar, were fitted into the intersection between the bark sides. The edges at the bow and stern were sewn along the curvature with split spruce root. A thin layer of cedar lath, about 7.0 mm in thickness, was laid longitudinally along the interior of the canoe so that the width and thickness of the lath was greatest in the middle of the canoe and decreased towards the bow and stern.

The ribs were pre-bent before insertion. Cedar was preferred by both tribes although tamarack was also used by the Montagnais/Nascapi. The ribs in Micmac canoes measured from 6.0 cm to 7.5 cm in maximum width and about 1.2 cm in maximum thickness. The ribs in the canoes made by the Labrador Indians ranged from 7.0 cm to 10.0 cm in width and about 8.5 mm in maximum thickness, and were therefore slightly wider and thinner than those made by the Micmac. Ribs were

set in place with a blow from a wooden mallet, which was roughly bottle-shaped and had a bulbous head, flattened on one side to form a striking plane. This type of canoe mallet was made by Algonkian-speaking peoples throughout the Northeast.

Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi birch bark canoes had five wooden thwarts inserted under the inner gunwale rail and lashed in place with split spruce root. Each canoe was constructed with a central thwart, two end thwarts and two thwarts set half-way between the central and end thwarts. The canoe seams were caulked with a mixture of black spruce gum and animal grease.

Northern Nascapi canoes were small, mainly because of the scarcity of birch bark and the difficulties in navigating the shallow, rushing rivers characteristic of the Labrador interior. Only rarely did a Nascapi bark craft exceed 5.0 m in length and 1.2 m in width. (Plate 45). Micmac canoes were longer, ranging from 4.5 m to 7.0 m in length. Both the Montagnais/Nascapi and the Micmac canoes rode light in the water, exhibited little upturn at the bow and stern and had incurved sides in cross-section above the waist. A second type of birch bark craft with steeply upturned bow and stern, used in southwestern Labrador and known as the 'crooked canoe', was adopted historically by the western Montagnais from the Cree around James Bay. (Turner 1894: 55).

The Micmac 'rough water' canoe. The design of the Micmac 'rough water' canoe implied a lengthy association of this tribe with the exploitation of marine resources. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 43). The canoe exhibited a low, sweeping rise amidships of about 12.0 cm in maximum height above the lowest point of the gunnel which prevented

the craft from swamping when its occupants were heeling the vessel to take aboard a large catch. (Plate 46). Moreover, when the canoe was riding into the waves, an ocean swell breaking against the bow would rise highest in the middle of the gunwale length, particularly if the canoe were heavily weighted in the water. Both of these factors, in addition to a third that the raised gunwale amidships aided in securing a large load from slipping sideways in rough water, demonstrated a constructive adaptation to marine conditions which must have taken a long time to develop to the degree of sophistication exhibited in late historic times. A second major difference between this type of Micmac craft and the canoe of the Labrador Indians was the presence on the former of narrow wooden railings sewn along the length of the bark vessel, parallel to and about 10.0 cm below the gunwale rail on either side.

According to Adney and Chapelle (1964), the raised gunwale type of canoe in the Maritime Provinces antedated 1740, about which time Denys described a Micmac man seated on the bottom of a canoe where the top edges of the canoe gunwales came to the level of the Indian's armpits. (Denys 1971:17). Adney and Chapelle maintained that Denys' statement could "only be true of a canoe having a hogged sheer in the lengths given [approximately 5.0 m] and is, in fact, a slight exaggeration unless the man referred to was of less than average height." (Adney and Chapelle 1964: 68).

Beothuk canoes. The Beothuk canoe, being top heavy in design required ballasting with stones to enable it to float upright in the water. Another distinctive feature of this craft was the presence of an inner keel rod that ran the length of the basal channel and was

"thickest in the middle (being in that part about the size of the handle of a common hatchet), tapering each way ..." (Howley 1915: 32). The base of the hull in cross-section bulged slightly downwards and outwards to accommodate the diameter of the keel. In the Beothuk canoe both ends of the keel rod continued upward to form the bow and stern pieces at the juncture of the bark sides, whereas the historic Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac craft had separate wooden bow and stern pieces and lacked the intervening keel section.

The Beothuk craft differed radically from Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi bark canoes in several other ways. Its hull was not constructed of one large sheet of bark bent upwards toward the gunwales, but was formed of two separate pieces sewed along the keel line and up the curvature of the bow and stern. (*Ibid.*). The sides in cross-section were not incurvate above the waist as on canoes from the mainland, instead they "began at the keel and continued up in straight lines to the edge of the gunwale." (*Ibid.*:31-2). The depth at which this canoe rode in the water due to the shape of its hull and stone ballasting was not suited to lengthy river travel where rapids and shallows made a round-bottomed canoe much more feasible for swift progress.

Cartwright likened the shape of the gunwale of the Beothuk canoe to a double catenarian arch, where the two inverted arches met at an apex amidships. A narrow transverse thwart of only "two fingers substance" (*Ibid.*: 32) was inserted medially beneath the inner gunwale rail, and additional thwarts set at the bow and stern. Large craft possessed five thwarts similar to Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi canoes. The Beothuk canoe also had an interior lining of wooden lath "two or three inches [5.0 cm or 7.6 cm.] broad, cut flat and thin, and placed

lengthwise" below the overlay of ribs. (*Ibid.*). An inner and an outer rail were lashed with split spruce root along the perimeter of the gunwale as on the Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac craft, except that on the Beothuk canoe the rails were not continuous along the craft's length but had a break coming at the highest point amidships. Below the outer gunwale and above the water line there was a second reinforcing rail. A series of transverse ribs curved upwards to meet the inner gunwale on either side. Beothuk canoes most frequently ranged from 4.0 m to 6.0 m, although in 1829 Cormack recorded discovering an abandoned canoe almost twenty-two feet [6.7 m] long. (*Ibid.*: 192).

Two complete models and one bow fragment from a model of a Beothuk canoe recovered from the child's burial on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay, provided supporting artifactual evidence for the shape of the craft as described in the ethnohistorical literary accounts. (Plate 47). Each of the complete models was made from a single piece of birch bark folded lengthwise to form a V-shaped hull in cross-section, and each exhibited a sweeping rise in the gunwale amidships. The gunwales were elevated sharply at the bow and stern to terminate in a point. Two seams sewn with fine strands of caribou sinew joined the sides together at the ends, but there was no evidence of any other sewing except in these two areas. The largest model measured 35.5 cm in length, 7.5 cm in maximum width and 7.5 cm in maximum height. The second complete model was proportionately smaller by several centimeters. Both complete models were equipped with a single crosswise thwart to spread the sides and both, including the bow fragment, were thoroughly stained with red ochre.

Paddles. The Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi canoe paddles were short - rarely more than 1.4 m in length - and usually were carved from one piece of wood. The handle of the Micmac paddle was roughly about the same length as the blade. It expanded slightly in diameter towards the distal end and terminated in a blunt, ball-shaped knob. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 46, 198). These paddles were sometimes decorated with incised or painted curvilinear lines. The Nascapi paddle had a long blade, rounded at the end, with a handle scarcely more than half the length of the paddle. (Turner 1894: 306).

The Beothuk paddle differed from the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi paddle in that it had a long, narrow blade, "with a sharp point" at the end. (Howley 1915: 332). In 1612 John Guy described two kinds of Beothuk paddles. The first was "about fower feet [1.4 m] long, of one piece of firre - the other . . . about ten foot [3.05 m] long, made of two pieces, one being as long, big, and round as a halfe pike, made of beeche wood, the which, by likelihood, they made of a Biskaine oare; the other is the blade of the oare, which is let into the end of the long one, slit, and whipped very strongly." (Howley 1915: 15). The 'oare' observed by Guy and the pointed-ended Beothuk paddle blade probably served a double purpose as paddle and pole in shallow water.

Sails as an historic introduction. Although an upright pole fitted with a rectangular hide, bark or canvas sail was used by the historic Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac, it was probable that these Indians were not familiar with rigging sails prior to European contact. In 1607 Lescarbot stated that the Micmac craft did not have sails (Biggar 1928: 245), yet by the mid-seventeenth century Denys acknowledged

that they did. (Denys 1971: 17). Sails were recorded among the historic Beothuk, for Cartwright wrote that "In fine weather they [the Beothuk] sometimes set a sail on a very slight mast, fastened to the middle thwart; but this is a practice for which those delicate and unsteady barks are by no means calculated." (Howley 1915:33). Each tribe on observing European sailing ships may have independently developed simple methods of rigging their canoes with a square sail apparatus. The Micmac were able to control the direction of the sail when riding close to the wind by pulling on alternate ropes attached to the base of the square sail. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 47). But there were no recorded adaptations in the construction of the hull of canoes which were used with sails. Lacking a keel of any kind, the bark craft had no stabilizing capacity when sailing broadside to the wind, it being almost impossible to prevent the vessel from being blown sideways or from capsizing.

Comparison of canoes. The Micmac 'rough water' canoe and the Beothuk canoes were similar in that both had an elevated gunwale -- the Beothuk gunwale rising much more in height than the Micmac -- and both were fitted with wooden reinforcing rails along the outside of the hull above the water line. These shared constructional traits may have arisen independently or have been the result of cultural exchange between the two tribes in the past. Both features were obviously structural adaptations to enhance the seaworthiness of the craft. The Beothuk and the Micmac 'rough water' canoe also exhibited longitudinal interior planking, ribs and transverse thwarts. Yet the Beothuk canoe, as already discussed, had a V-shaped hull in cross-section and a steeply-pointed bow and stern which the Micmac canoe did not.

Furthermore, the Montagnais/Nascapi craft was closer to the Micmac 'rough water' canoe in hull construction, although it lacked the outside reinforcing rails and raised gunwale amidships.

The simplest hypothesis derived from this evidence was that both the Micmac and the Labrador Indians adopted the birch bark canoe into their material cultures from the same source, possibly from a prehistoric Indian group inhabiting the region about the lower St. Lawrence Valley and Upper Great Lakes. Both the historic Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi retained a canoe design which apparently was efficient enough to require little modification from the original prototype. Conversely, the ability of the Beothuk to employ the same basic ideas with distinctive results indicated a remarkable independence of design development.

Where a merging of constructional traits, as exhibited by the Beothuk canoe, did not have recognizable parallels outside the area occupied by an historic tribe, it was possible that 'grafting' of introduced ideas took place on older prototypes. The V-shaped hull of the Beothuk canoe may have been derived from a number of ancient sources along the Atlantic coast. The historic Wabanaki constructed a canoe from two moose or caribou hides sewn together head-to-tail which were stretched over a wooden frame composed of a keel rod, several transverse ribs and a set of gunwale rails. (Wallis and Wallis: 50; Speck 1940: 66). Thwarts were inserted to spread the sides the required amount. Second, there may have been an ancient tradition in the maritime region of simply folding large sheets of bark lengthwise into a canoe shape, sewing up the curvature at the bow and stern, attaching gunwale rails and spreading the sides with thwarts to make a form of temporary craft. Ballasting may also have been necessary. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 50).

By contrast, the two historic mainland tribes made canoes of a construction suggestive of a more viable exchange of ideas northwest across the Gulf of St. Lawrence than across the Strait of Belle Isle.

Prehistoric diffusion of cultural ideas in the Northeast. Although environment played a leading part in determining the materials available for construction purposes, affinities in techniques of sewing with root and sinew, in manufacturing birch bark canoes, sleds and snowshoes, indicated that all three peoples derived aspects of their material cultures from a mutual pool of cultural ideas. Yet, perceptible anomalies could be detected in the development of this restricted group of ideas among each of the three tribes.

A major division existed among the three Indian groups based on differences in their winter subsistence activities. The tradition in Labrador and northern Quebec of manufacturing long, narrow flexible toboggans and snowshoes with broad, oval frames represented a sophisticated adaptive technology for the transportation of heavy loads not recorded for the material cultures of the two coastal peoples. Although environmentally-instigated, these adaptive processes within each culture continued for hundreds, if not thousands of years.

The assimilation of ideas, rather than their growth into agents for change, in Beothuk culture implied that the spread of cultural ideas across the Strait of Belle Isle was either sporadic and diffuse, or that the resident culture in Newfoundland was already well enough adapted to surrounding environmental conditions that it tended to resist outside influences for change. It was also probable that a similar culture existed anciently in the Maritime Provinces, but that successive intrusions of ideas had so modified its diagnostic traits that they were no longer recognizable from the historic evidence.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CLOTHING AND BODY ORNAMENTS

Evidence from the ethnographic sources.

Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac. The modifying influences of European styles and introduced materials on the clothing articles worn by the historic Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi made it necessary first to compare the ethnographic sources concerning clothing with items housed in the museum collections. Early descriptions of clothing were remarkably similar for the Algonkian-speaking peoples of the Northeast. During the hottest months of the year men wore only a hide breech clout, which passed between the legs and attached front and back to a supple waist belt. Women covered themselves with a nearly rectangular robe sewn together from two caribou or two moose skins wrapped cylindrically about the body, the free end of the garment draped over one shoulder and then secured beneath the opposite arm. The folds were held in place by a girdle. There were no attached sleeves on these garments and many early writers regarded the robes as shapeless and bulky.

Montagnais/Nascapi. No major distinctions were recorded between men's and women's winter dress, except that the women usually kept their robes drawn more closely about their bodies and maintained a modest appearance at all times. In 1634 Le Jeune reported that the Montagnais had no knowledge of tailoring and covered "themselves to keep off the cold and not for the sake of appearance." (Thwaites 1897: VII, 7).

Occasionally when sitting around the fire the Montagnais men allowed their robes to fall backwards like a cloak, with the garment secured on their shoulders by hide thongs tied across the upper chest. Indian women never permitted themselves this liberty.

Winter robes were worn with the hair or fur side against the body. Heavy fur robes were made in much the same manner as the hide summer garments. The bulk of the robe was wrapped about the body and the trailing end thrown over one shoulder, passed under the opposite arm and then crossed back upwards over the exposed shoulder for warmth. A waist belt kept the folds in position.

On cold winter days a fur robe was tied about the waist and allowed to hang down long enough so that the bottom edge could be turned up double or even triple, "these folds forming a big belly or large flap in which they carry their little belongings." (*Ibid.*: 13). Le Jeune made no mention of hats, hoods or collars, and even trade hats were worn only during the coldest winter days. He assumed that "very few of them [the Indians] used hats before their intercourse with our Europeans" as they did not apparently "know how to make them, buying them already made, or at least cut, from our French people." (*Ibid.*: 11).

Le Jeune further described a Montagnais tradition of ornamenting the skin side of the robes with vertical coloured stripes "which are about as wide as two thumbs, and are equally distant from each other, giving the effect of a kind of lace-work." (*Ibid.*: 13). The finest fur robes were made of "the skins of a kind of little black animal found in the Huron country" -- probably the marten -- sewn into a rectangular shape." (*Ibid.*). The animals' heads were either sewn to

the upper edge of the robe and hung downwards from the wearer's neck region, or were left on pelts which were wrapped about the shoulders to form a fur collar.

Stripes similar to those painted on robes were also applied to sleeves, which were worn separately over the shoulders. The Montagnais varied the direction of these linear designs on different pairs, the stripes drawn "sometimes lengthwise, sometimes around." (*Ibid.*: 15). "These sleeves are quite broad at the top," continued Le Jeune, "covering the shoulders and almost uniting at the back, -- two little strings fastening them in front and behind ..." (*Ibid.*).

Micmac. In 1607 Champlain noted that the Algonkian-speaking Indians living along the shores of the St. Croix River wore robes mainly beaver and elk [deer, moose and woodland caribou]. (Grant 1967: 55). The garments had separate sleeves, as did Montagnais robes, and were so loosely attached to the body of the costume that one could "see the flesh under the arm-pits ..." (*Ibid.*). Champlain's account was supported by Lescarbot, who wrote that the Micmac had "a cloak on their backs, made of many skins, whether it be of elan, or stag's skin, bear or luscerne [lynx], which cloak is tied upward with a leather riband, and they thrust commonly one arm out ... I cannot better compare it than to pictures that are made of Hercules, who killed a lion and put the skin thereof on his back." (Biggar 1928: 188). Le Clercq recorded that Micmac robes and other articles of clothing were also made from sealskin. (Ganong 1968: 93).

Sleeves were worn over the Micmac robe and were joined together

by a hide latch at the back. A complete description was given by Le Clercq who stated that the sleeves were "separated into equal parts by an opening which serves for the passing of the head. One of these sleeves falls in front, and covers only half of the arm; the other falls behind, and covers the entire shoulders." (*Ibid.*: 94). Red or white blankets obtained from the French through trade were worn in a similar manner to the hide robe in that, when wrapped about the body and the free end thrown over one shoulder, the blanket-garment reached to the knees and was secured about the waist by an ornamented belt. (*Ibid.*) The half-blanket, an important trade item well into the nineteenth century, may have performed the same function as the separate sleeves which covered the upper half of the bare arm left exposed by the robe or blanket.

Le Clercq did not distinguish between the dress of the sexes except for the modesty and reserve with which the Micmac Indian women wore their clothing. (*Ibid.*). Denys, however, stated that the women occasionally had hide robes cut in a poncho-like fashion. The sides of these garments were held together about the body by "cords in two places, some distance apart, in such a way that the head can pass through the middle and the arms on the two sides. Then they [the Micmac women] double the two ends one above the other; and over it they place a girdle which they tie very tightly, in such a manner that it cannot fall off." (Denys 1971: 9). Denys' description was unclear as to the way in which the Micmac women doubled the two ends of the robe "one above the other," though possibly the side edges were folded over so that no vertical gaps were left.

On the coldest winter days the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi wore hide leggings, moccasins and rabbit skin wrappihgs as footwear. Le Jeune described the Montagnais leggings as made of "Moose skin, from which the hair has been removed, nature and not art setting the fashion for them; they are considered well if the feet and legs go into them, no ingenuity being used in making corners; they are made like boots, and are fastened under the foot with a little string." (Thwaites 1897: VII, 15). The Montagnais sewed the seams along the sides of the leg so that a ridge was formed where the two selvages met. This ridge was fringed and occasionally ornamented with *matachias* -- small shells, beads and quills. (*Ibid.*: 16). The leggings extended well up the thigh, particularly in the front, and were attached to a waist belt worn next to the skin. Short hide breeches, reaching from waist to thigh, provided additional protection from the cold. Lescarbot described a fringe along the seams on the Micmac leggings similar to that on the pairs worn by the Montagnais. (Biggar 1928: 188). Montagnais moccasins were of moose hide, well-oiled and admirably suited for use on snowshoes. (Thwaites 1897: VII, 15). No information could be located concerning the particulars of the design or the ornamentation used on this early type of footwear. Moccasins were tightened about the ankle by a draw string. Throughout the winter both the Montagnais and the Micmac wrapped their feet in rabbit skins insulated with moose or caribou hair and on occasion wore two pairs of moccasins, the one over the other.

Beothuk. Special problems were encountered in attempting to isolate descriptions of clothing which confidently could be regarded as

Beothuk. The earliest ethnohistorical accounts of meetings with indigenous peoples in the Strait of Belle Isle region were confusing. In 1501 Cortereal wrote of inhabitants who clothed themselves shapelessly in the skins of wild animals, but who also tattooed their faces and made garments out of the intestines of seals, similar to the historic Eskimo. (Howley 1915: 5). Cartier's report of seeing Indians along the northern shore of the Strait of Belle Isle in 1634 probably referred to the St. Lawrence Iroquois, who made seasonal journeys from the vicinity of Quebec to the Gulf coast to hunt seals, fish and, since the turn of the sixteenth century or earlier, to trade with Basque whale hunters and sealers. (However, controversy still exists concerning the identity of these people.)

In 1536 an expedition led by a Mr. Hore of Gravesend, England, discovered an abandoned Indian encampment along the shores of Notre Dame Bay, from which Mr. Hore and his companions took a "boot of leather garnished on the outside with certaine brave trails, as it were of raw silke," and "a certaine great warme mitten." (*Ibid.*: 11). This short account indicated that the Beothuk made fringed legwear and footwear similar to that worn by the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi. It also implied that the Indian peoples of Newfoundland used mittens prior to 1600. In John Guy's account of 1612 the Beothuk were clothed in "a short gown made of stags' skins, the furre innermost, that raune down to the middle of their legges, with sleeues the middle of their arme, and a beuer skin about their necke ..." (*Ibid.*: 17). But even though it was late autumn, only one Indian man wore moccasins and mittens and none had hide leggings.

A first-hand description of the Beothuk's winter costume was recorded by Buchan in 1811:

> Their [the Beothuk's] dress consisted of a loose cossack, without sleeves, but puckered at the collar to prevent it falling off the shoulders, and made so long that when fastened up around the haunches it became triple, forming a good security against accident happening to the abdomen. This is fringed around with cutting of the same substance. They also had leggings, moccasins, and cuffs, the whole made of deer [caribou] skin, and worn with the hair side next to the body; the outside lackered with oil and red ochre, admirably adapted to repel the severity of the weather. (*Ibid.*: 86).

Buchan may have derived the term 'cossack' from the hide tunics worn by the Cossack peoples of northern Russia, although it seems more likely that the word cossack in this context was a varient of 'cassock', meaning a long, shapeless, loose-fitting garment.

Buchan did not report differences in the clothing worn by each sex except for a hood attached to the back of the Indian woman's garment in which the mothers carried their children.

W. E. Cormack described the Beothuk garment as a "sort of mantle, formed out of two deer skins, sewed together so as to be nearly square." (*Ibid.*: 212). Both Cormack and Buchan noted various folds in the garment which doubled its thickness over the shoulders and chest in a way reminiscent of the bulky foldings of the Montagnais dress observed by Le Jeune in 1634. Cormack also stated that the robe was sleeveless, but that hide arm coverings of some type were worn over the shoulders. The sleeved garments recorded by Guy over two centuries earlier might therefore have been a combination of the hide mantle worn with the detachable arm coverings referred to by Cormack, rather than a poncho or jacket-like article of clothing with sleeves sewn directly to the body of the costume.

The major difference between the Beothuk winter dress as described by Cormack and the hide and fur robes worn by the mainland Algonkian-speaking peoples was the presence of a collar on the former garment. Cormack wrote that the collar was "sometimes attached to the mantle, and reached along its whole breadth." (*Ibid.*). It might be inferred from this that a single broad strip of hide was sewn to, or laid over, the upper edge of the robe which could be brought forward to cover the head in inclement weather. From the written accounts dated prior to 1811 it was difficult to imagine the Beothuk dress as having much tailoring or style, the robe being shapeless in design with little or no deliberate ornamentation except for a coating of red ochre. Cormack's report of a collar made of "alternate stripes of otter and deer skins" (*Ibid.*) tended to modify this impression however, and several other short references to Beothuk clothing also supported a different view. Winter garments were lined with the fur of beaver and other small mammals in a manner which not only protected against the cold but also appeared attractive to the eye. (*Ibid.*: 100). The robe worn by Demasduit or "Mary March" at the time of her capture was described as being of "dressed deer-skins tastefully trimmed with martin [sic, marten]." (*Ibid.*: 128).

A sketch by Shanawdithit of a dancing Beothuk woman (Plate 48), depicted a loose-fitting hide robe wrapped about the dancer's body so that one arm was covered, the opposite arm bare. A trailing edge of the hide was left free to hang loosely behind to swing with the woman's movements. The garment was gathered just below the waist in a broad horizontal fold. What appeared to be the end of a belt or girdle hung

Plate 48



Shanawdithit's drawing of dancing Beothuk Woman
From Howley (1915: opposite 248)

Plate 49



Micmac moccasins
Nova Scotia Museum collection

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee, Dept. of Anthropology, St. Mary's University, Halifax

Plate 50



Nascapi decorated moccasins
Speyer collection

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

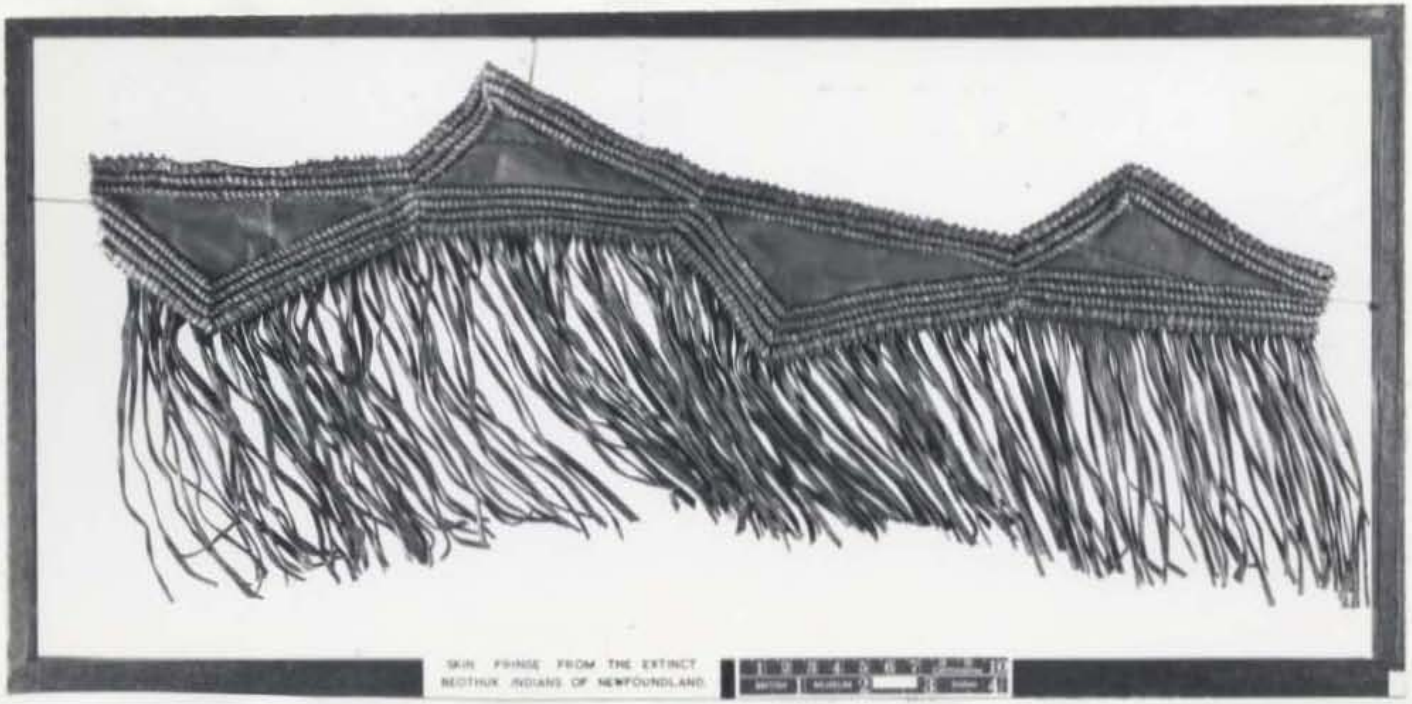


Plate 51

Five Beothuk moccasins

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 52



Hide fringe, stained with red ochre, of Beothuk manufacture

Photograph courtesy of British Museum, London

Plate 53



Nascapi boys in caribou-skin winter costume
Northwest River band, Hamilton Inlet
Photograph courtesy of Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

Plate 54



Nascapi small bear-skin coat with hood
Photograph courtesy of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

Plate 55

Nascapi tailored hide coat with fringed hide collar. Mid-nineteenth century. (Front)

Photograph courtesy of British Museum, London

Plate 55a

Nascapi tailored hide coat (back).

Photograph courtesy of British Museum, London

Plate 55



Plate 55a



Plate 56

Back of untailored decorated hide coat made either by Montagnais/Nascapi or eastern Woodland Cree. Late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

Photograph courtesy of Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, Holland



Plate 57

"Captain Cartwright visiting his Fox-Traps"

From Cartwright (1972: Frontispiece)



W. Hilton Pinx.t

Captain Carturright visiting his Fox-traps

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Plate 58

Back of Nascapi tailored hide coat showing hour-glass decorative motif across shoulders and down central gore

Photograph courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto



Plate 59

Back of elaborately-decorated, tailored hide coat of Nascapi manufacture.
Late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Photograph courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto



Plate 60

Detail of painted designs on back gore of Nascapi coat shown in Plate 59

Photograph courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

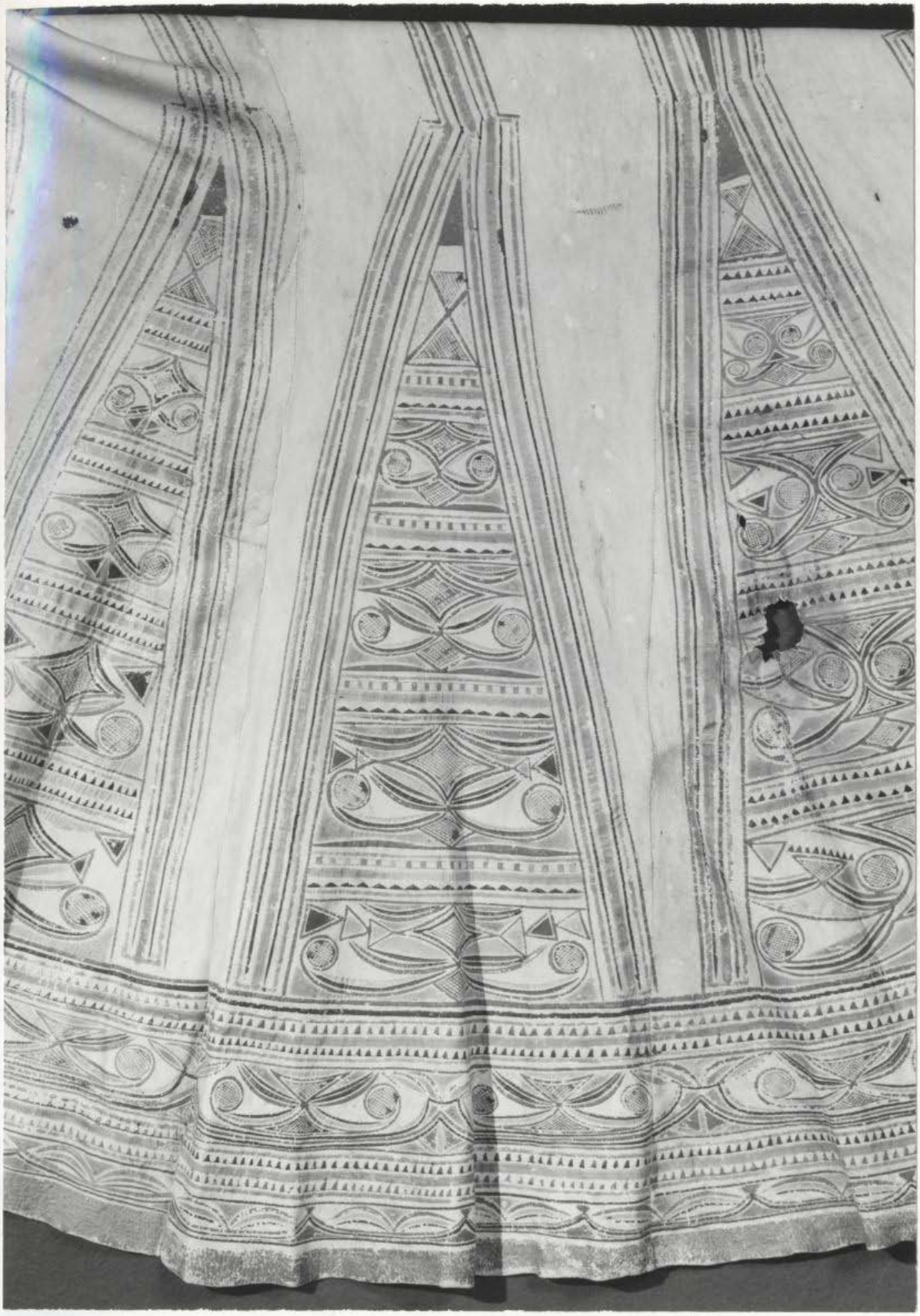


Plate 61

Front of tailored broadcloth coat,
probably made by New Brunswick Micmac.
Early to mid nineteenth century.
European military style.

Photograph courtesy of New Brunswick Museum, St. John


Garment of a Micmac woman
worn about 1750.

downwards on the left side. The similarity in the line of ornamentation along the bottom and top edges of the garment and trailing section indicated that the robe was made from a continuous length of hide. There was a distinct affinity between this type of Beothuk clothing and the hide robes worn by the mainland Indian tribes, although there was no evidence for sleeved, poncho-like garments among the Beothuk. Beothuk clothing was secured by belts and thong laces and, as Shanawdithit's drawing showed, was not always shapeless, but could be designed, cut and ornamented with an eye to appearances as well as to practicality and warmth.

Comparison of ethnographic data with evidence from the museum collections. There has been a bias among early collectors of North American Indian clothing, notably Arthur Speyer, but also among many others who followed a tradition throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of preserving only those articles which were 'showy', and thus considered worthy of presentation to the public. Examples of more mundane and utilitarian clothing items have been ignored in the historic artifactual record until recently, when there has been a drive to retain articles which presented a more 'rounded' approach to the material culture of the historic tribes. Comparisons were complicated by the predominance of highly-ornamented ceremonial garments, or clothing items which were made expressly for sale to European buyers; articles which constituted at least three-quarters of the specimens in most museum collections. At the time when the majority of collections were compiled the historic tribes had adopted European clothing

for regular use or had so adulterated the cut and design of the aboriginal clothing that it was impossible to determine in many instances which traits were aboriginal, which introduced. Such problems continually arose during the examination of the Micmac collections where the clothing items often displayed a motley admixture of European materials and styling with traditional ornamentation and design patterns. Legwear and footwear appeared to be most unchanged by European influences, and thus presented the soundest basis for an intensive comparison of clothing types.

Legwear and Footwear.

Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi. Moccasins most frequently examined in collections from Labrador and the Maritime Provinces were of the 'puckered' type. Made of two or three separate pieces of hide sewn together, puckered moccasins had a distinctive rounded toe where the bottom piece was folded upward in front and at the sides and sewn in a gathered stitch directly to the second piece, the vamp or instep. (Plate 49). Usually a third piece, a rectangular hide strip, was sewn to the upturned edges about the heel of the moccasin and acted as a covering for the ankle region of the foot. This strip had two flaps which extended toward the toe and were wrapped about the front of the lower ankle and secured with draw-string thongs. The heel of the moccasin was formed by making two parallel cuts in the back end of the bottom piece to conform with the width of the foot and the height of the sides, and then folding the sides of the piece upwards. The two flaps left projecting at the heel were then folded inward towards one another and sewn in a central vertical seam along the inside of the

moccasin. The remaining bottom flap was either bent upward and used as a backstay reinforcement for the seam, or was simply cut off. The heel seam thus fashioned was shaped like an inverted letter T.

A second type of moccasin made by the Montagnais/Nascapi had the bottom piece upturned at the toe to meet at a small seam projecting centrally forward from the vamp. (Plate 50). This seam was reinforced by a second short transverse seam across the upper toe region. Although widespread northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, this type of moccasin was most prominent in collections from the Ungava district. The heel seam was of the inverted T shape. Similar to the attachment on puckered moccasins, a long strip of hide thong passed through holes perforating the upper edges of the bottom piece at regular intervals and emerged through holes cut in the front edges of the ankle piece. A thin strip of hide was placed as a stay between the vamp and the bottom piece to reinforce the central seam. Moccasins with a single straight central seam extending from the vamp to the toe were restricted mainly to Indian peoples west of James Bay, although Rogers recorded moccasins of this type at Mistassini. (1967: 53-4).

Micmac moccasins, which were almost all of the puckered type, had a curved vamp seam sewn along the outside and often overcast with ornamental stitching. The vamp frequently extended upward into a high rounded tongue, and many moccasins from the Maritime Provinces lacked the third reinforcing piece about the ankle. Designs on Micmac and Montagnais moccasin vamps were worked in beads or moosehair embroidery. The double-curve motif appeared most frequently, although realistic floral designs were also widespread. The sinuous line motif bordered

by rosette flowers showed close affinities to beadworked designs introduced by the French to the Iroquois, from whom it was undoubtably 'borrowed' by the Micmac. The majority of northern Nascapi moccasin designs were bilaterally symmetrical, exhibiting a geometric or double-curve pattern arranged in pyramid composition with the apex of the design, conforming to the shape of the vamp.

Hatt (1916: 173) considered the puckered type of moccasin to be "unquestionably old" and maintained that it may have been introduced by ancient coastal peoples from whom it spread westwards to the Iroquois. In the late seventeenth century Denys reported watching young Micmac women making moccasins, which were "puckered as finely as a chemise." (Denys 1971: 33). The Wabanaki Indians occasionally attached a narrow third piece, or ankle extension, to the upper edge of the sides and heel section and turned it downward in a decorative flap. Moccasins were also trimmed with fur or had a fringe around the opening for the foot. Fringed examples were rare in the Micmac museum collections.

Beothuk moccasins. Only five Beothuk moccasins were housed in the Newfoundland Museum. All of these five were removed from the boy's burial discovered on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay, in 1886. The moccasins, although uniform in cut and design, differed from footwear made by the historic Labrador Indians or the Micmac. The instep piece was not rounded, but rectangular in shape and sewn with caribou sinew in a simple in-and-out stitch to the rectangular bottom piece. The bottom piece, only slightly wider than the instep, was simply folded square across the toe and sewn with an overlap stitch to the vamp just above the line of the crease. (Plate 51). The sides were also folded

square along the border of the vamp and creased to permit ample room for the foot. On one moccasin, not belonging to a pair, the bottom piece which formed the sole was sewn to a second rectangular section cut to the proportions of the heel and sides. The vamp formed the third piece. Such workmanship gave the moccasin a highly angular appearance, lacking the rounded planes of those made by the mainland Indians. On the remaining moccasins the rectangular bottom piece curved upwards to form the sides. Four of the Beothuk moccasins exhibited a rectangular strip sewn to the top edge of the bottom section along the heel and sides to afford greater protection to the wearer's ankle. The tongue extended as high as the sides, as on many Micmac examples. The five moccasins were either secured by means of a drawstring thong passed through perforations about the circumference of the heel and sides, or by thongs simply knotted through holes in the front of the ankle piece.

None of the moccasins exceeded 15.0 cm in length, 8.0 cm in height and 6.0 cm in width which, although they had shrunken with age, suggested that all five had been made for the child with whom they had been buried. One example had been mended along the bottom of the heel with fibrous reed or split root, which indicated that it had been worn prior to being placed in the grave. A narrow fringed band, the cutting on the fringe being very regular and fine, was sewn to the upper edge along the heel and sides on the single moccasin.

One curious trait exhibited by the five Beothuk moccasins was the absence of the inverted T seam at the heel. Instead, a single vertical seam terminated in a point at the base of the heel where the

hide bulged out in a cone shape to accommodate for the overlap at the sides. The technical simplicity of the T-shaped heel seam and its uniform adoption by the mainland Algonkian-speaking peoples suggested that the historic Beothuk were unaware of its existence. Hatt stressed that the advantage of the T-shaped seam lay in the "fact that it prevents the pointed cone-like projection which the simple straight seam carries with it and which is especially undesirable at the heel." Hatt also presented the following hypothesis:

> There are good reasons for assuming that [the moccasin types discussed] ... developed from one common prototype; this prototype must have been a form ... consisting of one piece of skin gathered around the foot by means of a straight seam. All the variations from this fundamental type may be classified under two headings: First, straight seam replaced by heel seam. Second, the one-piece pattern replaced by the two and three-piece pattern. (1916: 175).

A straight seam across the toes was occasionally observed on moccasins made by the Labrador peoples. Turner wrote that "moccasins for young children often have a seam parallel with the toes and the creasing is thus obviated." (1894: 285). Yet the rectangular instep piece and the pointed projection at the base of the heel on Beothuk moccasins distinguished them from moccasin types manufactured by continguous historic tribes. It seemed reasonable to expect that children's moccasins were made in the pattern of adult footwear, particularly in regard to the heel-seam. Based on evidence from the five existing examples, it was assumed, therefore, that the Beothuk developed a moccasin type independently from surrounding historic Indian tribes and that this type involved the use of the three piece pattern but retained the straight heel seam.

Leggings and boots. Both the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi wore fringed leggings which reached to the upper thighs. It could not be determined whether or not hide leggings were regularly sewn to the top edges of moccasins, or whether each remained a separate clothing item. No examples of hide leggings were preserved in the Micmac museum collections. Those that do exist were made of broadcloth and worn in the form of trousers rather than as individual leg coverings. The fringe recorded by Howley as running vertically up the sides of the leggings on the partially mummified body of the Beothuk boy (1915: 331) indicated that leggings with fringed side seams were made by all three peoples under study.

Leg-skin boots, an ancient form of footwear throughout the circumboreal regions of the globe, were made by both the historic Labrador Indians and the Micmac of the Maritime Provinces. The hide was removed from the area of the animal's hock where the skin was drawn off the flesh in a manner which preserved its cylindrical shape, and the short end sewn straight across the front of the toes. The wearer's heel then fitted "into the bend in the hock." (Rogers 1967: 58). In the late nineteenth century an elderly man named Wells from Notre Dame Bay recounted that leg-skin boots were used by the Beothuk. These boots "were made from the deer's [caribou's] shanks, just as they were cut off the legs, and sewn round to form the toe part. They reached up the calf of the leg to about the end of the deer skin robe, and were tied round with deer skin thongs." (Howley 1915: 271). The leg-skin boots worn by the Montagnais/Nascapi reached to the calf of the leg. During the coldest winter months the northern Nascapi followed a practice

of sewing the bottoms of the leggings directly to the upper edges of their winter moccasins. These leggings were split down the side seam to a point just above the knee where they were tightened about the leg by thong lacings inserted through a series of holes along either side of the split. Occasionally a cylinder of canvas was sewn to the uppermost rim of Nascapi leg-skin boots to increase their height up the leg.

It remained debatable whether or not moccasins and leggings were regularly ornamented by the mainland tribes prior to European contact. Turner in 1894 stated that the Nascapi around Fort Chimo rarely decorated vamps with painted designs or beadwork as did the Montagnais to the south, but simply overlaid the instep with a piece of brightly-coloured cloth. (1894: 284). Prehistorically, ornamentation may have been restricted to special articles of clothing, such as ceremonial and shamanic items or, as recorded by Denys among the Micmac, when young women wishing to look attractive to their husbands or lovers worked colourful designs in quills along the seams of their moccasins. (1971: 9). In early historic times the greatest number of ornamented moccasins were sold as curiosities to the French.

Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi decorated hide robes. Special ornamented clothing was socially required at certain occasions. Lescarbot reported that at a hastily-prepared feast between the Micmac and the French one Micmac man "did excuse himself for that he had not brought his fair beaver gown, because the weather had been foul." (Biggar 1928: 84). Both the Micmac and the Montagnais fringed the borders and applied painted designs, later beaded designs, to the surface

of their hide garments. In 1616 Biard wrote of the Micmac, "Their clothes are trimmed with leather lace which the women dress and curry on the side which is not hairy. They often curry both sides of elk skin, like our buff skin, then variegate it very prettily with paint put on in a lace-like pattern, and make gowns of it ..." (Thwaites 1897: III, 75). Denys too, recorded the Micmac's fondness for decorating their garments worn at tribal ceremonies.

> For all these festivities of weddings and feasts, they adorn themselves with their most beautiful clothes. In summer, the men have robes of Moose skin, well dressed, white, ornamented with embroidery two fingers breadth wide, from top to bottom, both close and open work. Others have three rows at the bottom, some lengthwise, and others across, others in broken chevrons, or studded with figures of animals, according to the fancy of the workman.
>
> They work all these fashions in colours of red, violet and blue applied on the skin with some isinglass. They had bones fashioned in different ways which they passed quite hot over the colours, in a manner somewhat like in which one gilds the covers of books. When these colours are once applied, they do not come off with water. (1971: 8).

There were close affinities between the manner in which both the Labrador Indians and the Micmac painted hide robes in lace-like patterns. Turner presented a short description of the techniques used in 1894 by the northern Nascapi:

> The pigments used are procured from different sources. From the traders are obtained indigo in the crude condition or in the form of washing blue, vermillion in small buckskin bags and a few other colors. An abundance of red earth occurs in several localities. The pigments are reduced to the finest possible condition and kneaded with the fingers until ready for the addition of water often mixed with a slight quantity of oil or tallow. A favorite vehicle for the paint is the prepared roe of a sucker (*Catastromus*) abounding in the waters of the district. The female fish are stripped of the mass of ova which is broken up in a vessel and the liquid strained through a coarse cloth. The color is a faint yellow which becomes deeper with age. The fluid is allowed to dry and when required for use is dissolved in water. It has then a semiviscid consistence and in this condition is mixed with the various pigments. When

> a yellowish color is desired the fish-egg preparation is applied alone. The albumen gives sufficient adhesive quality to the paint and produce [sic, produces] a rich glaze, giving a good effect to the otherwise dull colors. (1894: 297).

Turner stated that many of the painted patterns on hide made during late historic times were imitations of "the delicate designs on a gaudy bandana handkerchief or some similar fabric." (*Ibid.*: 298). Nevertheless, the tradition of painting garments in the manner described above was probably ancient, and similar painting techniques may have been used prehistorically both northwest and south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Though Turner made no mention of cauterizing the colours to make them water-proof, it was possible that by the nineteenth century many of the older artistic methods had been forgotten. Had Denys mentioned the use of bone stencilling devices for painting linear designs, or specified that fish albumen was the isinglass prepared by the Micmac, there might have been grounds for a much closer comparison between the techniques employed by the two tribes. The range of applied colours was similar and both peoples regarded red ochre as an important pigment for design purposes. The Nascapi were also known to have tooled the hide before applying linear designs and, as tooling was an integral part of the book binding process during the seventeenth century, it would therefore have been included in the practice referred to by Denys. (Turner 1894: 297; Denys 1971: 8).

The literary sources were not specific concerning the cut of the women's clothing on ceremonial occasions or the ornamental designs applied to them, though it was recorded that robes were often painted and fringed along the hem and borders. Turner described the winter dress of the northern Nascapi women as a sleeveless hide gown which

reached "a little below the knees and as high as the chin." (1894: 291). The flesh sides of these garments were rubbed with powdered red ochre, as were many of the men's fur robes, and had an ornamental hide border decorated with designs in beadwork and a beaded fringe.

Skirts were adopted by Micmac and southern Montagnais women during the late seventeenth century. Hide and cloth skirts in museum collections were of a cylindrical cut, ankle-length and almost always had a colourful border along the lower hem where traditional designs were either painted or worked in beads and ribbon *applique*.

Beothuk decorated hide garments. Fringes were an important decorative element on Beothuk clothing. The body of the Beothuk boy at the Burnt Island burial site was "clothed with a sort of skin pants covering the lower limbs, which was neatly sewn together and fringed with strips of skin cut into fine shreds." (Howley 1915: 331). Two other fringed hide sections were also located, one housed in the Newfoundland Museum, the second in the British Museum. The former strip was 14.0 cm long and 7.5 cm wide and cut into fringed lengths approximately 1.5 cm in diameter. This fringed section was part of a border sewn either to the boy's 'pants' or to the burial robe. The second fringed section indicated with what skill and precision the Beothuk were capable of cutting and ornamenting a strip of caribou hide. The hide strip was 48.3 cm long with a fringe approximately 7.0 cm wide. In outline form the hide strip exhibited a bisymmetric arrangement of triangular forms, two broad triangles facing downward interspersed by two triangles facing upward. The upper and lower borders of the strip

were artistically defined by rows of ribbing made of split root wound around a fibrous core; four horizontal rows on the bottom edge, three rows on the top. The fringed section was heavily stained with red ochre. (Plate 52).

Speck (1936: 151-2) and Webber-Podolinsky (Speck, Dodge and Webber-Podolinsky, unpublished ms.: 536-8) speculated on possible cultural affinities between the Beothuk practices associated with red ochre and the intensive use of this substance on clothing shown by the historic Montagnais, particularly around Natashquan. However, local decorative traditions based upon the liberal application of red ochre to hide clothing might just as well have developed independently over time, as have arisen through cultural contact and exchange.

Fitted coats. The most impressive hide garments were definitely male attire and were made for chiefs, shamans and hunters of noted rank. Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi shamans wore a decorated robe when conjuring. The Micmac shaman-chief, Membertou, was said to have been clothed in a magnificent robe while lying on his deathbed. (Thwaites 1897: II, 17). Yet the early accounts remained confusing as to the cut and painted designs of these robes. There was no literary evidence of an aboriginal prototype for the fitted, sleeved and open-fronted hide coats represented in the museum collections from northern Labrador.

Montagnais/Nascapi fitted coats. In recent years a controversy has arisen among ethnologists concerning the aboriginality of the fitted hide coat in North America, or whether the cut of this garment was

derived from the late-seventeenth century French military coat, from the European civilian frock-coat or from the historic Eskimo *parka*. Open-fronted, fitted hide garments were worn historically at ceremonial occasions by Nascapi chiefs, shamans and leading hunters. Similar coats were made by the Plains Cree during the early nineteenth century. Outside the continent of North America belted, open-fronted hide coats with sleeves and usually fringed along the borders and painted with applied designs, comprised the major clothing articles of circum-boreal peoples from Lapland to eastern Siberia. Furthermore, a waist-length, open-fronted and sleeved, painted hide coat was part of late-historic shaman's costume from the Goldi River region, Amur, southeastern U.S.S.R. (Vastokas 1973/74: opposite 130).

Clark Wissler, researching the costumes of the Plains Indians, was inclined to argue for the aboriginality of the fitted hide coat. (1915: 56-7). Speck cautiously agreed with this view and presented the following grounds for his reasoning concerning the cut of the Nascapi fitted hide coat:

> I find myself wavering from one flank to the other, yet the tendency is to swing back to a feeling of native origin, presumably proto-historic, for the pattern of the Nascapi coat. Accurate cutting of patterns to fit form and function is by no means too complex an achievement to the Northern Indians, even barring influences derivable from Eskimo, when we examine the handling of bark, rawhide leather, and wood in form-fitting constructions requiring the assembling of parts previously measured and patterned, to form the completed object (snowshoe, canoe, bark-container, etc.). It may be pointed out furthermore that the inserts or gores in the skirts of the Nascapi coats serve a most advantageous purpose in enabling the girdle to bring the coat tightly around the waist of the wearer: a distinct advantage as protection from the wind. Gores likewise are known in the construction of canoes and containers of birch bark. Had the European coat of the 18th Century been the model for the Nascapi garment, we may wonder why the open flap in the European coat tail of the period had

> not been imitated in the Indian garment. I know of no Naskapi coat possessing this feature. (1939: 39-40).

The most recent summary of the arguments supporting and rejecting the aboriginality and circumboreal affinities of the fitted coat was presented by Webber-Podolinsky from data collected during her own fieldwork in Labrador in the mid 1960's and from unpublished writings on the subject by Speck and Dodge. (Speck, Dodge and Webber-Podolinsky: unpublished ms.: 391-407). Yet no firm conclusions were reached in the wake of much theorizing on the subject. Jenness (1932: 272) restricted the geographical range of the fitted, sleeved hide coat historically to the northern Nascapi. The southern Montagnais wore the same costume as the Indian population of the Maritime Provinces which consisted of a hide breech clout, robe, leggings and moccasins, whereas "the harsher climate in the interior of the Labrador Peninsula compelled the Naskapi, and some of the more northern Montagnais, to adopt the tailored shirt of the coastal Eskimo, and to fit it occasionally with a hood for winter use." There were serious problems to be considered in accepting Jenness's statement. The *parka* coat was worn by both Eskimo men and women, while among the Indians the knee-length fitted coat was worn only by the hunters. This sexual dichotomy in Nascapi dress was stressed by Turner who wrote that "the forms of the garments for the sexes are so different as to require special consideration." (1894: 281).

The Nascapi winter coats in the collections were made of two rectangular caribou hides sewn with sinew thread up the sides from hem to armpit and across the top of each shoulder. Wrist-length sleeves were sewn directly to the bodice of the garment. The space

for the insertion of the head was sufficiently wide to allow the garment to be pulled on easily and yet provide maximum coverage for the chest and neck region. Often a rectangular flap of hide was attached to the back of the head-opening and hung downward across the points of the shoulders as extra protection for the upper back against the wind and cold. This collar was sewn with the hair side outward and was usually fringed along the bottom edge. The fringed strands were short and wide, and primarily served for the practical purpose of shedding water and snow. A hood made from the two cheeks and poll skin of the caribou often replaced the collar. (Plate 53). The cheek sections were fitted so that the contours of the hide pieces conformed with the contours of the head. The hoods examined had the hair side of the hide on the outside.

Unlike the Eskimo coat, the Indian fitted garment had a vertical slit cut centrally up the back from hem to waist and a triangular gore inserted to flare the skirt. Two additional gores were set just in front of the side seams. The borders of the garment were painted with designs which extended up the gores. On adults' winter coats the hair side of the skin faced inward toward the body, though on children's coats the opposite was sometimes observed. (Plate 54).

The winter and summer hide coats made by the Nascapi were apparently derived from the same original prototype, as Jenness suggested. Yet, not only did the historic Eskimo coats lack back and side gores, but it seemed strange that, should the Nascapi have adopted the design from the Eskimo peoples, the Indians did not also develop a coat-type similar to the Eskimo woman's garment, with its long hanging

flaps at the front and back.. Second, the practice of wearing the fur-side of winter garments next to the body was an Indian tradition, rarely followed by the Eskimo. The Montagnais/Nascapi summer hide coat with its contoured waist and gore seams thus was probably not adopted primarily from the Eskimo winter outer garment. In its cut and manufacture, and in the range of stylistic designs which were applied to its surfaces, the Nascapi hunter's coat was distinctive among hide clothing made by other peoples in the Northeast.

The summer coat was made of hide curried on both sides as finely as *chamois*, and composed of three main pattern pieces. The first pattern piece extended in a single panel downward from the neck and shoulders to the back of the knees, and the second and third pieces, cut identically for both sides, were joined to the back piece with a seam along the top of each shoulder and down each side to form a knee-length, open-fronted vest. The sleeves were cut from two rectangular sections of hide folded double and sewn along the length of the open edge with the seam on the inside. Sleeves were often wrist-length and occasionally fitted with an additional folded hide cuff. The sleeves were sewn to the body of the garment with a fine gathered stitch. A hide flap, sub-rectangular to roughly crescentic in shape, was often attached to the back of the circumference of the neck opening and hung down the back within the area defined by the wearer's shoulder blades. This collar had the hair removed on both sides and was fringed along its lower edge. (Plate 55).

A broad gore seam, approximately 12.0 cm to 15.0 cm in maximum width on adults' summer coats, extended from the center of the hem

at the back and terminated at an apex at the waist. Similar, although slightly narrower, gores were inserted in front of the two lateral seams to increase the flare of the skirt evenly on every side. The garment fastened in front by a series of narrow hide thongs, often four in number, which tied in a vertical row across the wearer's chest. Adults' coats had geometric curvilinear design patterns around the bottom border, along either side of the front opening, encircling the upper part of the sleeves and about the cuffs. The gore seams were completely covered with colourful stylistic motif, and a vertical line of quadrate designs often continued upwards from the apex of the back gore to meet a second, transverse line of similar patterns extending from shoulder to shoulder. This T-shaped area of design motif was repeated up the front and across the chest region. The collar, if there were one, was also decorated. The coats were tightened about the waist with an ornamented hide belt or a brightly-coloured woven trade sash, the ends of which were crossed in the front.

The earliest examples of sleeved hide coats in the Northeast dated from the mid-seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries. Many of the oldest specimens made by Algonkian-speaking peoples from northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence belonged to the George Speyer collection and in recent years became scattered throughout different museum collections both in North America and Europe. A fine early example from the Speyer collection was housed in the Berlin Museum. A second coat similar to the specimen in Berlin was located in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology), Leiden, Holland. (Plate 56). The coat in the Rijksmuseum and the coat in Berlin both were long-sleeved

and had rectangular lapels decorated with porcupine quillwork reminiscent of the ornamentation on the ceremonial costumes worn by the late-historic Woodland Cree. They were cut straight along the side seams and lacked belts. Especially interesting, these coats had a large T-shaped area of quadrate design patterns up the center of the back and across the shoulders.

Although their specific geographic origins were uncertain it was generally accepted that these coats were collected either from the Montagnais/Nascapi or from Woodland Cree peoples inhabiting northwestern Quebec and eastern Manitoba. Both examples had straight lines down the side seams and neither exhibited inserted gores. According to this museum evidence there was scope for complacently assuming that fitted hide coats were a late eighteenth century development. Yet, the hide coat worn by George Cartwright in his portrait *frontispiece* to his Labrador journal, published in 1792 (Plate 57) was identical in cut to the fitted coats collected in Labrador during the first half of the nineteenth century. It must have taken a fairly lengthy period of time for a sophisticated hide-working skill such as that required for inserting gore seams in leather to have been adopted uniformly by the Labrador Indians. It thus seemed surprising that so little ethnographic data existed on these coats prior to 1800, as the garments were of such a distinctive design as to catch the eye of even the casual observer. It was also probable that most Europeans did not wear frock coats or military uniforms in a region of rugged wilderness which was infested with flies in summer and bitterly cold in winter. Turner stated that the Europeans at Fort Chimo, finding

the Indian dress lacking the insulating qualities of the Eskimo *parka*, rapidly adopted the latter garment during the winter months. (1894: 288). Should the Nascapi have derived the cut of their fitted coat from the Europeans, the rate at which these peoples developed the hide-working techniques involved in its manufacture, and the shortness of the time in which the coat gained widespread acceptance was impressive. It was particularly remarkable for an Indian group who were comparatively isolated from European influences during the historic period.

A more speculative approach to the problem of the aboriginality of the fitted coat in the Northeast involved an investigation of the major areas of coat design. Design elements on early coats were highly stylized -- usually geometric -- and strict controls existed on over-elaboration. The T-shaped pattern extending up the center of the back and across the shoulders stood independent from seam lines, gores or applied accessories such as cuffs and collars, which tended to contain designs within well-defined boundaries. The T-shaped pattern was definitely the main design focus on the early coats. On mid- to late nineteenth century coats this T-design appeared broadened at the top and bottom into an 'hour-glass' shape. (Plate 58). The tailored waist of the fitted coat conformed with the center of the 'hour glass', the transverse line across the shoulders the width of the 'hour glass' across the top, and the area of design on the flared back gore formed the basal pyramid. V-shaped designs, with their apexes radiating upward from the hem of the coat toward the waist, were painted on either side of the back gore and in front of the two side gores so that later

coats had as many as seven principal areas of decoration around the circumference of the skirt. (Plate 59).

The triangular areas became more important as fields for decoration than the upper back and shoulders, a progression of design development which was of interest for several reasons. First, the uniformity of the T-shaped pattern on early coats must have been of special importance to the Algonkian-speaking Labrador Indians as it implied a form of magico-religious or shamanic symbolism. Second, the gradual tailoring of the straight coat into the fitted coat caused a flaring outwards at the top and bottom of the original design prototype. This change within a single design area over time suggested that fitted garments may not have been aboriginal, but that the addition of the flare acted as a modifying agent on the earlier design pattern, causing it to lose its shape and original symbolic significance. The persistence of the "hour-glass' design area apparently became dependent on stylistic tradition alone by the mid-nineteenth century.

The Micmac decorated fitted coat. No historic Micmac fitted coats had either a large T-shaped design area on the back nor did they exhibit decorated gore seams. From a cursory survey of Micmac coats it was obvious that the quasi-military coats worn by European officials at treaty meetings and other diplomatic encounters with the Indians had a major influence on the coat styles adopted by the coastal Wabanaki. Ethnographic accounts frequently referred to a desire on the part of the Indian chiefs to appear equal, or even of superior status, to the European representatives. Fitted European coats of red or blue broadcloth were presented as gifts to chiefs and were proudly displayed

by their recipients. But status, as communicated in terms of clothing, played a greater part in external diplomatic relations between the Wabanaki and the Europeans, than in inter-tribal agreements between groups of chiefs, or between a chief and his own tribespeople. Prior to the seventeenth century ties of friendship and peace among the coastal Wabanaki were not cemented through an exchange of decorated clothing, but through the presentation of strings and belts ornamented with shell beadwork.

This use of *wampum*, though reputedly adopted by the Wabanaki from the Iroquois (Speck 1919: 6) may have been based upon a much older tradition initiated by the coastal peoples themselves. Even the Beothuk of Newfoundland observed certain diplomatic rituals associated with shell *wampum*, for in 1612 Guy reported that men of his company who met with the Indians on the shores of Trinity Bay were presented with chains "of leather full of small periwinkles shels." (Howley 1915: 16). Other ethnographic reports written prior to 1630 indicated that among the New England Wabanaki *wampum* was confined to "Ye Sachems and spetiall persons that wore a little of it for ornament." (Beauchamp 1901: 335). Restriction of beaded work to articles of adornment as a symbol of exalted status also had a parallel among the Micmac and the southern Montagnais in the form of brightly-coloured quillworked garment borders. Champlain stated that the Montagnais "put on their robes bands of porcupine quills which they dye a very fine scarlet colour. They value these bands very highly, and detach them so that they may serve other robes when they wish to make a change." (Grant 1967: 318). Similar to beaded ornamentation, these quillworked borders had a special

worth apart from the garment itself, and were carefully removed and re-applied to newly-manufactured articles when the old robes began to show the effects of wear.

A trend ensued among the Wabanaki after the turn of the seventeenth century toward the replacement of the belts of shell *wampum* by beaded coat accessories as a medium of inter-tribal diplomatic exchange. Beaded collars, cuffs, lapels, epaulets, tabs -- reminiscent of the cut of accessories on the coats received by the chiefs from the Europeans -- were given as gifts to inter-tribal representatives. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 95). The merging of the European practice of presenting coats with the Indian tradition of exchanging decorated bands and belts was complete when, by the nineteenth century, there was a red broadcloth coat cut to the style set by military fashion, but which had traditional design patterns worked in white beads on the collar, cuffs, epaulets, lapels and up either side of the front opening. This coat was examined in the collection at the New Brunswick Museum, St. John. (Plate 61). Although undoubtably an example of the adoption of European clothing models by the Wabanaki, it exhibited traits which made it specifically Indian. The dotted border sections, the rows of pyramidal shapes, and particularly the prominent width of the line of ornaments about the bottom of the garment were based on early Indian design prototypes. The most interesting aspect of the design motif, however, was that the areas of design on each major accessory, although similar in execution, were not quite the same. It was tentatively assumed by the staff of the New Brunswick Museum that the coat was a symbolic garment representing the cohesive spirit among certain tribes in the

Wabanaki League. The beaded designs on the lapels were Micmac, possibly signifying this tribe's contribution to the League. The ornamental work on the other coat accessories exemplified the stylistic traditions of related Wabanaki peoples. The concept behind the workmanship on the coat differed greatly from the prevailing attitude between Indian and European. It signified a unity of separate and individualistic tribal components into a whole; a tradition of intertribal diplomacy where each tribe saw itself as a self-sufficient entity willing to co-operate and yet loosely bound by the bonds of friendship and a mutual regard.

The fitted broadcloth coat thus not only represented exalted status among the Wabanaki chiefs at formal meetings with Europeans, but more than this it became a symbolic field for diplomatic relations among the tribes themselves. Its significance may occasionally have transcended the desire for status, imitation or mere vanity. This garment type, although cut to European tailoring standards, probably replaced the decorated hide robe described by Denys, and with its adoption assumed many of the intrinsic properties traditionally attributed to the chief's or shaman's robe. Yet the Wabanaki were also influenced by the social and political organization of the Iroquois. By early historic times the chief's robe signified political rank rather than the more individualized qualities associated with a good hunter or warrior. With the arrival of the Europeans this process was accelerated; the fitted coat which superseded the chief's hide robe developed into a form of civilian uniform, similar to the European garment from which its design was taken.

A comparison of Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi fitted coats.

Conversely, fitted hide coats retained a greater individualistic worth among the Nascapi. Hide coats were fields for the painting of the hunter's dream visions, and although these dreams were depicted in traditional stylistic form, they nevertheless represented the prowess of the individual. This differing perspective towards the hunter's coat was significant, as it implied an older magico-religious attitude akin to the mysterious powers ascribed to shaman's paraphernalia. These powers worked only for the hunter who had cognizance of the supernatural realm -- an individualistic approach to tribal status in keeping with the traditional beliefs of most northern Algonkian hunting peoples.

Relatively free from Iroquoian influences, the northern Nascapi continued to maintain their own concepts of tribal status until these ways and beliefs were undermined by intensive European contact during the nineteenth century. Though speculative, the above view allowed for the aboriginality of the Montagnais/Nascapi fitted hide coat but probably not of the form encountered most frequently in the museum collections. Sleeveless, vest-like garments of caribou hide tanned to the pliability of *chamois* and open down the front may have been aboriginal prototypes for the fitted garment. A hide mantle wrapped about the body so that it met in the front would have provided the bodice of the vest and, with the addition of arm holes, would be complete. A belt or girdle would draw the garment closely about the waist in semblance to the tailored coat. Sleeves might have been attached by hide thongs.

As no artifactual or early literary sources were located to support the presence of the fitted hide coat among either the Micmac or the Beothuk prior to European contact, the aboriginality of this garment among the coastal tribes remained in doubt. Should the hood on the back of the Beothuk woman's garment have been derived from Eskimo winter coats there was the possibility that imitation of the Eskimo coat itself might have taken place. Again, however, lack of artifactual and literary evidence made this assumption untenable as a grounds for comparison. What data did exist tended to uphold a broad division between possible types of outer hide garments made by the Indian peoples of Labrador and those made by the Micmac and the Beothuk on the coast. Whereas the controversy focused on the development of the fitted hide coat among the Labrador Indians will undoubtably continue for many more years, the problem concerning the aboriginality of a clothing counterpart among the Beothuk or Micmac must be considered completely enigmatic until more substantial evidence is forthcoming.[1]

Mittens and Headwear. There was no artifactual or literary evidence that mittens were made in the Northeast prior to European contact. Rogers (1967: 60) was inclined "to suspect they were not aboriginal. For instance, no mention of mittens has been found in the *Jesuit Relations*, when referring to the clothing of the Montagnais." The cut, and ornamental designs of mittens made by the Montagnais/Nascapi became more elaborate with time. Turner reported that Nascapi mittens were made simply by folding a rectangular piece of smoked caribou hide lengthwise and cutting out the general shape of the hand in both layers. (1894: 285). On mittens collected from the Labrador

peoples during the late nineteenth century a section of the folded edge was left uncut and the outline of the hand sewn together. The thumb was composed of two pieces, an outer piece large enough to cover the back and sides of that appendage, and a smaller tongue-shaped inner flap left protruding from the base of the slit cut in the main palm section. A strip of hide sewn to the upper edge of the mitt formed the cuff and was decorated with painted designs or ribbon *appliqué*.

Mittens made within the last hundred years were composed of as many as six independent pattern pieces. Two identical pieces of hide cut large enough and of a suitable shape to fit comfortably over the hand were sewn edge to edge. The thumb section either consisted of separate back and front pieces sewn up the sides, or had an inner flap left protruding from the base of the thumb slit, as on earlier examples. Flaring cuffs were made from two pieces of smoked hide sewn up the sides and attached to the top edge of the main body of the mitten. About the circumference of the hand the seams were sewn on the inside in a simple in-and-out stitch, whereas the side seams along the wrist were usually fringed. On mittens where the hair was left on the hide, the hair surface faced inward.

The two-piece thumb section and the flaring cuffs on late-nineteenth century and twentieth century specimens were recent developments A pair of late eighteenth-century mittens in the Speyer collection at the National Museum of Man, Ottawa, were straight-sided along the wrists and had a short, stubby thumb. The decoration on these early mittens was applied entirely at variance with the symmetry of the

articles. On both there was a vertical line painted in red from the base of the cuff to the curve of the hand, and the areas on either side filled with fine zig-zag, curvilinear and lattice-like designs, also in red. The hide was unsmoked and had the texture of *chamois*. (Plate 62).

Mittens of smoked moosehide were rare in Micmac collections and could easily be copies of items obtained by trade. Decorated gloves, certainly not aboriginal, often had French floral motif worked in beads on the cuffs and the backs of the hands.

That the Beothuk had mittens by as early as the late sixteenth century was supported by Hore's account of finding a "certaine great warme mitten" at an abandoned Indian encampment on the shores of Notre Dame Bay. (Howley 1915: 11). Also, one of the Beothuk hunters encountered by John Guy wore mittens. (*Ibid.*: 17). Guy's description intimated that the wearing of mittens may have been a mark of elevated status as only one Beothuk man had mittens and this man apparently commanded some authority over the other Indians in the group. Though these mittens may have been derived from Eskimo prototypes or have been introduced by early European fishermen and traders, there was no evidence to contradict an assumption that they may also have been aboriginal.

Micmac and Montagnais/Naskapi headwear. Difficulties similar to those encountered in the comparative study of mittens also arose during the examination of headwear. There was no firm evidence that hats were made aboriginally. Many early accounts stressed that, even

when hats became available through trade, they were only worn on the coldest days of the winter. The Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi tied a narrow hide strip about the forehead to keep the hair from falling into the eyes. Similar to the Algonkian-speaking mainland Indians, the Beothuk wore their hair shoulder-length or longer, but plaited it in a coil about the back of the head with a forelock before. Conversely, the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi usually braided and looped their hair above their ears on either side. Feathers were often displayed in the hair by both the coastal and the interior tribes. According to Lescarbot the historic Micmac had a feathered head-dress made of a "crown of moose hair painted red pasted or otherwise fastened to a fillet of leather of three fingers breadth ..." (Biggar 1928: 214). Le Clercq referred to the Micmac making a head piece out of two wings of a bird which they wore on ceremonial occasions or before leaving on a war expedition. (Ganong 1968: 98). Neither practice was recorded among the Montagnais/Nascapi or the Beothuk.

The ornamented peaked cap used by Micmac women as part of their traditional dress until the nineteenth century might be aboriginal, although no mention of it could be found in the early accounts. It may have derived from a ceremonial form of head-dress worn by the chief or leading hunters which, because of a prevailing conservatism among Indian women, persisted as an article of traditional dress only among the female sex. (Plate 63). In early historic times men's hats rose to a peak at the front and had a flap at the back which could be adjusted to protect the neck against the sun or wind. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 80-1). The Micmac petroglyphs on the rocks at Lake Kejimkoojik and along the Medway River, Nova Scotia, depicted elaborate peaked

caps decorated with feathers, twigs from various coniferous trees and painted or beadworked designs.

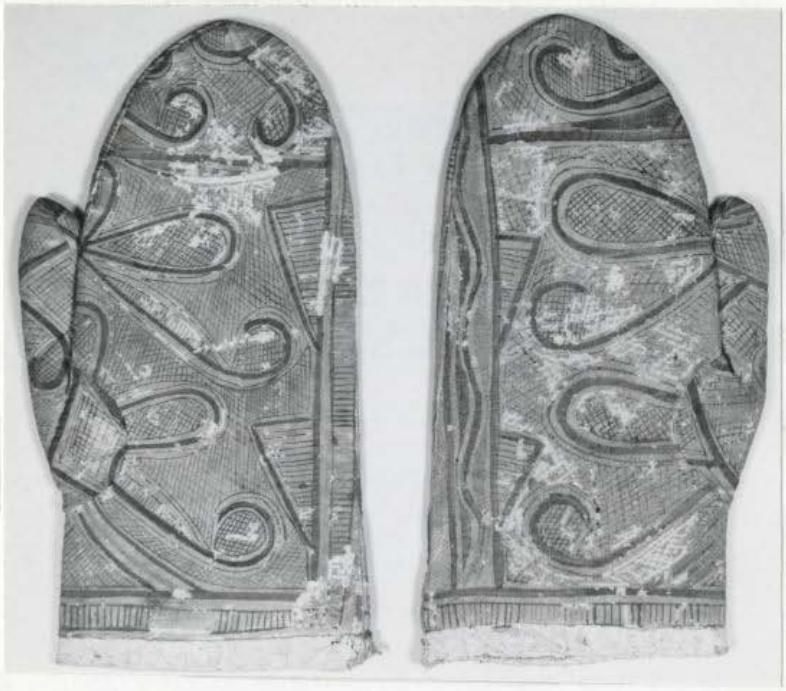
Denys observed rectangular head-coverings being made by young Micmac women out of woven strips of moosehide decorated with porcupine quills. A lengthwise fold with a vertical seam running backwards from the center front to the crown of the head would have produced a hood-like bonnet not unlike the woman's peaked cap. A one-seam hide pattern with angular, rather than rounded corners, could be adapted to the contours of the head and yet be quickly and easily made.

Peaked caps similar to the Micmac headwear were also made by Indians of Labrador and northern Quebec. In a late eighteenth century watercolour by Thomas Davies entitled "A View Near Point Levy Opposite Quebec," presently in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, there were several Indian women depicted wearing red peaked caps. The clothing, dwellings and hairstyles indicated that these people were Montagnais.

Hoods and peaked caps may have been worn mainly by women for many reasons. The Beothuk made hood-like hide bags attached to the back of their garments for carrying young children. In historic times Christian influence encouraged Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi women to keep their heads covered, an accepted practice extended to most ceremonial occasions both lay and religious. Yet, though peaked hats were almost exclusively women's garb by the eighteenth century, it seemed unlikely that this was always the case.

The cloth toques and pill-box hats made by the Montagnais/Nascapi were undoubtably copied from European patterns. However, there was a decided preference among these Indian people for conical caps

Plate 62



Nascapi decorated hide mittens
Speyer collection
Photograph courtesy of National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 63



Micmac woman's beadworked head-covering
Photograph courtesy of National Museum of Man, Ottawa

of red cloth which may have had an aboriginal precedent. Turner stated of the northern Nascapi:

> Some [Nascapi men] who are able and love a display of fancy colors have a cap made and ornamented with beads worked into extravagant patterns. The cap is a high conical affair, and from the weight of beads upon it often falls to the side of the head. (1894: 286).

Beothuk headwear. It seemed possible that both Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi peaked caps could have been derived from a ceremonial prototype also known to the ancestors of the historic Beothuk. This statement was supported by two brief references to Beothuk headwear in the ethnographic accounts compiled by Howley. First, the beadworked trim on Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi peaked and conical headwear was reminiscent of the strips of shell beads sewn on the sealskin hats worn by the Newfoundland Indians, described by Whitbourne in 1582, (Howley 1915: 72). Second, in 1811 Buchan recorded a brief encounter with a Beothuk man, whom the lieutenant believed to be a chief. This hunter possessed a head-dress which Buchan described simply as a "high cap". (*Ibid.*: 79).

Stray notes in Cormack's handwriting recovered by Howley included this curious phrase: "Men singing to Ash-wa-meet, with Eagles feathers and deers ears in cap." (*Ibid.*: 230). The syntax of the sentence failed to specify whether the men or Ash-wa-meet were wearing the cap ornamented with eagles' feathers and deer's ears. Should the participants have been required to wear a form of ritualistic head-dress, the statement might be interpreted as referring to special groups akin to 'medicine societies' whose duties included the glorification of a deity, chief or culture hero. Most important, in accounts where

high-peaked or conical hats figured prominently, these articles were almost always associated with ceremonial occurrences. The manufacture of these items in late historic times paralleled the persistence of fringed cloth leggings as vestiges of traditional attire. Hats and hoods thus may not have served primarily functional purposes, but have been articles of ceremonial Indian garb ornamented with shell beads, feathers and, on the mainland, with quills and paint.

Cultural contact between the Historic Montagnais and the Micmac across the Gulf of St. Lawrence led to a sharing of clothing traits between these two tribes which were conspicuously absent from the ethnographic and artifactual material relating to the Beothuk. A form of headwear made by all three Indian peoples would therefore have predated the historic period, as evidently the Beothuk were either not exposed or not receptive to ideas and changes on the mainland subsequent to early European contact.

Body ornaments. Ornaments worn by the historic Micmac and southern Montagnais included belts, necklaces, pendants, earrings and hair ties decorated with dyed porcupine and bird quills, shell beads and strands of dyed rush material. The Micmac obtained ornaments, occasionally of copper, through inter-tribal trade to the west and south. The more-isolated Nascapi painted geometric designs on hide strips to be worn around the neck or across the forehead. Earth pigments and black from wood ash were used for painting the face and limbs. To the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi red ochre generally signified life-giving blood or war; black was associated with death.

Little data was recorded concerning the body ornaments worn by the Beothuk. Similar to the mainland tribes, the Beothuk strung hide thongs with perforated animal claws, animal teeth and birds' feet. These objects may have had a ritual significance to the Beothuk wearer, as often they did to the mainland Indians and the Eskimo. The Beothuk were the only historic tribe to smear red ochre over their entire body, and there were no indications that other earth pigments or dyes were regularly used by them. Neither was it known whether or not the Beothuk traditionally blackened their faces as a sign of mourning.

No early Micmac quillworked bracelets, necklaces, hide belts or strings were examined at first-hand in the museum collections. European-introduced jewellery, silver medallions, brooches and ornamental pins were of no comparative value. The study required a methodological framework based on a select range of ornamental types known to have been manufactured independently of European influences. Categories formulated had to be supported by artifactual and literary evidence for all the tribes.

Three categories of ornaments were chosen, based primarily upon items from the Beothuk collections. These categories consisted of (1) bone and antler combs, (2) perforated discoidal shell beads, and (3) perforated decorated bone pieces of a size and shape capable of being worn as pendants or amulets. Where comparative evidence was scarce for the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi, emphasis was placed on those aspects of shape and stylistic design which distinguished the Beothuk ornament type from its closest parallel among surrounding Indian peoples.

1. Carved bone and antler combs. Beothuk combs uniformly exhibited certain distinctive formal and decorative characteristics. The seven existing Beothuk combs in the Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, were flat and of two main outline shapes. Four combs were of an hour-glass shape with an indented 'waist' in the middle of the handle. These examples were longer than they were wide, the longest being 7.5 cm in length and 3.0 cm wide. Most were about 2.5 cm in thickness. The base of the handle flared outward to accommodate from six to fifteen carefully-carved teeth about 3.0 cm long. (Plate 64).

Two of the bone combs were of the second main shape, wider than they were long. The largest specimen measured 2.75 cm in length, 4.75 cm in width and .25 cm in thickness and exhibited twenty-two teeth approximately 1.5 cm long. This comb had a triangular outline incised with a fine ladder-like design on both faces. The smaller comb was indented laterally above the line of teeth, and then flared sharply outwards to a straight top. Both the former and latter examples were perforated for suspension. A third bone comb in the Newfoundland Museum collection with sixteen teeth was almost square in shape, being 2.75 cm long and 3.0 cm wide.

Beothuk combs demonstrated a well-developed aesthetic appreciation for shape and design which was at variance with prevailing European artistic standards. Most specimens appeared almost too delicate to have been used for 'everyday' ornamental purposes. Hair was usually left uncut and tied back, or rolled. Guy wrote of the Beothuk as having "a great

locke of haire platted with feathers like a hawke's lure, with a feather before." (Howley 1915: 17). But nowhere in the ethnographic accounts were combs specifically mentioned.

Combs recovered from Beothuk burial sites did not lie near the head of the dead as though they might originally have been set in the hair, but were placed with other gravegoods to the side. The careful carving and incised designs may have been primarily ornamental, as suggested by Shanawdithit's facility at this art. She proved to be "very ingenious at carving and could make combs out of deers' horns and carve them beautifully." (*Ibid.*: 175). This statement implied that many Beothuk, or at least the women of the tribe, were capable of carving and decorating bone ornaments, and that the skill was not restricted to a limited number of 'specialists'. The uniformity of outline shape and incised designs used on the Beothuk bone combs indicated further that the makers were following a long-standing stylistic tradition in their bone-working endeavours.

There was no ethnographic documentation to support the existence of a parallel tradition of comb manufacture among either the Micmac or Montagnais/Nascapi. Turner described wide, rectangular wooden combs carved by the Nascapi in imitation of those purchased from the trading companies. (1894: 320). Bark comb cases, and comb cleaners made from the coarse hairs of a porcupine tail after the quills had been removed were examined in both the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi museum collections. The Micmac also used a piece of moose hide as a comb cleaner.

Comb-carving was an ancient practice in the Northeast as evidenced

by three antler combs recovered from the high-alkaline content soil at the Maritime Archaic burial site, Port au Choix, Newfoundland. (Tuck 1970: 119). These combs were flat, longer than they were wide, and had long slender teeth, about ten in number. The outline of the handles on two of these combs represented the neck and head of a bird. Delicately-carved and well-proportioned bone combs have also been found at Dorset sites in the Northeast.

Although none of the existing Beothuk combs were representational in form, they were similar in shape and stylized ornamentation to the Maritime Archaic and Dorset examples. The absence of archaeological evidence for the persistence of a related ancient comb carving tradition among the historic Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi, however, might perhaps be attributed to the highly acidic nature of the soils in the Maritime Provinces and Labrador, which cause the rapid deterioration of buried bone or other organic materials, rather than to cultural factors.

2. *Discoidal shell beads.* The category of discoidal shell beads was the most rewarding, comparatively, of the three selected. Flat shell beads, perforated through the middle for suspension, were the only bead type described in the early ethnographic sources relating to the Beothuk. Since shell *wampum* was recorded among the historic coastal Wabanaki but not among the Montagnais/Nascapi, its additional presence among the Beothuk implied that the manufacture of this bead type was a practice restricted geographically to the Atlantic seaboard. Speck (1919: 6) maintained that flat discoidal shell beads were an independent development among the coastal tribes prior to European contact,

although replaced historically by tubular quahog beads and the glass trade bead. No tubular shell beads have been recovered from Beothuk sites in Newfoundland; thus it was assumed that the technique of making them never reached the island.

Micmac beads. Both discoidal shell beads and glass trade beads were recovered from an early seventeenth-century Micmac 'copper pot burial' at Avonport, Nova Scotia. The discoidal shell beads were very small, about 6.0 mm in diameter and from 3.0 mm to 14.0 mm in length -- those of the latter dimensions being tubular in shape. There were 1,950 Indian-made shell beads, and 1,103 glass trade beads unearthed at the site. (Whitehead 1974: 10). Holes in the shell beads were drilled rather than biconically gouged.

Beothuk beads. The Beothuk discoidal beads were much larger in size than the Micmac shell beads from Avonport. A collection of perforated shell discs in the McCord Museum, Montreal, probably from a post-contact burial site near Rencontre on the south coast of Newfoundland (Dawson 1860: V, 462), ranged from 3.0 cm to approximately 4.0 cm in diameter. The majority were less than .25 cm in thickness. The holes in the discs appeared to be drilled rather than gouged.

The Beothuk must have manufactured large quantities of discoidal shell beads in view of the widespread distribution of these beads at sites in Newfoundland and the presence of a small number of bead preforms recovered from Beothuk graves. (*Ibid.*) Howley described a Beothuk cave burial site on Swan Island, Bay of Exploits, where in addition to miscellaneous pieces of rusted iron, broken glass bottles and

fragments of French clay pipes there were "discs made of shells perforated in the middle." (1915: 289). Further mention was made of three small beads and "two flat beads on a stick" from a pre-contact cave site known as Indian Hole on Tilt Island in Placentia Bay (*Ibid.*: 293) and to several beads associated with a Beothuk skeleton in a cave on Comfort Island, Bay of Exploits. (*Ibid.*: 333). Reference to beads from the Comfort Island burial were entirely open to speculation as the site was post-contact and the beads might have been made of glass. No trace of these specimens could be located in the ethnohistorical collections.

The Beothuk stole or bartered for French clay pipes from French fishermen who visited the bays along the northeast coast. Two lengths of necklace from the Swan Island burial, one 30.0 cm long and the other about 50.0 cm long, consisting of thin sections of clay pipe stems strung on a double thickness of hide thong alternatively with discs of sheet lead and small circles of the inner bark of the birch, were examined in the Newfoundland Museum. (Plate 65). The round discs varied from 1.5 cm to 2.0 cm in diameter. Three short fragments of what also appeared to be necklaces belonged to the same collection. One fragment, 10.5 cm in length, had sections of clay pipe stem alternating with discs of sheet lead about 1.25 cm in diameter. All of the necklaces and fragments were joined to flat bone rings on at least one end. Patterson (1891: 159) maintained that the Beothuk, upon being driven from the coast during the late eighteenth century, substituted wood and bone materials for shell in making beads. Shell appeared to be the traditional material for manufacturing necklaces,

however, as beads from pre-contact and early contact burials were all of this substance.

It was not known for how long a period of time the coastal Indians made discoidal shell beads prior to European contact. No beads of this type have been recovered from Maritime Archaic Indian sites where artifacts of bone and shell have been preserved, nor were they present in woodland shell heaps in New England and the Maritime Provinces. The marine shell material of which they were manufactured suggested that the bead prototype was developed along the Atlantic coast. Yet cultural affiliations connected to their origin were difficult to trace. The problem became even more acute with Wintemberg's discovery of several broken cylindrical beads in a cave burial on the north shore of the Strait of Belle Isle between Bradore Bay and Blanc Sablon. Wintemberg assumed that the burial was Beothuk because of the profusion of a "reddish substance" which covered the human bones and the beads. Yet, he stated further that the beads "retain the spiral groove of the columellae from which they are derived and are like some of those found in pre- and post-European sites of Iroquois in Ontario and New York, and of other cultures in the United States." (1936: 25). These beads differed so greatly from beads found at Beothuk sites in Newfoundland that their affinity with the Beothuk culture remained doubtful. It seemed more plausible that they were manufactured by the St. Lawrence Iroquois.

The antiquity of the practice of using perforated shell beads for ornamental purposes was well documented for the Northeast. Thousands

of beads made from the shells of small marine snails have been unearthed at the Port au Choix site. (Tuck 1968: 119). The beaded hide strips presented by the Beothuk to Guy's company in 1612 may have evidenced a continuation of this ancient tradition into historic times. (Howley 1915:16). Should the discoidal shell beads have been made prehistorically by coastal peoples inhabiting the Maritime Provinces, it seemed feasible that exchanges among coastal tribes could have easily promoted the distribution of this bead type as far northeast as Newfoundland. This diffusion would have been facilitated should greeting ceremonies involving the mutual presentation of strings of these beads have been used to breach linguistic barriers among coastal tribes. Conversely, the absence of shell beads among the southern Montagnais implied that these Indians were isolated from a mainstream of cultural ideas progressing up the Atlantic coast.

The manufacture of discoidal shell beads by the Beothuk, combined with slight evidence for a ritualistic attitude towards these beads beyond that attributed to them as ornamental components, suggested that prehistoric cultural contact occurred between this tribe and the coastal Wabanaki. But it did not necessarily indicate a cultural affinity between these two peoples. Grounds were merely laid for widening the gap between the Beothuk and the Central Angonkian groups; thus directing the focus of the possible cultural associations of the former tribe south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence rather than to the northwest.

3. Decorated 'pendant-shaped' bone pieces. There were no counterparts to the Beothuk flat, decorated bone pieces in the ornament inventories of the historic mainland tribes. Numerically they by far composed the majority of Beothuk artifactual evidence: over four hundred individual pieces were recorded, of which three hundred and sixty-five were housed in the Newfoundland Museum, and forty-five in the Jehness collection at the National Museum of Man. Where possible, photographs were obtained of the remaining specimens, two of which were in the possession of the British Museum, three in the McCord Museum and seventy-five in private collections in Newfoundland.

The greatest number of Beothuk bone pieces were flat, longer than they were wide and had polished surfaces on both faces. (Plate 66). The remainder were three-dimensional in appearance, seven of which resembled game counters. (See Chapter Ten). Almost all the flat pieces tapered towards the distal end where there was a single biconically-gouged hole for suspension. Approximately one-hundred fifty of the flat pieces had bifurcate bases. Sixty-five of the number were blunt-ended, whereas twenty-eight terminated obliquely. The remainder had three or four basal prongs. In addition, there were two examples in the Newfoundland Museum, each composed of two bone pieces with bifurcate bases joined together side by side with a solid linking section across the distal end and at the bottom of the two inner prongs. One specimen exhibited deep V-shaped indentations at either end of its length joined together medially by a narrow connecting stem. The outline shape of this example suggested that two individual bone pieces may have been formed from a single flat section of bone by

carving out the indented base at either end and then narrowing the piece in the middle into an 'hour-glass' shape. When the joining partition was slender enough, it may have been simply snapped across. The rough edge along the narrow top of many pieces implied that this was a fairly common method of manufacture. (Carignan: personal communication).

The flat decorated bone pieces fell within two categorical sizes; the larger from 7.5 cm to 12.0 cm in length and the smaller from 3.0 cm to 7.0 cm in length. The average width of the sizes was approximately the same for both categories, ranging from 2.25 cm to 3.0 cm. The largest pendants in the Jenness collection at the National Museum of Man, from 18.0 cm to 20.0 cm in length, did not differ substantially in width from the above. Pieces with three basal prongs had the forks set closer together than the bifurcated examples.

Marshall (1974: 43) categorized the 'pendant-like' bone pieces into two distinct groups, "incised" and "carved", on the basis of decorating techniques used by the Indian manufacturers:

> The "incised" pieces, with an average length of 8.9 cm, were decorated with a sharp pointed tool, possibly needle or awl-like, which was used to scratch or incise geometrical patterns into the surface of the bone piece, effecting predominantly line patterns. The "carved" pieces with an average length of 4.7 cm had most of their patterns, such as triangular or diamond shapes, carved out and then filled with red ochre, resulting in a heavier though effective decoration of quite a different type.

In outline form and stylistic design the flat bone pieces were undoubtably derived either from a single basic prototype, or a set of related aboriginal prototypes. Marshall's recognition of the two categories referred to above was therefore less important to a

comparative study -- as it reflected minor changes in stylistic techniques over time -- than a tentative reconstruction of the formal prototype(s). This, however, was impossible to attempt except in the most speculative manner because of the lack of comparative data from the mainland tribes.

The specific function of the bone pieces remained uncertain. Most existing examples were recovered from coastal burials and at several of these sites were arranged together in a way that implied they may have had a special significance as amulets or charms. Patterson (1891: 156) described the body of the Beothuk boy interred in the grave on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay, as wrapped in a hide robe with an ornamental fringe "having attached to it some birds' claws and about thirty-two small pieces of bone of different shapes, all carved ingeniously." This account of decorated bone pieces led Howley to speculate that they might have had an additional purpose as ornamental accessories on ceremonial costumes. (1915: 249). But it was doubtful whether this was their primary purpose.

Other assemblages of bone pieces were not found in association with burials. Nearly forty examples unearthed from a cave site at North China Head, Long Island, Notre Dame Bay, did not accompany traces of human remains. A second collection of thirty bone pieces, now lost but illustrated in Howley (*Ibid.*: Plate XXXVI), was found beneath a cave floor at Southern Head, Long Island, Notre Dame Bay. In both instances the bone pieces were wrapped in birch bark and placed from two to three feet below the ground surface. The depth to which these items were buried, and the fact that they were obviously left in the

cave for some reason other than to accompany the dead, suggested that they may have been a ritual offering of some kind. (See Chapter Nine). A third item, a hide necklace consisting of a perforated boar's tusk and six 'incised' bone pieces -- three pieces bifurcated at the base, two with triple prongs, and one consisting of two double-pronged pieces joined together at the distal end and at the base -- was presented to the Newfoundland Museum by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. (Plate 67). Nothing could be learned of its origins other than that it was obtained by the police in the vicinity of Notre Dame Bay.

The decorated Beothuk bone pieces undoubtably had an intrinsic worth to their makers -- probably of a magico-religious nature -- which accounted for their uniformity of shape and stylistic design patterns. Although basal outline form and techniques of decoration varied in the Beothuk collections, it seemed reasonable to expect that manufacture took place according to a rigid set of conditions which were primarily independent of either ornamental or utilitarian considerations. This assumption was supported by the shape of five three-dimensional bone pieces in the Jenness collection at the National Museum of Man which, when placed side by side in order of diminishing size, were highly reminiscent of a skeletal bear paw. (Plate 68). Each piece had two or three crosslines at regular intervals throughout its length suggestive of joint divisions. All five examples were carefully carved and polished so that they bore "a striking resemblance to their natural counterpart." (Marshall, unpublished ms.: 39). Marshall maintained that these particular bone pieces may have been used as

amulets or ritualistic 'claw images' in the observance of magico-religious customs associated with bear ceremonialism.

Comparison of historic and prehistoric decorated bone pieces. The standardized shapes and design patterns exhibited by the majority of Beothuk bone pieces may reflect a progression from a realistic concept of animal forms to conventionalized, magico-religious abstractions. Should this have occurred in the past, the Beothuk were the only historic Indian tribe to represent animistic fetishes consistently in this way. Flat, 'pendant-like' bone figures and symbolic shapes were absent from the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi museum collections. Artistic counterparts to the Beothuk bone-carving tradition, therefore, were sought outside the comparative boundaries set by historic material culture.

Speck's view that Beothuk bone items reflected later historic Eskimo influence in their shape and possible function (Speck 1939/40: 225-8) was rejected because it lacked sufficient time depth. An appealing alternative was the derivation of the flat, 'pendant-like' bone pieces from late Dorset prototypes. Although Beothuk-Dorset contact has yet to be archaeologically confirmed either in Newfoundland or Labrador, there were close similarities between the bone-carving practices of the two peoples. The Dorset's concentration on skeletal imagery in the manufacture of their representational bone pieces, for instance, might have influenced the stylized linear design patterns on the later historic Beothuk examples.

'Pendant-like' bone pieces, however, stained with red ochre and

decorated with incised notches and crosslines were made by early coastal Indian peoples for thousands of years prior to Dorset intrusion into Labrador and Newfoundland. A small, perforated bone 'pendant' shaped like a narrow tear-drop and exhibiting a double row of short incised marks on both faces was recovered from a 7,500 year-old Maritime Archaic burial mound at L'Anse Amour on the north shore of the Strait of Belle Isle. (Tuck and McGhee 1975: 90). Similar bone pendants were made by the late Maritime Archaic peoples at Port au Choix, four thousand years later. Inclusion of these objects in Indian burials indicated that they were important items in Maritime Archaic culture. The fineness and regularity of the linear design patterns on the Beothuk bone pieces suggested that the decorating skills employed by this historic tribe were a continuation of the ancient coastal bone-carving tradition in the Northeast.

The historic Algonkian-speaking peoples in Labrador and the Maritime Provinces manufactured a wide range of quillworked, painted and beadworked ornaments, which were absent from the Beothuk museum collections. Conversely, there were no parallels to specific Beothuk bone items in inventories for the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi. A highly tentative assumption drawn from this data during the course of study maintained that at some period during the first thousand years A.D. the ancestors of the historic Beothuk became partially or perhaps even completely, isolated from other Indian peoples, during which time a major cultural impact came from the late Dorset. (Although such contact has not been archaeologically documented, some exchange of cultural ideas between the two groups was certainly not impossible.)

Subsequent to the disappearance of the Dorset culture in the Northeast, ornamental artistic traits and techniques which were lost or modified elsewhere were retained by the ancestors of the Beothuk and transmitted to later influxes of Indian peoples who crossed the Strait of Belle Isle and became assimilated into the resident population in Newfoundland.

Plate 64

Beothuk combs

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 65

Beothuk necklace

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 64



Plate 65



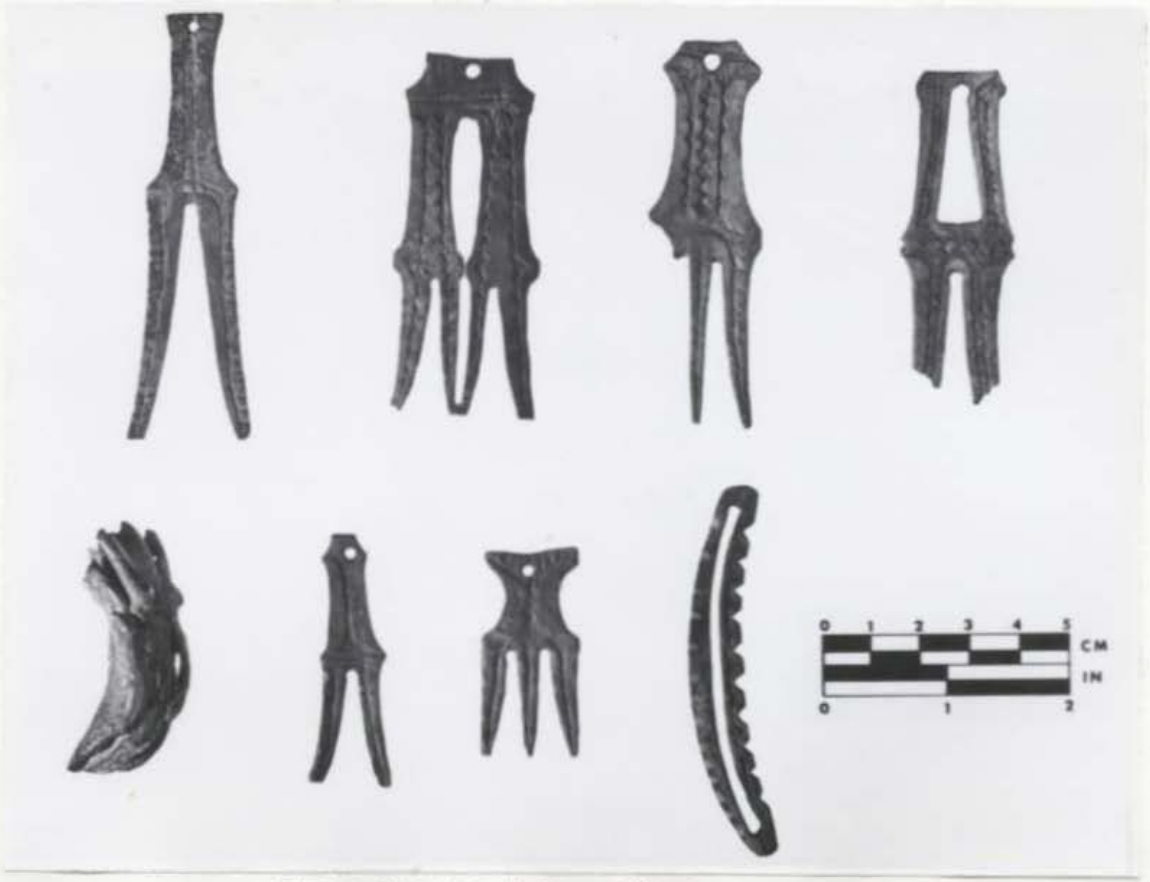
Plate 66



Beothuk 'pendant-like' bone pieces with
incised designs showing vertical 'spine-column'

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 67



Items from Beothuk necklace
a. two-pronged bone piece, b. four-pronged bone piece, c. three-pronged bone piece, d. two-pronged bone piece, e. boar's tusk, f. two-pronged bone piece, g. three-pronged bone piece, h. bone piece serving as 'clasp'

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 68



a-g

Beothuk carved bone pieces

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 69



Framework of dome-shaped lodge
Seven Islands, Province of Quebec

Photograph courtesy of Museum of American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

CHAPTER EIGHT

DWELLINGS

The historic Indians of the Northeast constructed five major types of pole framework in making their dwellings: (I) the conical, (II) the A-frame ridgepole, (III) the ridgepole supported vertically at either end of its length, (IV) the scaffold type supported vertically at the four corners, and (V) the dome-shaped framework. All five types were made of materials which were readily obtainable in the woods and which could be cut, transported, handled and fitted together with a minimum of time and effort -- a necessity for tribes which were frequently moving from place to place.

(I) Conical. The first and most prevalent type of dwelling framework in the Northeast was the conical structure composed of three or four straight, unbarked coniferous poles, of roughly the same diameter and length, secured together with root or sapling lashings at an apex about a metre from the top of the poles. To ensure stability at the base, the poles were set equidistantly from one another in a circular formation and sunk into shallow post holes. Other poles, up to a dozen in number, were placed in the interstices between the foundation posts to strengthen the frame for the weight of the covering. Basal circumference was proportionate to the number of people to be housed, but usually ranged in diameter from 4.0 to 5.0 metres. Conical huts were tall enough to permit a person to stand in the center, but as the dwelling had a central fire, occupants squatted or lay with their heads near the walls away from the smoke. The pole framework was

overlaid with a covering of birch bark or of caribou or moose hide. Birchbark strips about 2.0 m in length and as much as a metre in width were formed by stitching three or four smaller sheets end to end. The Micmac attached a slender stick to the edge of each bark sheet which reinforced the join between strips. A small bark flap projected beyond this stick so that, in stitching the two layers together, the line of root or sinew thread did not pierce the main bark covering. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 58-9). There was no indication that the Montagnais/Nascapi and the Beothuk did otherwise than to simply stitch two bark sheets together. The bark strips were laid around the conical framework from the bottom upwards, each section overlapping the one below it. Where hides were used as covering, as among the Barren Ground Nascapi band, wide strips were formed by sewing several hides together end to end. (Turner 1894: 299). A smokehole was left at the center top of the structure. Entrances were closed by suspending a crosspiece of wood, from which hung a long hide flap, from two upright poles on either side of the opening; occasionally a second crosspiece was attached at the bottom for a weight.

The Beothuk evidently did not erect a four pole foundation for the conical lodge as was traditionally done among the historic Micmac. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 57). Yet the form of the multi-sided Beothuk *mamateek*, where the symmetry of the dwelling depended on the accurate placement of the foundation poles in relation to the whole, indicated that the Newfoundland tribe was familiar with the importance of pre-determining the number of poles they were to use. Eight was the most frequently recorded number. (Howley 1915: 85, 211). Conversely,

among the Algonkian-speaking peoples north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence no specific arrangement of foundation poles seemed to have been employed as long as the structure was stable, and there was often a superstitious reluctance to count the poles, as to do so might bring bad luck. (Cooper 1946: 297; Rogers 1967: 11).

Two major constructional features of the conical lodge built by the Algonkian-speaking mainland tribes also characterized the Beothuk summer dwelling or *meotick*. (Patterson 1891: 134; Howley 1915: 305). First, a fairly slender hoop of flexible wood was attached horizontally to the side poles about the interior perimeter of the hut, at a height so that the transverse poles suspended from side to side across the hoop served as a convenient storage rack for food and belongings. (Speck 1922: 31). Usually a pot hook, or a straight branch with a crook in the end hung above the fire from one of the crossbars in the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi dwelling. Second, a forked pole was set at an incidental angle against any over-ladened side pole to provide extra security against the weighting of the entire structure to one side. (Howley 1915: 85).

All three Indian peoples covered the floor of their dwellings with fir or spruce boughs, the ends of the branches being turned downwards to present a smooth, springy surface. Logs or a ring of stones separated the fire from the surrounding living space. Among the Beothuk, as among the mainland tribes, hides and furs were used to line the walls to keep out draughts. Bear and rabbit skins provided the primary bedding material for the Indians of Labrador and the Maritime Provinces, as they may also have done for the Beothuk; and were

good insulation when used on the floor. Finely woven mats of grass and reeds were made by the Micmac. Biard praised these mats for their ability to shed water and for their insulating qualities as floor or hut coverings. (Thwaites 1897: III, 77).

II and III. The A-frame ridgepole and the ridgepole supported by vertical uprights. The A-frame ridgepole and the ridgepole supported by uprights at either end were constructional types used to broaden the circular ground plan into an elliptical form, and thus enlarge it. The former type involved the suspension of a single horizontal pole several metres in length between two A-shaped cradle frames, each formed by two poles intersecting and joined together near their tops at the same height above the ground on either cradle. Bark or unsmoked caribou or moose hides were placed over a secondary framework of lateral poles laid obliquely against the ridgepole. Slanting poles were also placed against one end; a space was left open for a narrow entrance at the other end. Among the historic southeastern Labrador Indians and the Mistassini Cree this was one of the basic frameworks employed for the construction of permanent winter communal dwellings. (Rogers 1967: 11). The framework involving the ridgepole supported at either end by vertical posts did not differ substantially in the manner of completion from the above type, in that the walls were formed by poles or slats slanted against the length of the ridgepole. This may also have been the type of Micmac construction referred to by Biard in 1916 when he wrote "In summer the shape of their [the Micmac] houses is changed, for then they are broad and long, so that they may have

more air." (Thwaites 1897: III, 77). Denys reported a long Micmac dwelling structure large enough for two fires, one at either end. (Denys 1971: 4).

IV. Scaffold construction. The scaffold construction, which was simply a parallel set of ridgepole frames joined together at either end by a transverse bar, presented a medial expanse of rectangular flat roof. The Micmac occasionally left the roof uncovered during the summer months with only the slanting, bark-covered walls to act as a windbreak for the central fire. It was also used by the same tribe in the construction of their smoking and drying houses for fish where four upright posts with crotched tops were erected to support the frame for the roof. Side-slats were laid obliquely against the stringers on either side. The top and ends were left open, although a long section of bark could be pulled over as a covering during a rainstorm. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 61).

There were close parallels between the Micmac type of smokehouse structure, present among the Labrador Indians as well, and the Beothuk "Smoking and Drying House of Venison", illustrated by Shanawdithit, which appeared to be a basic scaffold construction. (Howley 1915: opposite 246). Rectangular scaffold structures supported at the corners by upright posts and roofed with poles were made by the Beothuk and the mainland tribes as storage areas for valuables; for meat, bones, furs, hides and canoes. A similar structure was also made by these peoples as a funerary platform for their dead. (See Chapter Twelve).

V. Dome-shaped. A fifth type of pole frame, the dome-shaped type, was used infrequently as a dwelling structure by the northern Wabanaki and not at all by the Beothuk. The only Indian peoples north of Maine and east of the Great Lakes who built this type of lodge for housing families were the Montagnais/Nascapi and the eastern Cree. Four supple poles, or eight shorter poles joined together in four pairs, were bent into arches. The arches were set in double arcs; one set of double arches overlying and transverse to the other. Occasionally the basal ends of the arches were merely thrust into post holes in such a way that a circular ground plan was achieved and the hut took on a dome-shaped appearance with a space left for an entrance opening. (Plate 69). At other times the ends of slender, straight poles were set in the ground and the withes subsequently bent to join at the center top. Large huts were several metres in diameter and covered with bark sheets or hides. In the Northeast these dwellings often had a horizontal wooden hoop about the perimeter of the interior, half way up the sides between the apex and floor, to reinforce the shape of the walls.

Though the dome-shaped frame was not a recognized dwelling form among the Beothuk and Micmac, both tribes built small versions of the hut, lacking the central smoke-hole, as sweat lodges or vapour baths. (Denys 1968: 12; Howley 1915: 190). The domed ceiling was highly practical because it retained heat longer than the funnel-like conical shape. The domed hide and bark hut was therefore a frequent dwelling type in Arctic latitudes and may have been the formal prototype for the snow *igloo*. (Birket-Smith 1936: 122). The simpli-

city of construction and the spaciousness of the interior, moreover, led to the independent development of similar forms, covered with grasses, shingles, skins, and textile materials, from Africa to northern Siberia and throughout North America.

It might tentatively be suggested that the restriction of the conical dwelling in North America mainly to the Plains and subarctic areas implied the more recent introduction of this type into the continent, primarily among the northern Algonkian-speaking tribes. Or, conversely, its distribution may have rested upon other factors such as the comparative mobility of tribes, the average amount of annual snowfall in an area, the kind and availability of building materials and the density of scrub growth where settlements were located. In the dense boreal spruce forest, for instance, the conical hut might have been better adapted to the low-set tree branches than the hemispherical dwelling. Both types, however, were undoubtably of considerable antiquity in the Northeast.

Log Structures

I. The log cabin. Log structures, similar in shape and construction to many backwoods settlers' houses, were built by all three tribes during the eighteenth century. (Speck 1940: 33-4). References to European attempts at persuading the mainland Indians to cease from their nomadic ways and settle in permanent communities often praised the foresight and ingenuity of the Indian family who could build and furnish a log cabin rather than a bark or skin tent. The availability of iron axes, nails and hammers also encouraged the spread of European

dwelling types among the Indians. (Thwaites 1897: VI, 121). Guy's account of 1612 was the earliest reference to a Beothuk construction "made in square form with a small roofe" (Howley 1915: 15). Later reports described large log storehouses which approached fifty feet (almost 15.5 m) to a side although there were smaller examples with lateral dimensions of only several metres in length.[1] (*Ibid.*: 69, 192). Because of the numbers of European log houses and fishing sheds which would have provided models for the Beothuk to imitate since the early sixteenth century, Raymond Le Blanc doubted that Indian log structures were aboriginal. Lack of archaeological evidence from historic or prehistoric sites increased the difficulty of learning more about the construction of the Beothuk cabins:

> ... no remains of anything even resembling the floor plan of a square or oblong structure was encountered during the work at Wigwam Brook nor is any such feature suggested at the Indian Point site. (Devereux 1970; and personal communcation 1972). Moreover, the lack of any information on possible ground modification in the construction of such buildings and the fact that the upright poles which may have been merely sticks thrust into the ground and therefore not likely to leave any traces due to the highly acidic soils in the interior, suggests that the structures may be very difficult if not impossible to recognize. (Le Blanc 1973: 12).

The Beothuk log structures nevertheless exhibited constructional features which were distinctive among lodge types in the Northeast. Literary accounts reported unusual arrangements of lattice-like frame partitions which divided the interiors of both dwellings and storehouses into compartments, possibly to regulate the circulation of air. (Howley 1915: 248). Buchan described a Beothuk *mamateek* with high wooden walls where the partitions radiated outwards like the spokes of a wheel from an open core space about the central fire to meet the

walls at the juncture of each corner. (*Ibid.*: 85). In Beothuk storehouses the compartments were on two levels, a lower and an upper; both levels sub-divided in ground plan into grid formations. (*Ibid.*: opposite 241). No record existed of Micmac or Montagnais/Nascapi dwellings or storehouses partitioned in this manner.

As Le Blanc suggested, the rectangular dwellings with interlocking log corners may have been imitations of European cabins and fishing sheds, yet the multi-sided shape and interior lattice-like partitioning lacked obvious European parallels. Instead, there may be grounds for the presentation of an alternative view not based on duplication, but on the development over time of an aboriginal type into a structural form more closely resembling the European log cabin.

II. Dwellings with wooden substructures and an excavated central living floor. A most perplexing problem focused on the presence of the semi-subterranean log substructural frame in the Northeast and whether it existed prior to European contact. These constructions were made either of vertical pilings driven compactly side by side into the ground, or of logs, often flattened on one or more sides, placed horizontally one upon another. The log walls interlocked at the corners or were secured at each end to upright corner posts. Among the Beothuk and Montagnais/Nascapi the substructures supported pole frames. A wall plate or stringer was fixed by studs to the top surface of the log base from which poles rose obliquely upwards to meet at a conical apex, or at a ridge pole, to form gable ends. There were no accounts of dome-shaped constructions elevated on wooden basal structures.

The most detailed description of the Beothuk multi-sided winter dwelling or *mamateek*, which had a log substructure, was presented by Buchan in 1811:

> Considerable pains were employed on these [the dwellings] I found them [the Beothuks] in, and which were of the octagonal structure, the diameter of the base being nearly 22 feet [6.7 m], and enclosed with studs of four feet above the surface. On these was affixed a wall plate from which were projected poles forming a conic roof and terminating in the top in a small circle sufficient for emitting the smoke and admitting light, this and the entrance being the only apertures. A right line being drawn to equal distances from each of the angular points [of the octagonal base], was filled neatly with a kind of lattice work forming the points of so many recesses which were filled with neatly dressed deer skins. The fire was placed in the centre of the area around which was formed their place of repose, everyone lying with their feet towards the centre and their heads up to the lattice work somewhat elevated. The whole was covered in with birch bark, and banked on the outside with earth as high as the studding, making these abodes with little fuel warm even in the inclemency of winter. The whole was finished in a manner far superior to what might have been expected. (Howley 1915: 85).

Other reports stated that the log pilings could reach twelve feet [3.7 m] in height from base to studs and that the corners of the dwellings were reinforced with posts which were much heavier than at the sides. Crevices were filled with moss to keep out draughts and moisture, and a triple layer of birch bark interspersed between the first and second layers with six inches (about 15.0 cm) of moss, acted as covering and insulating material for the conical roof. Chimney clay was substituted for bark about the smoke-hole. (*Ibid.*: 100: 211).

The ethnographic data was well supported by archaeological evidence. Speck reported housepit features at Indian Point, near Millertown in central Newfoundland, which were "either circular

or somewhat multi-lateral in form." (Speck 1922: 21). Working in the same area during the summers of 1969 and 1970, Devereux uncovered several additional historic housepit features, one in particular which exhibited the following features:

> Housepit with hexagonal plan 25 feet by 20 feet [7.6 m by 6.1 m], shallow insloping walls, enlarged angle where two wall sections meet as though a large post had been driven into the ground at that point; central mounded hearth; platform around the interior periphery except for the entrance area; an interior hollow between the mounded hearth and the platform concentric with these; single entrance in northeast wall, two exterior adjacent flanking cobble concentrations of unknown functions; very thin, almost sterile blank occupation layer in the interior. (Devereux 1970: 57).

Yet except for the distinctive multi-sided ground plan, the Beothuk *mamateek* was not a structural anomaly among types of historic Indian dwellings recorded in the Northeast. Speck examined several housepits along the Penobscot River in Maine which were excavated below the ground surface. (Speck 1922: 31). Excavation of the dwelling floor from a minimum of several centimetres to almost a metre in depth was also practised by the Mistassini peoples of interior Quebec. The Mistassini earth-covered lodge had a foundation structure of poles arranged in a tightly-compacted conical formation, the spaces chinked with moss and the outer walls banked with backfill from the excavation of the interior space. (Rogers 1967: 13). Though this particular dwelling form was not mounted on a log understructure, Rogers also described instances where summer tents were erected on pole frames based on wooden foundations. Heavy posts were set at each of the corners of the rectangular ground plan and log walls laid between the uprights:

> Each wall consisted of five or six logs laid horizontally and abutting the inside flattened surfaces of the corner posts ...: Stringers were attached to the tops of the corner posts and studs inserted. Then, poles were erected at the centre of the back and front walls. These supported a ridge pole at a height of seven or eight feet. [2.1 m to 2.4 m] (*Ibid.*: 17-8).

Rogers did not consider either the log superstructure or the earth-covered lodge to be aboriginal. (Rogers and Martijn 1969: 88-9). However, the presence of slightly different but seemingly related constructional features among both the Beothuk and the Penobscot might lead one to seriously question this view.

Should it be held that the above traits were European-introduced, one would also have to account for their unusual geographic distribution north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and in Maine, and their absence in the Maritime Provinces. It seemed reasonable that in a harsh climate the advantages of building a wooden substructure for basal stability combined with the insulating qualities of banking with earth would have encouraged the spread of these constructional traits, once they were introduced, equally throughout the Northeast. Second, dwellings with excavated floor areas have been documented archaeologically among the historic Salish of Alaska, among early Eskimo migrants, and the Archaic Indian Shield population of the Northwest Territories. (Wright 1972: 55). The most ancient forms had a sunken central floor area flanked on one or more sides by banked earth platforms.

That the early arctic and circumboreal traits discussed above may have diffused southwards into central Canada is not impossible. Yet a much more speculative proposal concerns a secondary spread of northern traits to the Atlantic coast by way of rivers flowing south-

eastward out of the central region, where the mainstream of ideas by-passed Nova Scotia to reach the coast south of New Brunswick. Taken separately without reference to other cultural traits which may have diffused in this way or to linguistic affinities among Indian groups, however, historic evidence for the distribution of dwelling types cannot be regarded as a sound basis for the introduction of a migration hypothesis. It was therefore decided, until future archaeological work either substantiated or contradicted the assumption, that the dwelling type associated with an excavated floor area, banked earth platforms and, occasionally, a wooden substructure would be recognized as an arctic/circumboreal trait. Similar historic features in interior Quebec, along the northern New England coast and in Newfoundland thus would not be considered as imitations of European constructs, but as constructional types ensuing from a prehistoric diffusion of cultural ideas, and/or peoples, from northwest of Labrador.

CHAPTER NINE

ITEMS OF MAGICO-RELIGIOUS OR TOTEMIC SIGNIFICANCE

The wealth of available ethnographic and artifactual source material on traditional Montagnais/Naskapi magico-religious observances provided a firm ground from which to compare and contrast information on parallel aspects of Micmac and Beothuk culture. For, although the traditional belief system in the Maritime Provinces was displaced during the seventeenth century by the work of Christian missionaries, enough data on it could be derived from early literary accounts to form comparisons between magico-religious practices of the Algonkian-speaking peoples from both sides of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. A further attempt was made to expand the hypothesis concerning a major prehistoric migration of magico-religious ideas from north of the Great Lakes southeast to the Atlantic coast and eastward across the Strait of Belle Isle. During this latter part of the study emphasis was placed upon the position of the historic Beothuk tribe in relation to this greater conceptual whole.

General. The non-agricultural Algonkian-speaking peoples of the far Northeast regarded the kinetic power of the universe -- the *primum mobile* -- as an invisible fabric of spiritual agencies which both guided and controlled the activities of the material world. The physical things which mattered to the Indians, the caribou and moose herds, plants, fire, small terrestrial game, and even the actions of the hunter himself, were instrumental to powers obtainable through the

observance of certain magico-religious rites. These rites included a formal recognition of dreams as a communicatory medium between man and the spirit world, a prescribed set of ritualized observances in handling the carcasses of slain beasts, and the ornamentation of tools, weapons and clothing with patterns the spirits 'liked' -- practices which persisted among the Indian population in areas of Labrador and northern Quebec until the twentieth century (Speck 1935: 31).

Although there were no recognized medicine societies or prescribed dream-fasting rituals, certain communal magico-religious observances helped to maintain a respectful, rather than a solely exploitative, attitude towards the subsistence resources of the land. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 178; Thwaites 1897: VII, 159-63). By following these ritual acts, man in a mysterious way aided in the regeneration of the animal species he needed for food, shelter and clothing. The northeastern Algonkian-speaking hunter thus considered himself an instrument of the spiritual world burdened with grave responsibilities and yet was basically confident that due to his ritualized efforts life would continue to replenish itself seasonally, in accord with the hunters' vision of the way of things.

There were minor differences in magico-religious outlook between the Nascapi and Montagnais north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, however the general body of beliefs held by both groups was essentially the same. Foremost among the anthropomorphic beings on the Barren-Grounds was *Katipinimitaoch*, Lord of the Caribou, who regulated the size and seasonal activities of the arctic caribou herds. South of the

Labrador Height of Land the focus of spiritual attention was the *Mistapeo*, Soul or 'Great Man', also an important element of northern Nascapi belief but not so highly regarded as *Katipinimitaoch*. (Speck, Dodge and Webber-Podolinsky, unpublished ms.: 29). Where caribou wandering at will through the boreal forest did not seem to obey a dominant spiritual being, the Montagnais hunter had to rely upon his own familiar spiritual guide to ensure hunting success. The *Mistapeo* was looked upon as the hunter's possession; it belonged to him alone, and yet was approachable only through dreams or through specific rites, such as smoking. As it was believed that the Great Man could be gratified by an offering of tobacco, smoking often assumed a religious aspect. Though there were no specific Micmac terms for a single spiritual overlord or guide similar to the Montagnais/Nascapi *Mistapeo*, the Indians of the Maritime Provinces shared the view that both men and animals had familiar spirits which deserved respect if good hunting were to continue.

Evidence from Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi sources.

I. Bear ceremonialism. Magico-religious observances associated with the cult of bear ceremonialism were remarkably uniform throughout the majority of circumboreal hunting and gathering cultures from Lapland to Labrador. (Cooper 1946: 298; Hallowell 1926). Among the Algonkian-speaking tribes of the Canadian Northeast the name "bear" was never spoken out loud directly to the beast or voiced in conversation by the hunters themselves. Instead a term of respect, generally "grandfather" denoting the most elevated kinship position within the

extended family group, was conferred on the animal, or a phrase representative of some descriptive physical characteristic, such as "short tail", "black food", "long nose", but never the word "bear" itself.

The replacement of the proper name by an oblique term implied that the animal described exhibited qualities which were believed worthy of highest recognition -- courage, ferocity, speed, cunning and persistence. Each bear, because it embodied these desirable traits, was regarded as having its own 'spirit master'. Since bears were independent hunters rather than herd animals, each was looked upon as invisibly controlled by its individual spirit guide.

Ritual gratification of most spirit agencies, in return for granting of a prayerful request for more game, was generally performed seasonally at a communal feast -- the *mokoshan* northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence -- although a similar celebration was also held by the Micmac. But for every bear taken by the hunter, the ritual acts of appeasement were performed almost immediately after the creature was slain. A tobacco sacrifice was sprinkled over the animal's fur or placed between its closed jaws. Its body was treated with the greatest respect, care being taken during transportation of the carcass to always keep its head elevated in the position it would have been when the animal was alive. The Montagnais/Naskapi had a special dragging or holding device, the game string or *nimapan*[1] made especially for this purpose. Composed of braided three-ply lengths of *babiche*, the *nimapan* was secured to the bear's nose while the head was supported over the hunter's shoulder. The *nimapan* was also used for dragging the

carcasses of beaver and otter. These items were often dyed red and exhibited tassels of hide, ribbon or twine along their length. (Plate 70). No mention of any historic item similar to the *nimapan* was located for the Micmac.

The Indians of the Maritime Provinces and Labrador erected a special oval pole-frame dwelling for the bear feast. Women and children were prevented from entering the doorway through which the hunters had brought the bear carcass into the lodge. Tradition also demanded that the bear be roasted on a spit over an open fire and that the meat from the head be eaten by the men present without the aid of knives. The skull bone was then scraped clean and placed in a prominent position within the lodge. Following the feast speeches and dances praised both the exceptional traits of the bear and the prowess of the hunters.

Certain ritualistic practices associated with the bear ceremony northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence were not recorded among the Micmac. For instance, the Montagnais/Nascapi applied circles, dots and bars of paint to the occipital region and jaws of the bear skull; marks which were thought to be appreciated by the bear's spirit. (Plate 71). A plug of tobacco also was frequently secured inside the skull as an additional token of respect. Finally, the bear skull was impaled on a vertical post or tied in the branches of a tree high above the reach of dogs and other ground-dwelling scavengers. The skull was usually positioned so that it faced a body of water.

Both the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi preserved commemorative tokens of a profitable bear hunt. Leg bones and other less perishable parts of the animal, the claws, teeth, ears and tail, were retained

as hunting amulets. The Montagnais/Nascapi, but not the Micmac, cut the hide from the bear's chin region and folded it into a small triangular section which was stretched, allowed to dry, and then decorated along its perimeter with beads. The Mistassini Indians made the chin skin into a little triangular pouch to hold the bear's *lingual frenulum*, or tongue ligament, which the hunter kept as a hunting charm. (Rogers, 1967: 38). Such items were carried by the hunter with pride as only a brave man would have the courage and persistence to kill a bear. By the nineteenth century, however, bear hides also meant bartering wealth at the trading post. The chin skin thus became a symbol of economic status within the band (Turner 1894: 274-5), which may account for the unusually large number of these objects in collections both at the Heye Foundation and the National Museum of Man. (Plate 72).

II. Respect toward the bones and carcasses of game animals other than the bear. Bones of important game animals were usually preserved for a time on scaffold structures and eventually either burned or thrown into a river or lake -- fire and water both being associated with the powers of transformation from the flesh back into the realm of the spiritual. This respectful attitude toward animal bones lingered on into the first half of the twentieth century among the Micmac of Nova Scotia. One elderly Micmac man from Truro, Nova Scotia, stated that in his youth porcupines killed by cars on the highway were rarely if ever left to rot, but were removed and buried. (Personal communication).

There was no artifactual or ethnographic evidence that the historic Micmac ever possessed a specific, easily-identifiable range of hunting amulets, tokens or fetishes as did the historic Montagnais/Nascapi Indians. Furthermore, ritual hunting practices observed by the peoples

of Labrador, but absent among the historic Micmac, included elevating the skulls of most game animals on vertical wooden posts and ornamenting the heads of game birds with paint or strings of beads. Montagnais/Nascapi decorated loons' heads commemorated either the first of that bird species to be taken during a hunting season, or the first loon ever shot by an aspiring youth. (Plate 73). Yet, apart from these superficial differences, Algonkian-speaking peoples on both sides of the Gulf of St. Lawrence shared a similar magico-religious attitude towards game animals and their guardian spirits.

III. Comparison of shamanistic practices in the Northeast. The role of the shaman as curer, prophet and even in certain instances as a controller of life and death was similar among the Algonkian-speaking tribes. (Thwaites 1897: VI, 195-7; Biggar 1928: 176, Ganong 1968: 218). Hoffman (1955: 494-504) considered the Micmac use of the shamanic medicine bundle, the various Micmac shamanic contests and, in early historic times, the growth of nagualistic ceremonialism in the Maritime Provinces as being closer to the central Algonkian than to the shamanic practices of any other northeastern tribe, including the Montagnais/Nascapi. No specific mention of shamanistic personages could be found in the Beothuk accounts but, as in many hunting and gathering societies, it was probable that greater spiritual powers were ascribed to certain individuals than to others.

(a) The use of the sweat lodge. Traditional belief systems in the Northeast stressed the ability of the shaman, and to a lesser extent, every practicing hunter to recognize and interpret omens for good and evil in the world around him without resorting to forms of organized cult worship. Large semi-permanent structures.

to house devotional ceremonies, as built by the central Algonkian and Delaware, thus were absent in the Maritime Provinces and Labrador. The only lodge-type which qualified as a 'forum' for shamanistic practices as well as ritualized group activities was the sweat bath. Hemispherical in shape and usually only a couple of metres in height, the sweat lodge was made to contain the steam which arose from cold water poured over heated stones. (Plate 74). Its purpose was both prophylatic and magico-religious, for apparently what was considered good for the body was also favourable to the soul.

The Beothuk sweat lodge. The Beothuk also regarded the experience of sweat bathing as likely to bring the agencies of the spirit world very near the mortal. (Howley 1915: 190, 175, 214). However, this practice among the Newfoundland tribe did not necessarily imply the presence of cultural affinities between the Beothuk and the Montagnais/Nascapi or Micmac. The geographical distribution of the hemispherical sweat lodge transcended cultural boundaries everywhere in the Northeast and persisted, not only among the Algonkian-speaking Indians and the Beothuk, also among the historic Eskimo to the north.

(b) The shaking tent northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The 'shaking tent', so-called because of a belief that the spirits 'shook' the structure within which the shaman performed his ritual invocations, was not constructed by the historic Wabanaki and there was no record of it among the Beothuk. The Montagnais/Nascapi lodge was constructed of bent withes in the manner of the dome-shaped hut, but stood higher and had a smaller basal circumference. A circular

hoop of approximately one metre in diameter was placed over the crown of the lodge, and a large caribou or moose hide thrown over the hoop and pulled down tightly on each side. The hide was secured to the ground with tent pegs or rocks. There was no door, the shaman remained inside a sealed area where every "crack and crevice [was] carefully closed to exclude even a ray of light." (Turner 1894: 273).

Because of the absence of the shaking tent in the Wabanaki area it has been maintained by ethnohistorians that certain traditional magico-religious practices observed by the Indian peoples north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence may represent a fairly late influx of cultural ideas into the Northeast from a region northwest of Hudson Bay. (Speck 1926: 305-11; Cooper 1946: 297). A second interpretation, although perhaps not as convincing as the first considering the uniformity of the shaking-tent ritual among Algonkian-speaking Plains Cree and Ojibwa, held that the practice existed among the Wabanaki prior to European contact but that it was lost in the course of time. (Cooper 1946: 298).

(c) Red Ochre. Red ochre was employed as a decorative pigment and as a symbolic agent; both purposes were probably complimentary prior to the coming of Christianity. As a pigment it was used by Indian peoples to outline design patterns or present a solid colour field. As a symbolic agent it represented blood, more generally the life force, fire and the immortal elements of spiritual existence. In certain contexts it was cognitively associated with the red of the setting sun and the 'Land of the West,' which in Algonkian-speaking cultures

was considered to be the destination of the spirits of the dead. (Hoffman 1892). A design painted or outlined in red reputedly contained symbolic potentialities which could affect the item so decorated in a manner desirable to the artist. Red ochre further provided a means of visually externalizing the power of the life force felt within the hunter; thus garments as well as the body were occasionally coated with the substance, mixed with grease.

Blue, black, red and white pigments were applied by the mainland tribes to their clothing and bodies. (Thwaites 1897: 1, 279; also V, 23). Biard suggested that body pigments in particular may have had a practical advantage as a camoflage for fear or as a skin hardener, in addition to their decorative and symbolic uses:

> They [the Micmac] believed that in colours of this description they are dreadful to their enemies, and that likewise their own fear in line of battle will be concealed as by a veil; finally, that it hardens the skin of the body so that the cold of winter is more easily borne. (*Ibid.*: I, 279).

The use of red ochre by the Beothuk. Suggestions for the origin of the Beothuk practice of smearing the body with red ochre included practical reasons such as protection against the elements and, during the summer, flies and mosquitoes. (Lloyd 1874: 23; Howley 1915: 86, 262). Yet, as among other Indian tribes in the Northeast, red ochre undoubtably had a special worth to the Beothuk apart from the purely functional. No other historic peoples were known to have applied the red pigment so unsparingly to their bodies and material possessions. Whitbourne in 1622 wrote that the Beothuk had "a great store of red ochre wherewith they used to cover their bodies, bows, arrows and

canoes in a painting manner." (Howley 1915: 21). Other writers also mentioned this trait, among them Lieutenant John Cartwright who included skin garments and utensils in the inventory of the Beothuk items so treated. (1826: 307). The mainland tribes' association of red ochre predominantly with hunting activities and war -- both male occupations -- did not apply so ostensibly to the Beothuk. Whatever connotations the Beothuk attributed to their use of red ochre, their practice of coating the body with the substance was not restricted to members of either sex.

Similar to the Micmac, the Beothuk included small packets of powdered red ochre wrapped in bark or hide in the graves of their deceased. Two such packets were discovered at a Beothuk burial site on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay. (Howley 1915: 331). Lumps of red ochre and a hide container of powdered trade vermillion (an historic substitute for red ochre in the Maritime Provinces and Labrador) were recovered from a Micmac 'copper kettle burial' in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. (Harper 1956: 4). But unlike geographically-contiguous historic tribes, the Beothuk observed a practice of covering the bodies of their deceased with a thick smear coating of the substance so that the human bones remained stained with the red pigment once the flesh had decomposed.

Howley stated that red ochre was "not confined to the living only," nor was it limited to the dead, but apparently was associated with both states of existence. (Howley 1915: 333). Such an attitude toward red ochre was certainly not restricted in the Northeast to the Beothuk. The latter tribe's extensive use of the substance probably represented

merely a localized tradition having its cultural roots in an ancient and much more generalized pool of ideas associated with the use of the pigment.

IV. Pipe smoking in the Northeast.

Micmac pipes. During the mid-seventeenth century the Micmac manufactured pipes of "a certain green stone, and of another which is red, with the stem, the whole in one piece." (Denys 1971: 18). Piercing the stone pipestems was done slowly with a bone awl "a little flattened and sharpened," work which was undertaken "only for ... amusement." (*Ibid.*: 18). A second type of Micmac pipe had a separate bowl and stem. To prepare the stem a special wood known as *calumet* -- probably a species of willow -- was chosen which had an inner pith which could be twisted free and pulled straight out, leaving a hollow core. The stem was then polished and reduced to the thickness "necessary to make it enter the hole of the pipe." (*Ibid.*: 19). Bowls were usually made of stone, although hardwood, bone or a lobster claw substituted almost as well.

Two stone pipe bowls with keeled bases and flared bowls were described by Piers. The first specimen exhibited a V-shaped extension of the bowl base down either side of the keel and a finely-carved scalloped edge along the bottom of the keel. (Piers 1894/95: 56-7). The bowl was decorated with finely-incised floral motif. The second pipe, unearthed near Upper Rawdon, Nova Scotia, was formed of one piece of stone. Piers wrote of this specimen, "The most noticeable feature of the article is a bold representation of what is undoubtedly a lizard

placed with its ventral surface on that side of the bowl which is farthest from the smoker." (*Ibid.*: 53).

The latter pipe was highly reminiscent of a southeastern Woodland type and may have been acquired by the Micmac through inter-tribal trade. A recent discovery by Christopher Turnbull of an Adena-related assemblage at Redbank, northeastern New Brunswick, supported the existence of prehistoric routes from Ohio northwards to the Gulf of St. Lawrence which may have laid the foundations for later trade. (Gaby Pelletier, New Brunswick Museum: personal communication). The former pipe was probably a copy of an early southeastern prototype carved by the Micmac themselves.

Montagnais/Nascapi pipes. The Montagnais were very fond of smoking during early historic times. (Thwaites 1897: VII, 137). A pipeful of tobacco was offered as a welcoming gesture among friends, although on other occasions it could also be burned as a propitiation to the guardian spirits. Turner observed stone pipe bowls being carefully ground from fine-grained sandstone. There were two main colours of stone used, red and grey-green, of which the latter stone with strata of darker colours was considered the finest for pipemaking. (1894: 303). Pipebowls examined in museum collections were frequently of a dark, ungrained slate.

The shape of the pipe bowls varied little, the majority being about 4.0 cm in length, about 6.0 cm height and having a maximum bowl diameter of approximately 3.0 cm. Pipebowls had a narrow, rectangular keeled base with a tall, conical bowl. (Plate 75). Carved decoration on Montagnais/Nascapi stone pipes was minimal except for a small,

inverted triangular ornament at the juncture of the bowl with the keel. (This ornament was almost identical to one stone pipe in the collection from Nova Scotia.) A series of horizontal lines were occasionally incised about the rim of the bowl.

Pipestems were made of wood. A narrow hole was drilled through a stick of the required length and the outside surface of the stem whittled down to the proper diameter. One end of a piece of hide thong was attached to a hole bored through the underside of the keel, the other end of the thong was tied about the stem. This thong served to keep the bowl and stem together should they separate. On late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century examples the thong was substituted by a beadworked strip bearing beaded tassels at either end. The Montagnais/Nascapi also made a bone pipe-cleaner, pointed at one end like a letter-knife and ornamented along both edges of the handle with a series of carved bisymmetrical cruciform or quadrate figures.

Smoking as a prehistoric tradition northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Although early documentary evidence supported smoking as a prehistoric tradition in the Maritime Provinces, there was none to suggest that it was also practised by the Montagnais/Nascapi earlier than the sixteenth century. Speck regarded pipe smoking unreservedly as an European introduction northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. (1935: 217). His argument that wooden pipestems could not be pierced properly prior to the availability of the metal trade drills, however, was seriously undermined by Denys' account of how the Micmac performed the same feat with only their ingenuity and simple stone and bone tools.

Conversely, it seemed plausible that tobacco smoking, because of

its soothing effect on the emotions, may have been adopted historically by the Montagnais/Nascapi as a practice suited to 'pleasing' the smoker's soul spirit or *Mistapeo*. The religious connotations associated with smoking might thus be temporarily 'explained away' as an historic phenomenon encouraged by the immediate physical response induced by use of the narcotic. Yet no satisfactory explanation could be found as to why these people should have adopted an aboriginal rather than an European style of pipe, which could have been procured cheaply enough along with tobacco from the early trading posts.

The tobacco *Nicotina rustica* was probably obtained through trade with agricultural tribes to the south; hence the introduction of the keeled-base pipe northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Tobacco was a much later arrival among the Montagnais/Nascapi than among the Micmac, for allusions to smoking were lacking in Labrador oral tradition when compared to the many references to it in Wabanaki legends. There was a striking similarity in underlying theme, for instance, between the Micmac tale of a father journeying to the Land of Souls to receive the soul of his dead son -- as well as tobacco and corn seeds (Ganong 1968: 209-13) -- and the following Montagnais legend:

> ... a certain Savage had received from Messou (the Restorer) the gift of immortality in a little package, with a strict injunction not to open it; while he kept it closed he was immortal, but his wife, being curious and incredulous, wished to see what was inside this present; and having opened it, it all flew away, and since then the Savages have been subject to death. (Thwaites 1897: VI, 157).

Both tales, which involved the losing of a precious gift through the foolish curiosity of a woman companion, were apparently derived from

the same ancient source. (Rand 1894: 53). A primary difference between the Wabanaki and Montagnais/Nascapi legend lay in the Wabanaki characteristic of 'grafting' influences from the south and west onto the older body of oral tradition.

Smoking among the Beothuk of Newfoundland. Archaeological and ethnographic data for a tradition of smoking among the Beothuk was of a highly disputable nature. A stone pipe bowl, similar to the keeled-based examples from Nova Scotia, was presented to Howley (1915: 339) by a Micmac Indian "who picked it up near Pipestone Pond in the interior and pronounced it to be of Red Indian manufacture." This object had a finely-polished octagonal bowl exhibiting a keeled base with two incised horizontal lines along its sides -- none of which showed evidence of weathering. The name 'Pipestone Pond' implied that Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac peoples obtained lithic material from this area to manufacture pipes during the nineteenth century. The pipe described by Howley might have been dropped by an Indian from the mainland while on a hunting expedition in the Newfoundland interior.

Howley mentioned one other stone pipe from Fleur de Lys along the northeast coast of Newfoundland. This specimen was made of steatite and was "said to have some sort of an animal carved on the outside with its head projecting over the bowl." (*Ibid.*). Because of its close resemblance to Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi examples, the Beothuk origin of this pipe was also considered dubious.

Fragments of French clay pipes were associated with Beothuk burials. It could not be determined whether these items, when complete, had been used for smoking purposes, although it seemed plausible that

early trade contacts between the Beothuk and French fishermen might have included the exchange of furs for tobacco. Peyton affirmed that the Beothuk did not use narcotics at all. (*Ibid.*: 322). Conversely, Brown (1923: 29) maintained that the Beothuk word for tobacco, *nechwa*, inferred familiarity with the substance. Howley and Brown both assumed that plant species other than tobacco could have been dried and smoked. To account for the absence of stone pipes at Beothuk sites around Red Indian Lake, the two authors argued that narcotics may have been burned in wooden or bark pipes which, when discarded, left no traces in the archaeological record. (Brown 1923: 28-9; Howley 1915: 339). These suggestions, however, remained only speculations in view of the lack of confirmatory evidence.

V. Objects which contain magic power.

Micmac keskamzit objects. There was a close similarity between the Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac concept of power contained in specific objects, whose mystic potentialities were often kept secret lest the power disappear. This power was workable only for the possessor of the object. Sometimes it was discovered accidently, as was *keskamzit*, the Micmac term for magic good luck which came "suddenly to an individual in the form of unusual ability ..." (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 162; Mechling 1959: 186-7). *Keskamzit* objects included odd-shaped stones, pieces of wood or wood fungus, as well as functional things, although in the former case there was usually a visual resemblance between the object and the kind of power it contained. If a stone had the shape of a fish, for instance, it may have had *'keskamzit'* for good fishing (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 163).

Northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence there was less of a tendency to associate power with objects bearing physical resemblance to the magic capacity. Power was less accidental; one did not 'find' it but rather invoked it. Although secrecy was often essential, the object for the containment of the power was usually made according to traditional prototypes. Two types of Montagnais/Nascapi objects which were believed to retain magic power once certain ritual conditions were fulfilled, were (a) the *natutshikan*, and (b) the gun-stock charm. Masks -- specimens of which were observed in the museum collections (Plate 76) -- were used by both the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi to present game animal likenesses. These were reputedly worn at 'eat-all' feasts and ceremonial dances, although their specific function could not be determined.

(a) The Montagnais/Nascapi natutshikan. The *natutshikan* was a form of shamanistic necklace made of hide and painted with traditional designs. In late historic times Montagnais patterns were beadworked. Figures represented on the necklace depicted animals hunted by the Indians or mythical creatures associated with shamanistic curative powers. The shape of the *natutshikan* could vary considerably from a simple rectangular strip of hide to a collar-like mantle which covered a good expanse of the back and shoulders. Short strings of beads terminating in small loops often formed a fringe along the bottom edge. Two hide thongs secured the necklace in the front.

The designs on a *natutshikan* prescribed for its curative powers were "those of the shaman, not its wearer, who has no power over the magic he must use." (Webber-Podolinsky 1974: 150). A *natutshikan*

plaited from narrow hide strips was considered to be a type of 'net' which could catch disease, and thus represented prophylactic as well as curative agencies. A form of the latter item made from willow withes was also used as a preventive device by the Northern Athabaskan tribes. (Cooper 1946: 297).

(b) The Montagnais/Nascapi gun-stock charm. The gun-stock charm may have developed from an aboriginal hide hunting fetish of the same general shape. Museum items were formed from a beadworked hide square or diamond shape from 6.0 to 10.0 cm in length, and only slightly less in width. Pairs of short beaded strings were attached to the bottom and side corners of this object. Each of the pendant strings terminated in a small loop. The charm was suspended by a single beaded loop secured to the top corner of the diamond. Wings and legs of a bird were represented by the beaded strands at the sides and bottom, the head was defined by the larger loop.

Bird images had many symbolic associations among the Montagnais/Nascapi. In the context of the gun-stock charm they were considered to be hunting amulets which could bring good luck in shooting wild fowl to the person who made them. Unlike the *natutshikan*, which was primarily a shamanistic item, the gun-stock charm was not kept secret by the owner. Yet, several of these beaded charms attached to a necklace may have assumed a much different value to the wearer. (Webber-Podolinsky 1974: 151). Shamanistic power northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was closely linked with bird messengers, particularly the raven, and there were supernatural powers of spirit flight which belonged essentially to the shaman. (*Ibid.*: 151). The necklace may thus have symbolized

the magical capacities of shamanistic vision in a traditional stylized form.

Differences between Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi attitudes toward objects which contain power. As implied by the magico-religious power ascribed to the gun-stock charm when compared to that of the *natutshikan*, a division existed in the kind, or rather in the intensity, of the magic powers available to the hunter. Whereas the first kind of power was personal, the second was shamanistic -- belonging to a code of shamanistic ritual. Every Montagnais/Nascapi hunter could possess supernatural gifts; thus the gun-stock charm and the ceremonial hide visibly testified to the hunter's spiritual prowess in invoking the help of spirit guides -- both his own *Mistapeo* and the familiar spirits of the animals he hunted. Should he demonstrate a superior ability to his fellows in this respect he might gain the status of a shaman. (However, because of the traditional stringencies of ritualistic procedure in the shamanistic profession, the office was often outwardly hereditary simply because of the passing of traditions from father to son.)

It was the many ways in which the ordinary hunter attempted to gain the aid of the spirit realm through dream visions and specific ritualistic hunting practices which set the Montagnais/Nascapi peoples apart from the Indians of the Maritime Provinces. Among the Micmac the power to invoke spiritual agencies resided primarily in the shaman and was obtained through him as mediator. Compared to the Montagnais/Nascapi hunter, the Micmac was powerless through his belief system to

sustain any kind of rapport with the controlling spiritual forces. As embodied in *keskamsit*, individualistic power was wholly accidental, revealed only unexpectedly in dreams or stumbled upon in connection with some odd-shaped object.

The Montagnais/Naskapi ceremonial hide. As with the majority of Montagnais/Nascapi magico-religious objects which could have a two-fold purpose both as (1) a shamanistic item and (2) as a possession of an individual hunter, the ceremonial hide had no parallel among the Micmac or Malecite. The ceremonial hide had the same geographical distribution in Labrador as the *natutshikan*. Its use in shamanistic divination rites moreover, was almost identical amongst the Plain's Cree.

During the winter hide was tanned, stretched and placed outside to dry in the frost. This whitened skin was then removed from the stretcher, the margins trimmed and a series of red bars or dots outlined in paint along the edges. Occasionally yellow and blue pigments were also applied. The ears were left attached to the hide and cut longitudinally in narrow strips. The strips were further decorated with painted lines, strands of ribbon or dyed lengths of hide. To hang the hide a hunter stretched a *ninapan* taut between two vertical posts and placed the hide over the cord so that the anterior end faced southeast. (Rogers 1967: 32). Such ritualistic observances were thought to encourage success in the seasonal caribou hunt.

The ceremonial hide in divination rites. Speck (1935) maintained that by the first decades of the twentieth century divination

rites using a ceremonial hide could be performed by the ordinary hunter with a coat, although in earlier times there may have been a burden of responsibility attached to the practice which could effectively be controlled only by a powerful shaman, especially if the outcome affected the hunting activities of a sizable band. In performing the rite the hide was thrown flesh side down over the head and shoulders so that the designs painted on the outer surface faced the sky, and the hide formed a shielding cover from the sun's glare. By focusing his attention on a patterned object, often a hide tobacco bag or a decorated moccasin vamp, the hunter was reputed to see small dots of coloured light dancing upon the patterned surface. The traditional interpretations for different lights were men and caribou (or moose and bears depending on the game sought), and the patterned background was transformed into a recognizable landscape. No lights meant animals were scarce, a sizable gap between the dots of light meant that game was present but far away from the hunting band.

Ceremonial hides associated with shamanistic divination rites were decorated more elaborately than the ritual hides made by the ordinary hunter. The sun motif -- a disk surrounded by radiating triangular points -- was a prominent design focus on the former, as the hide was believed capable of drawing power from the sun by being exposed to the sun's rays. Only two ornate hides were located during the course of study. The first was in the Speyer collection, National Museum of Man, and the second in the Ethnology Department of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington.

The examples in the Smithsonian Institute most clearly illustrated the ability of the historic northern Algonkians to merge two related conceptual motifs into one design pattern. The surface area of the frost-whitened caribou hide was divided equally in four parts. Centrally located within each of the quadrants was the sun motif, a painted disc surrounded by radiating points. No other design patterns predominated, and although there were no linear divisions between the quadrants, the equal size and careful placement of the four sun motifs emphasized the importance of the invisible cross separating the discs from one another.

A symbolical representation for the number four, depicted as four discs or dots arranged in a square or cross formation or as the linear outline of the cross itself, was an important concept in northern Algonkian cosmology as it denoted the four corners of the universe. It was linked with the four winds; the Man of the North (wind) and the Man of the East (wind) being the most powerful, and hence the most dreaded. Highest in the material realm stood the sun which controlled the seasons and the migrations of the game animals. The cross provided a visible way of expressing a belief in a supreme power, which regulated even the sun and winds, known as *Tce·'m ntu* to the Indians of Labrador. (Speck 1935: 27)

Both the cross and the sun patterns were powerful symbols north of the Great Lakes, not usually displayed by the ordinary hunter. An Ojibwa ritual involving the use of the cross symbol laid the ground for an historic status cult, with close parallels among many Siouan and Athabascan neighbours. To the southeast, the Algonkian-speaking

coastal Delaware erected their Big House on a ground plan shaped like a cross. The House had a door built at the end of each transcept. Westwards across the Plains the predominant cosmology, with its dependence on the sun deity, perpetuated a class of sun priests. Because ceremonial hides exhibiting cross and sun designs were restricted to tribes west and north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, however, it was assumed that the fourfold concept was not indigenous to the coastal Indians. The absence of the ceremonial hide among the Micmac also reinforced Speck's assertion that certain magico-religious traits present in Quebec and Labrador never crossed the Gulf of St. Lawrence by historic times. (1926: 305-11).

The early eighteenth-century Nascapi ceremonial hide in the Speyer collection at the National Museum of Man was almost square in shape and had intricate patterns painted on its surface in red, blue and yellow. Curvilinear motifs were incorporated into the design composition in addition to the stylistic representation of the sun and cross. (Plate 77).

The cross was clearly the primary design component, with the sun superimposed on its centre. Seasonal change was graphically portrayed by three equidistant parallel lines, enclosing a series of double-curve patterns on two sides. A central column defined by two opposing rows of double-curves symbolized the migrating caribou herds, guided by the omnipotent sun and controlled by the Great Spirit *en route* to the Nascapi hunting grounds. (Ted Brasser: personal communication). A short, quill-wrapped fringe surrounded the perimeter of the hide, and small brass cones strung on hair tassels were attached to the four

corners.

VI. Scapulimancy in the Northeast. The Montagnais/Nascapi performed ritualistic divinatory rites with beaver pelvis and beaver tibia bones, the bear patella, fish mandibles, otter paws, teeth and otter tails. In 1634 Le Jeune wrote that a small bone in the throat of a "whiskeyjack", or Canada jay, was considered an omen of good hunting. (Thwaites 1897: VI, 221). Pine branches were burned to learn of the whereabouts of porcupines. (*Ibid.*: 221). Maillard (1755: 37-9) stated that the Micmac shaman forecast events to come by gazing into a bowl of water. But there was neither ethnographic nor artifactual evidence that the Micmac resorted to scapulimancy as a form of divination.

Bear, caribou, moose and porcupine scapulae were employed by the Montagnais/Nascapi for scrying purposes into the twentieth century. (Speck 1935). Cracks formed on the scorched bone blades were interpreted as familiar topographical features, the burned spots as men and game animals. This procedure was observed by Le Jeune who wrote: "They put upon the fire a certain flat bone of the Porcupine; then look at its color attentively, to see if they will hunt these animals with success." (Thwaites 1897: VI, 215). Le Jeune also maintained that it was necessary to use the scapula of the same animal species as was hoped would be taken in the hunt. (*Ibid.*). Speck clarified this assertion by stating that, whereas the Montagnais preferred to use the bones of the game animals they wished to hunt, the northern Nascapi almost always used the caribou scapula. (Speck 1935: 147).

VII. The bull-roarer. The wooden bull-roarer, approximately 40.0 cm in length and 10.0 cm in width, was lenticular in shape, serrated along its lateral edges and usually painted red. Spun rapidly on the end of a cord, the bull-roarer made a whirring noise, increasing to a dull roar depending on the speed of rotation. The Labrador Indians believed that the sound created by this device encouraged the Man of the North to send a cold wind and freeze a hard crust on the snow surface to facilitate snowshoeing. There was no record of its manufacture or use among the Micmac, and it was thus assumed that this magico-religious item, as well as the concept of the Man of the North, was restricted to the Algonkian-speaking and Athabaskan peoples living northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. (Cooper 1946: 297).

VIII. Reverence for the sun among the Micmac. Although the power of the sun to create, regenerate and give light and heat, in addition to its presence as a mystic source of spiritual strength, was highly regarded by the Montagnais/Nascapi, no special ritualistic ceremonies were attributed to its existence alone. Conversely, the Micmac worshipped the sun as the progenitor and protector of all living things which could afford man success both in hunting and in war, as well as provide a store of general 'good luck' when in need.

> [According to Le Clercq the] Gaspesians used to come out regularly from their wigwams to salute the sun just when it began to dart its first morning rays, and they did the same also without fail at its setting.
>
> They performed no other ceremony than that of turning the face towards the sun. They commenced straightway their worship by the ordinary greeting of the Gaspesians which consists in saying three times, *ho, ho, ho,* after which, while making profound obeisances with sundry movements of the hands above

> the head, they asked if it would grant their needs: that it would guard their wives and children: that it would give them the power to vanquish and overcome their enemies: that it would grant them a hunt rich in moose, beavers, martens, and otters, with a great catch of all kinds of fishes: finally they asked the preservation of their lives for a great number of years, and a long line of posterity. (Ganong 1968: 144).

Early missionaries regarded the Micmac 'high god' concept of the sun as an abstract framework for leading the Indians to a better understanding of the Christian God, but they were often dismayed at the instrumental fashion in which the Micmac asked blessings of their shining godhead. For instance, when Le Clercq stopped *en route* to deliver a prayer to the Christian God in the midst of an arduous journey, the non-Christian Micmac, Ejougouloumouet, interrupted with words:

> "Thou speakest to God," ... "thou teachest the way of the sun, thou art a Patriarch, thou art clever, and it must be believed that he [the sun] who has made everything will have granted thy prayer." (Ganong 1968: 173).

The respect and confidence which the ordinary Micmac hunter placed in the shamanistic oracle, who was believed to operate in league with the sun, was also demonstrated in a similar instance recorded by Biard:

> When they [the Micmac] were in great need he put on his sacred robe (for the Autmoins [shamans] have a precious robe, expressly for their Orgies) and turning toward the East said, *Niscaminou, hignemouy ninem marcodan*, 'Our sun, or our God, give us something to eat'; that after that they went hunting cheerfully and with good luck." (Thwaites 1897: III, 133).

According to Le Jeune the Montagnais regarded the sun as an anthropomorphic diety, wedded to the moon (*Ibid.*: VI, 224), whereas the Micmac envisioned a mating between the sun and earth from which all living things were born. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 142). The *Mistapeo*, or soul, and the spirit guides of the animals to be hunted

were regularly invoked by the Montagnais/Nascapi in time of need, rather than the sun. (Turner 1894: 272-3). What seemed surprising, therefore, in view of the existence of a tribal sun deity among the Micmac, was the lack of sun symbolism in Indian art from the Maritime Provinces. The important place occupied by the sun in design sequences painted on Montagnais/Nascapi ceremonial hides probably spread eastwards from the Plains, where sun worship was known to have assumed a high status in the belief system. (Krickeberg 1968: 192; Maundelbaum 1940: 287).

Micmac religion offered a firmer conceptual basis for the introduction of the Christian belief in the 'Light of the World', than the field of diverse and more individualized spirit guides of the Montagnais/Nascapi. The subordinate place of the sun and moon in northern Algonkian belief was discussed by a Montagnais informant interviewed by Speck in 1935. Concerning the supreme, but highly abstract Montagnais deity, *Tce·'məntu*, the Indian stated: "He is a spirit (*məntu*) like the sun, moon and stars, who created everything including them. As to form or body - Ah! - that is something no one can know because no one has ever seen him." Without a visible godhead, such as the sun, replacement of this vaguely-defined omnipotent controlling force by the Christian God was obviously more difficult for missionaries working northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. "The priests," exclaimed Speck's informant, "Ah! They do not know any more about that than we ourselves do!" (1935: 37).

IX. The shamanic hide-covered drum in the Northeast. The

distribution of the hide-covered, tambourine-type drum ranged from the eastern Arctic southward to the coast of Maine and westward across the Plains. Throughout these regions a close association existed between the drum and the drummer. (Krickeberg 1968: 156). Speck stated that the Indian peoples of Labrador and northern Quebec thought of their drums as living, animal-like entities which could speak as well as understand what was said to them. (1935: 171). Drum beats echoed the sound of the pounding heart, they induced men to dance. More than this they were instruments of shamanistic communication with the spirit world. In early historic times the Penobscot shaman was so intimately associated with his drum that he was known as a *məde'ɑlinu*, 'drum sound person.' (Speck 1919: 241).

Montagnais/Nascapi drums and rattles. Two types of Montagnais/Nascapi hide-covered drum predominated in the Northeast. The first, the single-headed drum was made by the Nascapi of northern Labrador, and had closer affinities with the Eskimo drum than the smaller, double-headed drums of the historic Montagnais and Mistassini Cree. (Plate 78).

Drums from northern Labrador ranged in diameter from 60.0 cm to 70.0 cm and from 12.0 cm to 18.0 cm in thickness. The barrel was made from a narrow, flexible spruce slat which had been steamed, bent into a hoop and the ends joined in a lap splice. Vertical seams of twisted sinew thread held the splice secure. Drum heads were made from tanned, unsmoked caribou hide prepared so that all rents and weak spots in the head were repaired by a fine line of stitching. The Nascapi stretched the skin taut over the barrel and pinned the

projecting edges of the hide to the inside of the frame by the insertion of a smaller, tightly-fitting wooden hoop within the barrel. This second hoop was two to four times wider than the barrel holding the head and formed the body of the drum. To prevent injury to the drum head through careless handling, a narrow wooden protecting rim, slightly wider in diameter than the head, was fitted over the top of the barrel. The three wooden sections were laced together by a hide thong run through holes placed at alternating intervals in the narrow rim piece and lower hoop.

The second type of drum from southwestern Labrador and northern Quebec was smaller than the northern Nascapi instrument. It had a single barrel, from 50.0 to 60.0 cm in diameter and about 6.0 cm wide, with two prepared hide heads stretched taut over each side of the barrel. A narrow spruce rim, similar to the rim on the Nascapi drum, was fitted over each of the two heads and the sections held together by means of a thong pulled taut alternately through holes in the two rims.

A narrow cord of twisted sinew was passed across the diameter of the drum head and secured on either side through holes bored in the wooden rim. Often two cords were used, one on the inside of the head and one on the outside. Short sections of bird quills or wooden sticks of approximately the same size as the quill pieces were attached at intervals across the head perpendicular to the membrane cord. These sections acted as snares when the drum was beaten to produce a dull buzzing sound. Turner (1894: 325-26) stated that in the north the snares were made from the "quills of the wing feathers of the willow ptarmigan ...". Drumsticks with a bulbous striking head were made of

wood or antler and had a narrow cylindrical handle about 30.0 cm in length, 6.0 cm in diameter.

Rattles were listed in the museum inventories as children's toys. One end of narrow strip of spruce lath, about 3.0 cm wide and rarely more than 40.0 cm long, was bent into a small hoop. The curved end was then spliced along the center portion of the lath strip, and the protruding lath piece bent backward like the tail of the letter 'S' to form a handle. (Plate 79). The circular frame section was covered on either side by two hide heads stretched taut and sewn together in a medial seam ridge around the circumference of the wooden hoop. Small pebbles enclosed inside the hoop produced the sound when the rattle was shaken. The presence of a red dot painted in the centre of both hide faces on the majority of Montagnais/Nascapi rattles suggested that the instrument originally may have been a shamanistic item. A circle surrounding a dot was a symbol of the Great Spirit among many Algonkian-speaking peoples. (Copway 1850: 135; Cressman 1937: 53). Drums, too, often exhibited a series of red dots painted on their hide surfaces. When arranged in a cross formation, the dots emphasized the spiritual qualities of the drum which could be invoked or subdued depending on the drummer's handling of the instrument. Speck wrote that a snap of the drummer's fingers against the coloured area on the drum symbolized submission -- the defeat of the drum's spirit -- to the will of the shaman. (1935: 173).

Micmac drums. When contrasted with the importance which the Montagnais/Nascapi placed upon the hide-covered drum producing the trance-like state necessary for communication with the spirit world,

it was surprising to find neither artifactual nor ethnographic evidence for the presence of this instrument among the Micmac. It was possible that early missionary efforts encouraged the demise of the hide drum because of its association with shamanic practices, as occurred among the Penobscot of Maine. (Speck 1919: 241; Thwaites 1897: XXI, 193-7). Yet, the only early reference to a form of Micmac drum was in Maillard's account of a Micmac thanksgiving feast:

> This ceremony of thanksgiving by the men being over, the girls and women came in, with the oldest at the head of them, who carries in her left hand a great piece of birch-bark of the hardest, upon which she strikes as it were a drum; and to that dull sound which the bark returns, they all dance, spinning round on their heels quivering, with one hand lifted, the other down: other notes they have none, but a gutteral loud aspiration of the word Heh Heh! as often as the old female savage strikes her bark drum. (Maillard 1755: 8-14).

Almost two hundred years later Wallis and Wallis mentioned a similar use of the bark drum at a St. Anne's Day festival at Pictou, Nova Scotia. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 186). Conical bark rattles with small pebbles or, in late historic times, gun shot inside were shaken rhythmically with the drumming, singing and dancing. There was no record, however, of either bark drums or rattles being used in shamanistic rituals by the Micmac.

Although the hide-covered drum was not located among the historic Micmac, it was present among the Malecite and Penobscot. The instrument was also made by the historic Ojibwa and Abenaki, implying that a southeast movement of central and northern influences, and possibly peoples as well, bypassed Nova Scotia to the west.

Plate 70



Montagnais/Nascapi *nimapans*
F. G. Speck collection

Photograph courtesy of Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

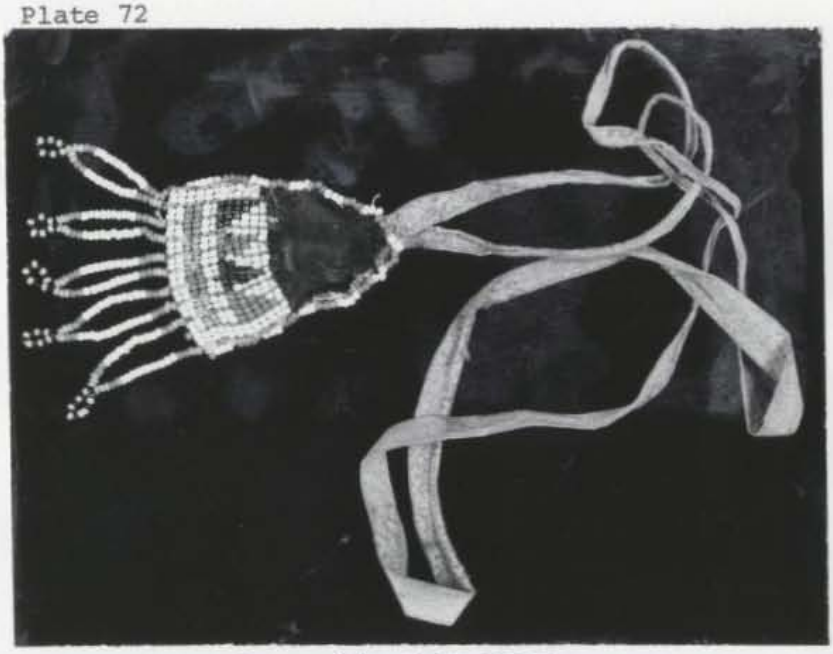
Plate 71



Decorated bear skull

Photograph courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

Plate 72



Bear chin-skin charm

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 73



Decorated Canada goose head

Photograph courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

Plate 74



Montagnais sweat lodge
St. Augustin, Province of Quebec

Photograph courtesy of Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

Plate 75



Nascapi stone pipe bowl and stem

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 76



a. Nascapi quiver (45.3 cm in length), b. Nascapi mask of caribou skin (Eye holes are only just visible)

Photograph courtesy of Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

Plate 77



Nascapi ritual mat used in the *mokoshan*,
held to propitiate the game spirits. Pre 1770.
Speyer collection

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 78



Nascapi drum

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 79



Nascapi hide and wood rattle

Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

Plate 80

Human figure of slate. 12.0 cm in height. Evidence of grease having been rubbed on the face suggests explanation of use of bear's grease to nourish the individual 'soul spirit' to obtain dream revealing where to hunt.

From old Micmac camp site on shore of Clyde River, Nova Scotia.

Photograph courtesy of Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

Plate 80



Plate 81

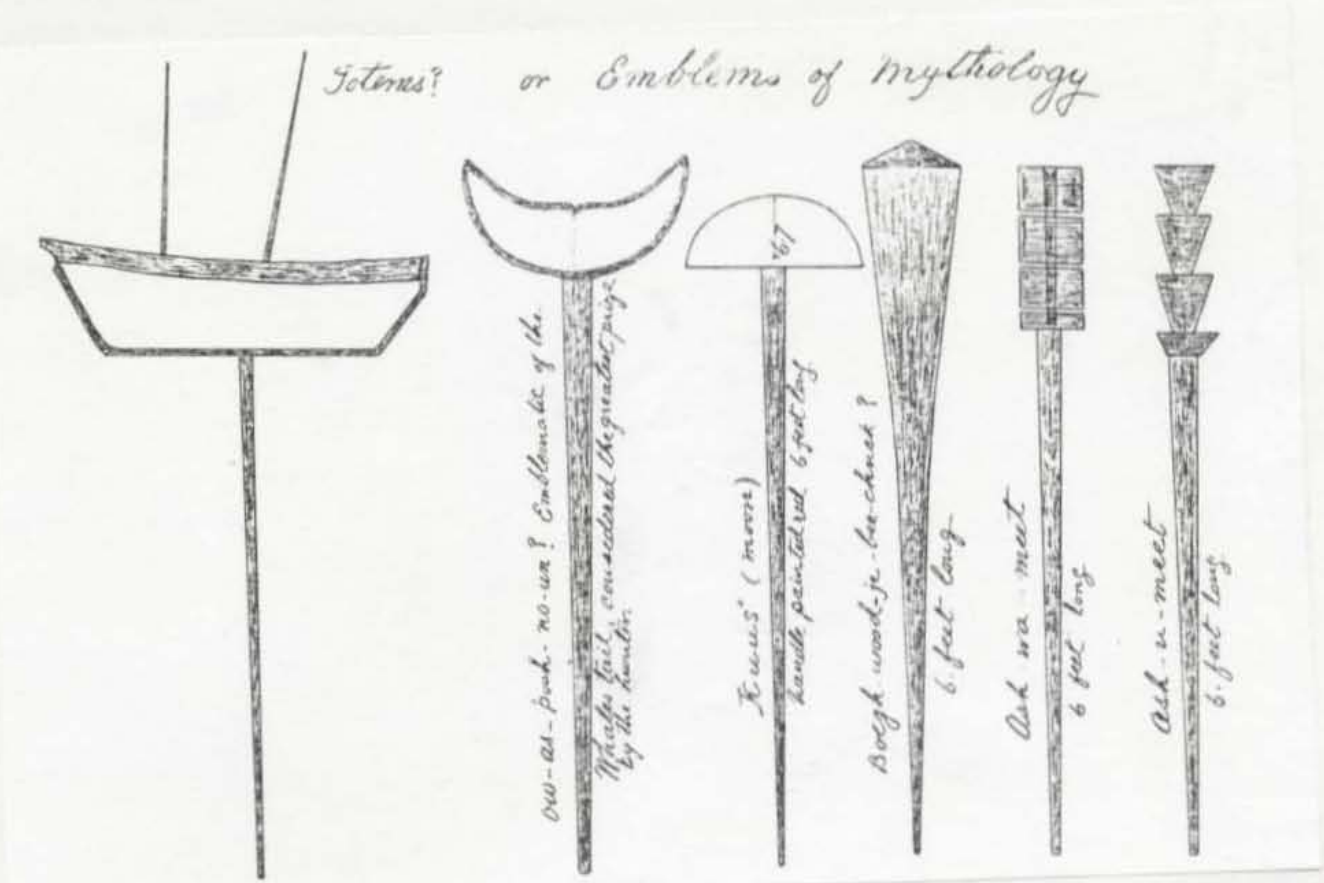
Beothuk boy's body laid on hide covering
From burial on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 81



Plate 82



Shanawdithit's drawing entitled
"Totems? or Emblems of Mythology."
From Howley (1915: opposite 249)

Items found exclusively northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The Montagnais/Nascapi *nimapan, natutshikan*, gun stock charm, bear-chin skin, ceremonial hide, bull-roarer and decorated bear skull composed a body of magico-religious hunting paraphernalia not located in museum collections or ethnographic accounts from south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Certain objects, and the practices associated with them, including scapulimacy, the ceremonial hide and the bull-roarer, diffused eastward from peoples further to the northwest. The *nimapan* was developed independently by the Indians of northern Quebec and Labrador as it was absent among the central Algonkian peoples. (Rogers 1962: C51). It thus represented a localized trait based upon the general body of northern Algonkian belief concerning the gratification of game spirits.

Northern influences south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The division between the magico-religious paraphenalia used by the Montagnais/Nascapi when compared to the Micmac did not preclude an exchange of ideas across the cultural boundary. Le Clercq described a small bark figure of a wolverine which he discovered among the contents of a Micmac shaman's bag. (Ganong 1968: 221-2). This particular object had close affinities with the Montagnais/Nascapi belief in the wolverine as the 'devil incarnate'. (Turner 1894: 327-49). Because the wolverine was primarily an animal of the boreal wilderness, influences responsible for this shamanistic tradition in the Maritime Provinces could only have diffused from the northwest. Second, it seemed plausible that the cross design revered by the Micmac at Miramichi (Ganong 1968: 146-52) derived from a curious fusion of Wabanaki totemic concepts

with northern Algonkian pictographic symbolism.[2] Totemic symbols were almost always animistic rather than geometric figures. (Benedict 1923: 57-8). Ganong suggested that the cross at Miramichi represented "a wild goose or other waterfowl in full flight ..." (1968: 39). Yet, should a primarily non-totemic symbol have been adopted in the past by the Micmac group, the anomaly might be traced to cultural contact with peoples to the north.

Evidences of southern Indian and Iroquoian influences in the Maritime Provinces. Other magico-religious traits in the Maritime Provinces, also located among the southernmost Montagnais bands, were the shaman's rattle -- a stick ornamented with the dew claws of moose attached to narrow hide strips pendant from the top of the wooden rod (Ganong 1968: 222) -- and a belief in 'feeding' carved wooden or stone fetishes as an act of gratification. The latter practice exhibited affinities with the Iroquoian tradition of spooning a mixture of corn and tobacco through the mouths of wooden 'false face' masks. One small armless stone figure of a man recovered from an historic Micmac site on the west bank of the Clyde River, Shelburne County, Nova Scotia, and presently in the Heye Foundation, New York, had bear grease smeared on its face. (Plate 80). Such evidences of Iroquoian magico-religious influence did not reach the northern Nascapi by early historic times.

The Micmac differed from Algonkian speaking peoples both to the north and south by their emphasis upon the deific power of the sun while also giving equal prominence to an abstract belief in 'soul spirits' under the control of one omnipotent deity or *manitou*. Moreover, the term for the Micmac shaman, *bouhinne* (Ganong 1968: 217), *buoin* or

booin, had no linguistic association with the Montagnais/Nascapi, Penobscot or Malecite terms. Instead, the word was 'pure Micmac', restricted in use to the Maritime Provinces. This distinctive combination of magico-religious traits tended to isolate the Maritime Provinces as a cultural arena for the merging of indigenous beliefs and practices with introduced traditions which progressed northeast along the Atlantic coast.

Continuation of the migration hypothesis. An hypothesis concerning a major eastward expansion of Algonkian-speaking peoples from north of the Great Lakes area has been considered seriously by linguists and ethnohistorians. Bloomfield's evidence (1946: 85) for linguistic affinities between central Cree and coastal Delaware was reinforced by Siebert's (1967: 35) more recent work collecting linguistic data for the migration of central-Algonkian speaking peoples both northeast to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and southeast to the Atlantic coast. As early as 1919 Speck had already come to basically the same conclusion. "There appears," he wrote, "to have been a two-fold, possibly a bifurcate drift, down the St. Lawrence basin from the central regions, one stream penetrating the country north of its shores, and the other covering the region of its northern water-shed to the ocean." (1919: 277). Mechling (1959: 273) argued for a localized drift across the St. Lawrence into "the hitherto sparsely populated valley of the St. John [River] ..." to account for cultural affinities between the northern tribes and the Malecite.

Migration of interior peoples to the seacoast also formed the theme of Indian tales and legends. Rand stated that the Micmac believed

that their forefathers came from the west. (1894: 110). A reconstructed legend, attributed to the coastal Delaware, known as the *Walum Olum* or *Red Score* recorded, both orally and pictographically, a large-scale movement of peoples toward the Atlantic coast. Yet, in contradiction to the view which proposed an ancient 'homeland' for the Algonkian-speaking peoples north of the Great Lakes, Voegelin and Pierce (1954: 278), both of whom have worked on possible interpretations for the *Walum Olum*, maintained that a major drift of Algonkian-speaking peoples started much further west, almost to the foothills of the Canadian Rockies. It also seemed reasonable to expect that cultural and linguistic influences diffused much farther than the distance actually transversed by a population migration. References to a mythical "Land of the West," though bearing cognitive associations with the red of the setting sun, death and the coming of night, assumed new inferences when one considered that a tradition of "looking westward" was universal to all the Wabanaki tribes in the Northeast. Should the ocean have acted as the ultimate barrier to peoples moving eastward, then a secondary diffusion of ideas and beliefs could have spread fairly rapidly north and south along the seaboard.

Turner (1894: 267) stated that a vague memory of an eastward expansion persisted among the northern Nascapi in the late nineteenth century, although Turner's informants might have referred to a minor population re-adjustment in response to Iroquois pressure from the south. More striking, though speculative, evidence for a large-scale cultural extension from north of the Great Lakes to Labrador was

presented by Webber-Podolinsky. Five curious curved bone and antler tools, serrated on either one or both ends with incised lines extending over the end and part way down the sides, have been unearthed from five different sites in Ontario and identified as painting instruments. Webber-Podolinsky herself commented:

> What is so exciting about these tools is that they represent concrete evidence of a painting culture in Ontario. It is usually taken for granted that a tradition of painting on skin had a wide distribution among the North American Indians and that this tradition remained longest in areas where other mediums of decoration were unavailable such as the plains and equally treeless north. But that we would be able to find a highly specialized tool for painting in Ontario is a most unexpected bit of luck. (1968: 25-6).

Webber-Podolinsky felt that the five tools may have been used for magico-religious skin painting practices, as well as for ornamenting clothing. She further added that the kinds of linear decoration produced by these markers were probably ancestral to the more elaborate curvilinear designs on many late-historic Nascapi hide objects.

Assessed collectively there were distinct implications that movements of peoples and/or ideas occurred in the past. Yet the view prevailed that Algonkian-speaking, or proto-Algonkian-speaking, peoples were the first to populate the coast and, throughout prehistoric times, Iroquois was the only other language to seriously rival Algonkian in the Northeast, with the exception of Eskimo. Should it be proposed, in contradiction to the above hypothesis, however, that the coast was originally inhabited by a small non-Algonkian-speaking population descended from Maritime Archaic peoples, whose cultural remains temporally comprise over two thousand years of the archaeological record in the Northeast, the picture changed drastically. With the continuum

destroyed, the only alternative would be to look for evidence of sudden cultural change.

As yet no archaeological data has provided firm support for such an hypothesis. Subsequent to the disappearance of the highly-developed ground stone tradition associated with the late Archaic, there was a marked hiatus until late Woodland times. Then again, in the Maritime Provinces, evidences of pottery making were absent in the upper cultural horizons just prior to the historic period. Influxes of interior peoples therefore could have occurred at any time following the late Archaic; their assimilation into an early resident population leaving much the same impression in the archaeological record as would a simple seriational change within a cultural continuum.

Evidence of Beothuk magico-religious belief. Very little data was preserved on Beothuk magico-religious traditions. As already discussed (Chapter Nine: 264), the tribe constructed the hemispherical sweat lodge (Howley 1915: 190) which was used for curing lung complaints and for rituals involving communication with the spirit world. (*Ibid.*: 175, 180, 297). The Beothuk also applied red ochre liberally to their bodies and possessions, and regarded death as a form of sleep where the souls of the dead could be contacted through solitary trance states. (*Ibid.*: 181).

The Beothuk word for 'red ochre', *odemen, ode-e-min* or *odement* was of Algonkian derivation, the reconstructed proto-Algonkian term being **welamana ~ *wolamana*. (Hewson 1971: 247). Contact between the Beothuk and the coastal Algonkian-speaking Indian peoples therefore

involved aspects of both groups' spiritual culture. Yet additional data on Beothuk magico-religious practices remained open to speculation. There was no artifactual or literary evidence that the tribe practised scapulimacy, used the hide-covered tambourine drum, or smoked tobacco and other narcotics. Historic Montagnais/Nascapi magico-religious items such as the *nimapan* and *natutshikan* were not observed at Beothuk sites, nor was there record that skulls and bones of important game animals were elevated on posts out of respect for the game spirits.

Bear ceremonialism was not reported among the Beothuk, although several claw-like, sculptured bone pieces in the Jenness collection at the National Museum of Man have been interpreted as bear claw images. (Marshall, unpublished ms.: 31-2). Considering the close linguistic correspondences between the Beothuk and the Algonkian terms for 'red ochre', it seemed plausible that a parallel argument might be proposed to allow for transmission of certain northern Algonkian animistic beliefs across the Strait of Belle Isle. Such a conjecture however, remained but one of several hypothetical premises for the existence of an animistic belief system among the Beothuk.

Beothuk bone pieces as animistic fetishes: an interpretative view. Flat, 'pendant-like' Beothuk bone pieces, although lacking historic parallels in the Northeast, may have had an animistic significance. Focusing her attention on the incised line patterns on the bone pieces, rather than on their outline shapes, Marshall claimed that the central ladder-like spine pattern on many of these objects

was reminiscent of a skeletal structure. Crosslines and gaps along the vertical design column may have depicted joints or body segments. (Marshall, unpublished ms.: 33-4). On the basis of this reasoning, then, certain bone pieces might be interpreted as carved images of claws or other amputated limb sections. That a row of several 'pendant-like' bone pieces, as well as two gulls' feet, were attached to the edge of the covering over the body in the child's burial, Notre Dame Bay (Howley 1915: 331), implied that an artistic counterpart replaced the natural items and that both were occasionally used together in the same context.

Bone pieces carved to represent stylized animal claws, fingers, teeth, birds' feet and bills would certainly be hard to identify simply by looking at the objects themselves, and probably impossible to recognize if one were looking specifically for entire animal shapes rather than appendage forms. Yet numerous advantages might have encouraged the practice of using the stylistic counterparts. Bone materials were not only readily available, but the finished pieces easier to handle and less prone to decomposition and wear than the untreated organic fetishes. Bone objects of a uniform size and shape could also be perforated and strung on thongs.

The carved bone pieces thus may have represented a major key to the persistence of ancient traits in Beothuk material culture. The absence of similar historic items elsewhere in the Northeast was, in itself, negative evidence implying a distinct cultural division between the Beothuk and the mainland Indians. John Cartwright, who

purposely sought information on Beothuk beliefs, probably discovered a greater clue to the problem than he realized when he wrote:

> I cannot obtain the least insight into the religion of the Red Indians, and have thought it very remarkable, that in a journey of about seventy miles through the heart of their winter country, not a single object should present itself that might be looked upon as intended for religious purposes, or devoted to any superstitious practices of these people, except indeed some small figured bones neatly carved, and having four prongs -- the two outer ones spread like a swallow's tail. Some of these have fallen in my way, and from the thong fixed to their handle, I have imagined them to be worn as amulets; and I am inclined to judge that the religion of the people rises but little above such harmless trifling observances. (Howley 1915: 39).

Wooden fetishes from Beothuk burials. Inclusion in burials of three-dimensional carved wooden figures with indistinct human facial features, but which were definitely identifiable as to sex by the representation of primary sex characteristics, was a peculiarity of Beothuk mortuary practice. These items were not associated with ancestor worship, as they were presumably intended to accompany the spirit of the dead. Because they portrayed the most basic physical characteristics of the deceased, they may have been placed in the grave to remind the spirits of the dead of their once mortal state. Cormack recognized this physical resemblance between the wooden figures and the appearance of the dead when he reported his discovery of the bodies of Mary March, her husband and child. Laid within the funerary repository were "two wooden images of a man and woman, no doubt meant to represent husband and wife; and a small doll, which was supposed to represent a child (for Mary March had to leave her only child here, which died two days after she was taken) ..." (*Ibid.*: 193). A small

wooden image of a male child (Plate 81) was also found in the Beothuk child's burial on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay. This item was obviously meant to resemble the boy himself. (*Ibid.*: 331). No record of a similar practice of placing wooden images in graves could be located for either the historic Micmac or the Montagnais/Nascapi.

That wooden fetishes with human features may have been reverenced by the Beothuk as idols or ancestor images was discovered accidentally in 1819 on the return journey down the Exploits River after the capture of Mary March. During a stop in an abandoned Beothuk dwelling, one man in the European company inadvertently aroused the anger of the Indian woman by his rough handling of a "small image, or rather a head, carved rudely out of a block of wood ..." (*Ibid.*: 100). No other mention was made of the shape, size or possible function of this object.

Information derived from Shanawdithit. Shanawdithit, when questioned about the origins of her tribe, replied "that 'the Voice' told them that they sprang from an arrow or arrows stuck in the ground." (Howley 1915: 262). The arrow as a symbol of creative power was a frequent literary element in Iroquois origin myth (Krickeberg 1968: 182; Biggar 1928: 158), although lacking in Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi oral tradition. The statement concerning 'the Voice', however, indicated that the Beothuk were similar to northeastern Algonkian peoples in emphasizing the presence of an unseen supreme deity, rather than celestial entities such as the sun or moon.

Shanawdithit's assertion that her tribe feared a man-eating sea monster (Howley 1915: 297) and regarded "the devil (?) as a man,

short and thick" dressed in beaver skin with a long beard (*Ibid.*: 247, opposite 248) had no parallels among the mainland Indians. Howley suggested that the Beothuk 'devil' might have been an early French missionary whose meeting with the Beothuk remained unrecorded in available historic sources. (*Ibid.*: 247).

The only other information provided by Shanawdithit concerning the intangible aspects of Beothuk culture was a drawing of six tapering wooden staves labelled "Totems? or Emblems of Red Indian Mythology." (*Ibid.*: 249, opposite 249). Each six-foot [1.9 m] staff was surmounted by a symbolic representation of either power or office. (Plate 82). The first symbol depicted a European fishing vessel. Howley described the sketch of this object as "faithfully executed ... the hull with a slight rise in the fore-part and drop towards the stern, the two short masts, the after one showing the characteristic rake familiar to all acquainted with this little craft." (*Ibid.*: 249). This drawing, more than any other, indicated the rapidity with which alien influences could be incorporated into Beothuk culture. Howley attributed the origin of this symbol to the Beothuk sabotage of Peyton's boat in the fall of 1818. (*Ibid.*: 250).[3]

The second symbol, *Ow-as-bosh-no-un*, depicted a whale's tail. Cormack referred specifically to the "Bottle Nose Whale which the ... represented by the fishes tail ...," and added that the Indian considered it "the greatest good luck to kill one." (*Ibid.*: 249). The third stave was surmounted by an inverted half-moon, *Kuus-Kuis*. (Possibly the moon was regarded as a subordinate deity of some kind.) The fourth drawing, *Boogh-wood-je-bee-chuk-Boogh-woodje-bee-shneck?*,

was of a stave, wide at the top with a pyramidal distal end, and tapered towards the base. *Ash-wa-meet* and *Ash-u-meet*, the fifth and sixth symbols, were slightly differing forms of the same abstract form. Both exhibited a narrow transverse section at the juncture of the stave with the carved symbol. Three wider transverse sections, spaced equidistantly from one another in a vertical row, were apparently set into a notch cut in the top of the stave. The transverse sections in the *Ash-wa-meet* symbol were rectangular; in the *Ash-u-meet* symbol they were of an inverted, truncated pyramid shape. Buchan observed a staff identical to the *Ash-u-meet* symbol in 1811. "This staff," he wrote, "was nearly six feet and two inches at the head tapering to the end, terminating in not more than three quarters of an inch; it presented four plain equal sides, except at the upper end, where it resembled three rims one over the other, and the whole stained red." (*Ibid.*:79).

According to Buchan's interpretation of the gestures made by his Beothuk guide, the staff belonged to the chief; a statement which suggested that the item denoted personal authority of some kind. Conversely, the stave might have represented an ancient tribal symbol similar to the cross among the Micmac at Miramichi. The Micmac cross signified a power which surpassed that of the office of chief, for "the chief himself carried it in his hand, as one carries a stick when he is walking upon snowshoes, and he stood it in the most honoured spot in his wigwam." (Ganong 1968: 149). The existence of the Beothuk boat symbol was therefore confusing, as it apparently was intended to commemorate an historic incident rather than a power or office. It may be that a merging occurred of magico-religious tradition with historic

concepts of personal power and daring. Should the older powers and guardian spirits have been considered inadequate before the threat of European encroachment on Beothuk hunting territory, the basis of the traditional magico-religious belief system might have fallen into jeopardy. The information provided by Shanawdithit was of particular interest because it concerned items and practices which must have persisted through a period of devastating strain on established Beothuk magico-religious concepts.

A comparison of Beothuk and northeastern Algonkian belief. Northeastern Algonkian magico-religious systems presented two levels of belief; the animistic and the abstract. Similar levels of belief may also have been maintained by the historic Beothuk. Yet, unlike Montagnais/Nascapi animistic belief which focused on the fauna of the northern interior, Beothuk attention was turned towards the sea and marine species of animal life. Sea birds, particularly gulls, and the whale were represented by organic fetishes -- birds' feet and bills -- and by carved symbols of these creatures. Should assemblages of flat bone pieces have depicted stylized counterparts for the organic fetishes, they may have included marine fish and sea mammal forms.

The uniformity of the historic bear ritual in the Northeast suggested that northeastern bear ceremonialism diffused from a unitary origin; thus unrecorded cultural exchange between the Dorset and Maritime Archaic peoples or, in much later times, between the Beothuk and the historic Eskimo, may have instigated an early form of bear

ceremonialism in Newfoundland. There is no archaeological or ethnohistorical evidence, however, that the Beothuk observed the body of elaborate bear rites performed by historic Algonkian-speaking hunters in Labrador and the Maritime Provinces.

CHAPTER TEN

GAMES AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac Games.

Tests of skill. Certain games demanding skill such as ring and pin and target shooting with bows and arrows were practised both south and northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, whereas gambling games and pastimes involving balls, spinning tops and game boards were restricted to the Montagnais/Nascapi. In ring and pin, a participant attempted to impale a series of small bone, wooden or bark rings of decreasing sizes on the point of a slender stick, to which the rings were attached by separate hide thongs. A variation of this game played by the Montagnais/Nascapi had five or six terminal phalanges of a caribou or moose foot strung along a single hide thong, which was tied at one end to a wooden peg. When flipped over the point these hollow cones fitted neatly one over the other, each successive phalange 'capping' the one directly beneath it. Often a small bundle of *Arbor vitae* twigs, bound together at the top, were tied by a length of thong to a wooden peg. The object of the game was to catch the miniature sheaf on the end of the stick. In 1634 Le Jeune observed young Montagnais children "using a little bunch of pine sticks, which they receive or throw into the air on the end of a pointed stick." (Thwaites 1897: VII, 97).

Bows, arrows and slings were used to hit wooden targets, often roughly carved into the shape of a game animal. (Turner 1894: 326; Rogers 1967: 118-9). Slings included the simple 'David sling' in which the stone was hurled from a hide loop swung over the head. Crotched-

stick slings may have been an European introduction. A third type, using a throwing board to give impetus to the projectile, was aboriginal. In making this device the Mistassini Indians cut a slender, flattened stick about 60.0 cm in length and tied a length of string to one end. The free end of the string was passed over the distal end of the stick and back along the underside of the device to the proximal end where both stick and string were grasped by the hunter. The stone was then placed beneath the string at the distal end and the device "fired in the same manner as an atlatl." (Rogers 1967: 76).

Mechling (1958: 222) reported dart throwing among the Malecite of New Brunswick. The dart was unfletched, approximately 60.0 cm long and fashioned from hardwood. A throwing board was used to cast the dart. A hide thong fastened to the distal end of the throwing board was knotted along its length and then fitted into a notch cut in the mid-section of the dart. When the dart was thrown the forward thrust released the knot from the notch on the weapon.

Mechling added that "it was said that the Indians were able to throw a dart 200 yards [over 180.0 m], much farther than they could shoot an arrow." (*Ibid.*: 222). Although the throwing-board, sling and the dart were used for sporting purposes during late historic times, they may have been prehistoric weapon types.

Miniature crossbows were made northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence for Indian children to practise precision in shooting. These small crossbows differed from full-sized weapons in lacking a trigger release and in having a groove cut along the length of the upper surface

of their stock. Flannery (1939:70) regarded the crossbow as an aboriginal weapon in North America because of its widespread distribution throughout the subarctic regions of the globe. However, similarities in construction and design between the North American Indian and European crossbow caused Rogers to seriously question Flannery's suggestion. (Rogers 1967: 68). Crossbows were not recorded among the historic coastal Wabanaki.

A string game, similar to the European 'cat's cradle' but reputedly aboriginal among the Montagnais/Nascapi, depended on the players' skill in making figures of animals or objects by alternating and crossing strings suspended on the fingers of both hands. (Speck 1935: 219-22). This game was not practiced by the historic Micmac.

Team games. Team games such as football and lacrosse were played by the Micmac, Malecite and Ojibwa but not by the Montagnais/Nascapi. The Micmac set up goal posts at either end of a field and two teams attempted to gain possession of the ball. In lacrosse the wooden ball was caught and thrown by means of a net pocket made of woven babiche on the end of a stick. Jenness reported that the Iroquois, with whom lacrosse was most frequently associated, bored small holes through the diameter of the wooden balls to make them 'whistle' when travelling through the air. (Jenness 1932: 268). No such sophistication was known to the Micmac.

Balls for kicking and throwing were made of caribou or moosehide stuffed with animal hair. 'Snow-snakes' was a team event in the Maritime Provinces played with narrow softwood sticks about a metre in

length with an animal head carved or painted on one end. The Micmac competed with one another in trying to make the sticks travel as far ahead as possible by throwing the 'snakes' downward against the ground with a slight forward thrust. (Plate 83). The game was also played by the Iroquois and Ojibwa and, similar to lacrosse, was undoubtedly adopted by the Micmac and Malecite from tribes further to the west. (Mechling 1958: 220; Cooper 1946: 301).

Gambling games in the Northeast.

Montagnais/Nascapi gambling games. Gambling may not have been practiced northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence prior to European contact. The only game, other than cards, which might have been used in early historic times for gambling purposes was an European introduced form of checkers known to the Nascapi as *ochenagan.* Turner wrote that "the game is played as in civilization, with only slight differences. I am not aware that wagers are laid upon its issue. Some of the men are so expert that they would rank as skillful players in any part of the world." (Turner 1894: 323).

It was plausible that most Montagnais/Nascapi games were associated with hunting, and winning meant good luck for the future. (Speck 1935: 219-20). Gambling for gain appeared to be an alien concept to the northeastern Algonkian-speaking Indians and was probably introduced prehistorically into the Maritime Provinces through contact with agricultural tribes to the southwest. (Cooper 1946: 279).

Micmac gambling games. No parallel to the Micmac gambling game, *altestakwn*, could be found among the Montagnais/Nascapi. The Micmac

game was played with a concave wooden dish about 30.0 cm in diameter carved from a bird's-eye maple burl which had a small hole bored through the centre of its base -- a characteristic of *altestakun* platters, or *waltes*, from the Maritime Provinces. The air rising through the hole was said to affect the turning of dice upon the dish. (Piers' notes: Printed Matter File, Nova Scotia Museum.)

To play *altestakun*, six dice of caribou bone, moose bone or walrus ivory were laid same side down on a platter, which was brought down with a bang on a hard surface. (Mechling 1958: 207). The score was allotted according to how the counters fell. Each die was approximately 2.0 cm in diameter and slightly less than .07 cm in thickness. One face was decorated with two pairs of incised arcs, each pair inverted back-to-back and intersecting at the centre of the counter to form a stylized cross-pattern. (Plate 84). Free-style designs were also observed in collections, although every set of six dice exhibited a uniform pattern. Red or greenish-blue pigment was rubbed into the incisions to emphasize the design pattern. The obverse face of each die was plain.

There were also three large counter sticks about 2.5 cm in thickness and approximately 10.0 to 16.0 cm in length, fifty-one small sticks of the same length as the large sticks but more slender, and a crooked stick which had no numerical value. One end of each of the large sticks was carved to resemble the fletched end of an arrow. (Hagar 1896: 31-42). Possession of the crooked stick marked a major turning point in the score keeping of the game by the formation of a debt pile.

Lescarbot reported that Cartier observed an almost identical game to *altestakun* among the Iroquois at Hochelaga. In the Iroquois game different coloured beans were used as dice.

> I have seen a kind of game that they [the Iroquois] have. They put some number of beans, coloured and painted on one side of the platter; and having stretched out a skin on the ground, they play thereupon, striking with a dish upon this skin, and by that means the beans do skip in the air, and do not all fall on that part that they be coloured -- and in short consisteth the chance and hazard -- and according to their chance they have a certain number of quills made of rushes which they distribute to him that winneth for to keep the reckoning. (Biggar 1928: 250).

Another Micmac gambling pastime similar to *altestakun*, and thus also patterned upon the Iroquois game, was *wobonunk*. In this game eight, rather than six discoidal dice were used. Le Clercq wrote that a form of dice game known as *ledelstaganne* was "the usual game of our Gaspesians ... [which] "they play with little black and white bones. That person wins the game who makes them turn out all white or all black as many times as they have agreed." (Ganong 1968: 210, 294; Le Clercq 1910: 294-5). Lescarbot (1911: 197) described a similar gambling pastime.

Rectangular and diamond-shaped Beothuk bone pieces resembling Micmac gaming dice. Seven small rectangular bone blocks were recovered from a Beothuk burial on Swan Island, Bay of Exploits. (Plate 85). Howley (1915: 290) described the rectangular bone pieces as:

> ... about one inch [2.5 cm] by 3/4 wide [2.0 cm] and 1/4 [0.5 cm] in thickness, perfectly plain on one side but elaborately carved on the other. A fine double line ran around near the edge on each of the four sides, inside of which was a double row of triangular figures meeting at their apex on a central line, extending across the face of the block. The triangular figures on four of the blocks were eight in number, four on either side, while on another block there were six such at each of the narrower ends, twelve in all. In the central

> space of this latter block there appears a large figure exactly resembling the capital letter H. A few other blocks were merely scored with fine lines crossing at right angles.

Four diamond-shaped bone pieces about 5.0 cm in length, 2.0 cm in width and .25 cm in thickness and one small bone piece of the same shape, 2.75 cm in length, 1.5 cm in width and 0.5 cm in thickness were also found in association with the Swan Island burial. (Plate 85). The rectangular and diamond-shaped bone pieces may have represented two separate sets of dice. Both types were similar to Micmac *altestakun* dice by displaying a stylistic emphasis toward bilateral design symmetry on only one face. None were perforated and all were polished on both surfaces. The presence of the seven rectangular blocks suggested further that, unlike Micmac *altestakun*, the Beothuk game used more than six dice. Fragments of French clay pipes at the Swan Island burial placed it chronologically within the early to mid-seventeenth century. The presence of the bone blocks in a burial of this period may imply that unrecorded cultural exchange occurred between the Beothuk and Micmac.

Similarities among the three tribes. Most games in the Northeast emphasized the improvement of hunting skills through competition. Certain games may have attained the status of magico-religious ritual events. Still others remained trivial amusements which provided enjoyment for both the participant and the observer. One such activity, primarily an occupation of women, was biting patterns in a thin layer of birch bark. By rotating a small sheet between their teeth, the Indians imprinted floral motifs, animal shapes and pleasing abstract

designs into the bark. Bark biting was also practiced by the Beothuk. It was reported that Shanawdithit could "take a piece of birch bark, fold it up, and with her teeth bit out various designs representing leaves, flowers, etc." (Howley 1915: 151). Possibly this trait among the Beothuk was 'borrowed' from the Algonkian-speaking coastal Indians. Cooper (1946: 296-7) stated that bark biting was not practised by the central Cree or tribes to the northwest of Hudson Bay; thus it seemed plausible that this form of amusing pastime may originally have spread northwest across the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Montagnais/ Nascapi.

Musical instruments. The most important musical instrument to the northern Nascapi was the circular, hide-covered drum. (Turner 1894: 324). Rattles as well as drums accompanied singing sessions, dances and ceremonies. A conical bark or horn rattle filled with pebbles, or in late historic times a rattle made from a small, cylindrical 'shot' tin filled with lead pellets, was used by the Montagnais and Mistassini Indians. Bark sheets, the bases of large bark containers and hollow logs produced a rhythmic sound when struck with a stick. Bark, wooden or horn rattles were manufactured by the Micmac.

The Micmac made a wooden flageolet in two pieces by hollowing out the pith of two alder, wild cherry or sweet elder rods. Mechling (1958: 225) maintained that sweet elder was preferred as the pith of the wood was soft. After the two rods, each measuring about 15.0 cm, were hollowed out and smoothed, the outer edge of the circumference on one piece was thinned to fit into the concavity of the other. The

number of finger holes or the shape of the mouthpiece on this instrument was not determined. Whistles and flutes were also manufactured by the historic Micmac. (*Ibid.*: 228). Whistles were an ancient instrument along the Atlantic coast, as a number of whistles with finger holes and mouthpieces, made from the wing bones of large sea birds, were unearthed at the Maritime Archaic burial site at Port au Choix. (Tuck 1971: 347).

No information could be obtained on the types of musical instruments used by the historic Beothuk, although these Indians were reputedly fond of singing. (Howley 1914: 230). It seemed particularly noteworthy that there was no mention of drums or rattles in ethnographic accounts on Beothuk material culture considering the importance of these instruments to the Indians northwest of the Strait of Belle Isle.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AN OVERVIEW OF STYLISTIC TRENDS

In preparation for the comparison of Micmac, Montagnais/Nascapi and Beothuk decorative designs, primary artistic elements were isolated and examined categorically. Since similarities were readily observable between the stylistic work of the Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac, artistic trends exhibited by these two tribes are combined under the same sub-headings. Elements of Beothuk stylistic design which differed from Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi artistic components, are discussed separately. A description of the decoration on the stone and bone objects recovered from Maritime Aachaic burial sites is also introduced to provide grounds for a brief comparison of ancient and historic stylistic traditions in the Northeast.

Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi design elements. Linear designs predominated in late-historic Indian art work from the Labrador Peninsula and the Maritime Provinces. Borders enclosed areas of cross-hatching, closely-set parallel lines or stippled points of colour. Realistic floral elements, adapted from European sources, were observed infrequently. Only rarely was an open space dominated by a solid colour field, and many design compositions presented a decidedly light and delicate appearance. Geometric motifs included the triangle, rectangle, lozenge, cross, circle and dot. Rows of a single, repeated design motif were small in size and provided a decorative border for a larger centre of design focus, often composed of curvilinear elements.

Geometric patterns were also observed in this context, particularly in design compositions incised on hard, grained surfaces such as wood or bone.

I. Curvilinear elements in northeastern Algonkian art. An important artistic motif in Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi art of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the double-curve, described by Speck (1914: 1) as "consisting of two opposed incurves as a foundation element, with variations in the shape and proportions of the whole." Bisymmetrical lobed figures rising upwards from the centre of the base of the motif presented a tracery effect reminiscent of plant growth. (Plate 86). Tendrils with blossoms and buds not only reduced the area of open space between the incurves, but increased the potentialities of the double-curve as a floral motif.

That the double-curve was developed primarily as a floral design was debatable. Double-curves appeared in the decorative art work of all the Algonkian-speaking peoples in the Northeast, as well as in the art of the eastern Iroquois. Each of these tribes produced a variant of the double-curve which formed a diagnostic part of their historic artistic traditions. The major division lay between the northeastern Algonkian and the Iroquoian use of the motif; the incurves designated the power and prestige of the Iroquoian chief, a symbolic concept alien to Algonkian society. A second Iroquoian symbolic design, that of the "world tree' was composed of "two divergent curved lines, each springing from the same point and curving outward like the end of a split dandelion stalk." (Parker 1912: 612-3). This specific Iroquoian motif

permeated Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi decorative art, but in so doing apparently lost its symbolic significance among the northeastern Algonkians. Iroquoian double-curves were also smaller, lacked interior embellishments and were more scroll-like in their appearance. (Speck: 1914: 9). Penobscot double-curve representations connoting political unity derived from an Iroquoian concept which apparently failed to make a strong impression on Indian art from the Maritime Provinces. (*Ibid.*: 4-5; Speck 1927).

Differences in curvilinear design patterns among Indian peoples to the south and northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence were evident, but more subtle. The earliest examples of Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi double-curves lacked interior elaborations. The opposing incurves were usually bordered by dots or solid lines to give emphasis to the primary design. These formed abstract foundation elements and were often arranged in rows or blocks, in which two double-curves were placed back-to-back. Blocks were also extended into pyramids or modified in other ways to conform to irregularities in the design surface. The versatility of the motif alone may have contributed to its widespread distribution in the Northeast.

II. Plausible origins for the double-curve in northeastern Indian art. Speck (1914: 3) suggested that, regardless of the prevalence of the double-curve in historic Indian art, the motif was probably not aboriginal among the Algonkian-speaking peoples. Instead, he maintained that "it may have been derived from an original old American design element that became remodelled and specialized to its

present form among some of these tribes and was subsequently adopted by their neighbours in general." Barbeau also held that the motif was European-introduced, but from early French sources. (Barbeau 1930: 52). To Barbeau, the design was reminiscent of roccoco figures of the early to mid seventeenth century. In support of Barbeau's assertion, many of the nineteenth-century double-curves resembled the delicate and elaborate swirling excesses of French roccoco art. Yet, Indian artistic evidence from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries tended to contradict Barbeau's statements. Early historic curvilinear patterns displayed a simplicity of form and application basically at odds with any view which regarded them merely as imitations of French or colonial American prototypes.

The unrestrained vitality of Montagnais/Nascapi curvilinear design compositions presupposed a long-standing acquaintance of these peoples with the double-curve component. The Nascapi ritual mat in the Speyer collection at the National Museum of Man (Plate 77) exhibited a large cross superimposed upon a tripartite field of double-curve designs, many of which displayed only a half-hearted attempt at bi-lateral symmetry. Apparently the entire composition represented a compromise of artistic balance to the symbolic potentialities of the artistic elements presented.

Supporting evidence for a merging of introduced curvilinear elements with ancient northeastern Algonkian symbolic concepts was observable in Micmac art from the Maritime Provinces. Here the cross motif was a dominant centre of design focus, but often its linear proportions were obscured by the extension of each of its transcepts

into a bifurcate curve. A beadworked design on a Micmac dress tab in the collection at the Peabody Museum of Salem exhibited three such crosses; two on the upper row, and one beneath. (Plate 87). It was therefore concluded that the double-curve was not originally a northeastern Algonkian artistic component, but was used historically in the embellishment of pre-Columbian geometric symbols. The presence of the double-curve in Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi art work as early as the mid seventeenth century probably arose from the introduction of Iroquoian curvilinear elements both northwest and south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. (Brasser 1976: 31, 43). Subsequently, colonial European floral patterns may have provided new and versatile possibilities for the elaboration of the earlier designs. The symbolic significance of the geometric figures was superseded by an artistic emphasis on the decorative properties of the swirling curvilinear designs. Only among the more conservative Micmac and northern Nascapi Indians did dotted outlines and bar-like transverse elements survive until the twentieth century. Curvilinear embellishments were added to the apex of pyramidal forms and to the corners of diamond shapes. Geometric zig-zags were modified into graceful scalloped lines. Hour-glass patterns provided design fields for a variety of internal curvilinear compositions. (Plates 59 and 60). In other areas the double-curve motif was stylistically refined until only the opposing incurves and a simple three-lobed central figure remained -- an artistic vestige of the Iroquoian 'world tree' symbol. (Parker 1912: 612).

III. Geometric design elements. Should it be accepted that an artistic metamorphosis from rigid geometric to primarily curvilinear elements occurred in the art of the northeastern Algonkian-speaking peoples, there must have been a restricted range of ancient geometric foundation elements to account for the uniformity of the change throughout the Northeast. Rows of triangles, rectangular shapes and dots were found both south and northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, although the circle was restricted mainly to the Montagnais/Nascapi. It might even be suggested, on the basis of prehistoric archaeological evidence, that along the maritime coast circular designs were predominantly historic northeastern Algonkian. Woodland pottery sherds exhibited repetitive punched or cord-marked designs. The inscribed decoration in the ceremonial stone and bone 'bayonets' unearthed at late Maritime Archaic burial sites included rows of stippled marks, bars and zigzags indicative of a concern for longitudinal bilateral symmetry with no centre of design focus. The decorative art of the Maritime Archaic peoples did not stress design compositions, but merely repeated a single, simple motif over and over again. These distinctive design patterns on ceremonial stone and bone objects uncovered at sites from New England to Labrador represented a widespread artistic tradition which existed almost unchanged for more than two thousand years. To isolate artistic components which might suggest a continuation of this tradition among the historic Indians of the Maritime Provinces was extremely difficult, if not impossible, as the circular and abstract curvilinear elements in Micmac ornamental art were entirely lacking in

the existing decorative work of the Maritime Archaic and Woodland peoples.

IV. Artistic techniques and materials. The Montagnais/Nascapi used tined bone and wood tools to paint linear borders on hide, and a narrow stylus with a blunt circular head to imprint circular designs and dots. It was not ascertained whether or not the Micmac bone painting tools described by Denys were tined. Neither was it recorded whether the pigments made by the Indians south and northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence were similar in composition, although both peoples mixed red ochre and charcoal with an adhesive such as grease or fish albumen to produce red and black.

The Micmac prepared a variety of vegetable dyes, the most striking of which was a brilliant red, to colour porcupine and bird quills. Only two of the Micmac circular quillworked designs, *Waeg-ar-dish*, the "northern lights," and *Gog-wit*, the "starfish" were considered by Whitehead (1974: 15) to be traditional in the Maritime Provinces. The former of these two motifs, a semi-circular to circular radial arrangement of quills, was similar to the Montagnais/Nascapi painted or beaded rosette, the symbol for the "heart" or "life". (Speck and Dodge, unpublished ms.: 15). Another frequent motif in Micmac decorative composition was the 'stepped triangle'. (Plate 87). Associated with quillworked or woven patterns almost exclusively, this artistic element was rarely observed in decorative compositions from northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. (*Ibid.*: 17). Quillworking, an aboriginal skill among the Micmac, was not indigenous to the Montagnais/Nascapi.

Shell beads were replaced historically among the Micmac and southern Montagnais by glass trade beads of several sizes and many colors. Ribbon *applique*, commercial thread, satin and velvet cloth were obtained through trade. Moosehair embroidery, adapted from French silk embroidery, was practised by the Micmac in late historic times. Both the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi scraped and incised patterns in bark until the late nineteenth century. Quadrate figures on bark containers were undoubtably aboriginal, whereas the realistic floral designs were European-introduced. Red ochre or wood charcoal was rubbed into linear decorations cut in wood or bone, but was not used for outlining incised patterns in bark.

V. The absence of representational forms in traditional northeastern Algonkian decorative art. Many designs carved, painted or incised on Montagnais/Nascapi functional items were made in response to dream visions. (Speck 1935). Only the limited number of designs which retained a fairly constant symbolic significance, therefore, were examined in this study. A Nascapi decorative border depicting closely-set parallel lines joined together at regular intervals along their length by heavier transverse bars represented toboggans loaded with supplies dragged by the Nascapi hunter. (Speck, Dodge and Webber-Podolinsky, unpublished ms.: 491). The hour-glass shape was associated with the power of the Great Spirit. Vertical rows of small hour-glass forms were reminiscent of the 'spinal column' motif prominent in the artistic traditions of the majority of northeastern Algonkian peoples. In Montagnais/Nascapi decorative compositions, dots were usually

animal footprints, the cross (when not used in a Christian context) attained a cosmological significance, and the double curve either symbolized caribou antlers (the caribou hunt) or the prophylactic properties of herbs.

Curvilinear elements were also interpreted by the Montagnais/Nascapi hunter as abstract landscapes in which triangles were mountains, lines were rivers and dots the wanderings of game animals. Traditional design compositions provided a means for the hunter to depict objects and forces constantly in the world around him, and reflected his desire to gain some measure of control over them. For, in addition to being ornamental, the patterns represented a wish for good hunting, fine weather and easy travelling conditions. In translating his desires into familiar artistic forms, the hunter hoped to communicate his prayers to the spirit world. (Speck 1935).

Almost no information could be obtained on the symbolic significance of Micmac designs. The Micmac petroglyphs from Kejimkoojik and Mewway, Nova Scotia, most of which, if not all, date from the historic period, probably portray the freer use of representational art following the introduction of Christianity by the French, with the resulting breakdown of traditional magico-religious beliefs. Rows of triangles on quillworked containers resembled villages or mountains. Branching 'tree' motifs were reminiscent of Iroquoian influence. The cross appeared on the sides of quill-worked receptacles, incised in bark lids, and in beaded designs on leather and cloth. Many of the late-historic crosses were associated with Christian worship, but others with a short transverse bar across the end of each transcept may have been aboriginal, as they were similar to the cross on the Nascapi mat in the Speyer collection. Bib-like chest coverings decorated with beadworked double-curve compositions

were worn by Micmac women as a protection against sickness.' (Pelletier 1975: 16-7). Such a practice may have been a historic expression of an aboriginal belief, which persisted as a superstitious regard for the supposed prophylactic powers of traditional design patterns against European diseases.

Representational figures were rare in historic northeastern Algonkian art, and those which were examined were associated with hunting magic or shamanic curing ritual rather than being purely decorative. There were many references in the early literary sources which implied that representational designs contained powers for good or evil. A desire for good hunting may have led the Miramichi Micmac to paint "different pictures of birds, moose, otters and beavers" on the coverings of their dwellings. (Gahong 1968: 100). The Algonkian shaman required his patient to lie on a skin painted with figures of canoes, paddles, animals and men. (Thwaites 1897; VIII, 261). Representational designs may have been regarded as too powerful, or possibly too inconsistent, in their symbolic significance to become a diagnostic part of northeastern Algonkian artistic culture. That such an attitute existed in the minds of the Montagnais during the early seventeenth century was indicated by the response of one Indian hunter to a tapestry hung in the Christian mission at Tadoussac:

> One of them [a Montagnais]... ran to his people: 'Be on your guard, [he said] - they have exposed the souls or figures of serpents and snakes in their house of prayers.' (Thwaites 1897, XXXI, 247)

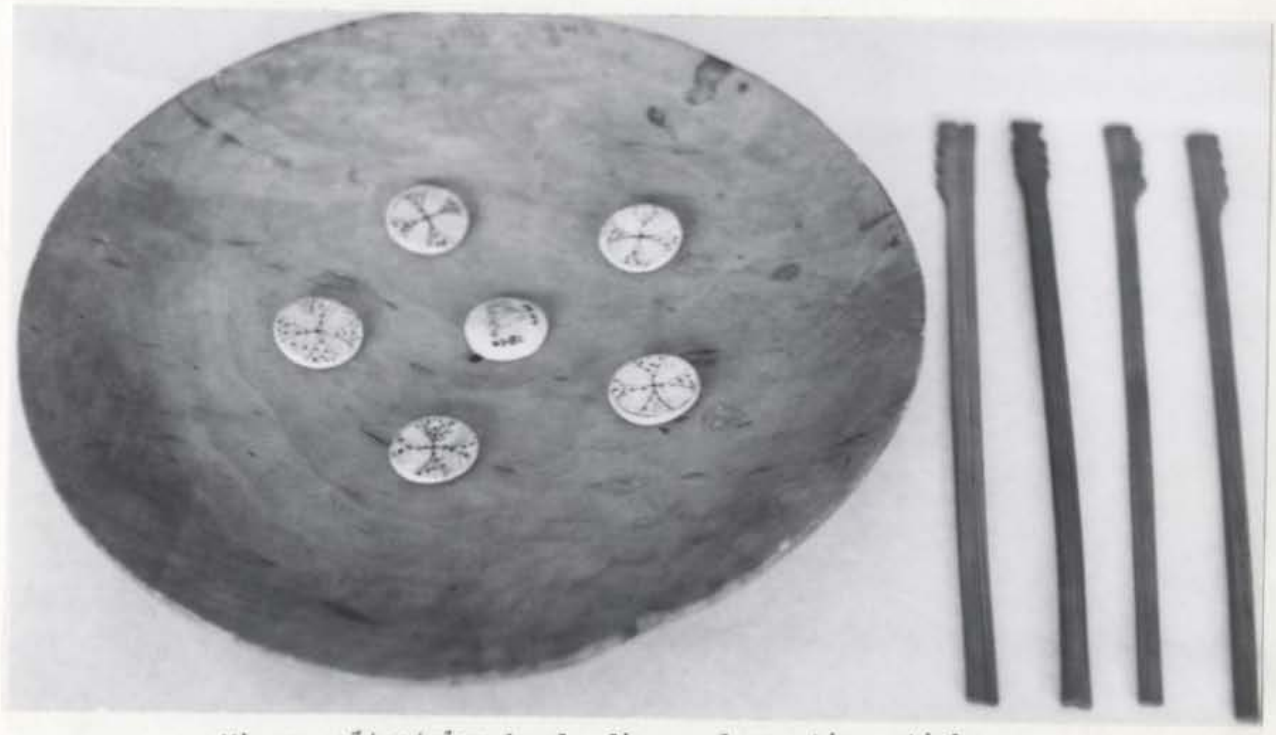
The belief expressed by this Montagnais hunter perhaps more than any other cause may account for the scarcity of representational art forms in traditional Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi decorative work prior to the introduction in the seventeenth century of European realistic floral patterns.

Plate 83



'Snow snake' from the Maritime Provinces
Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa

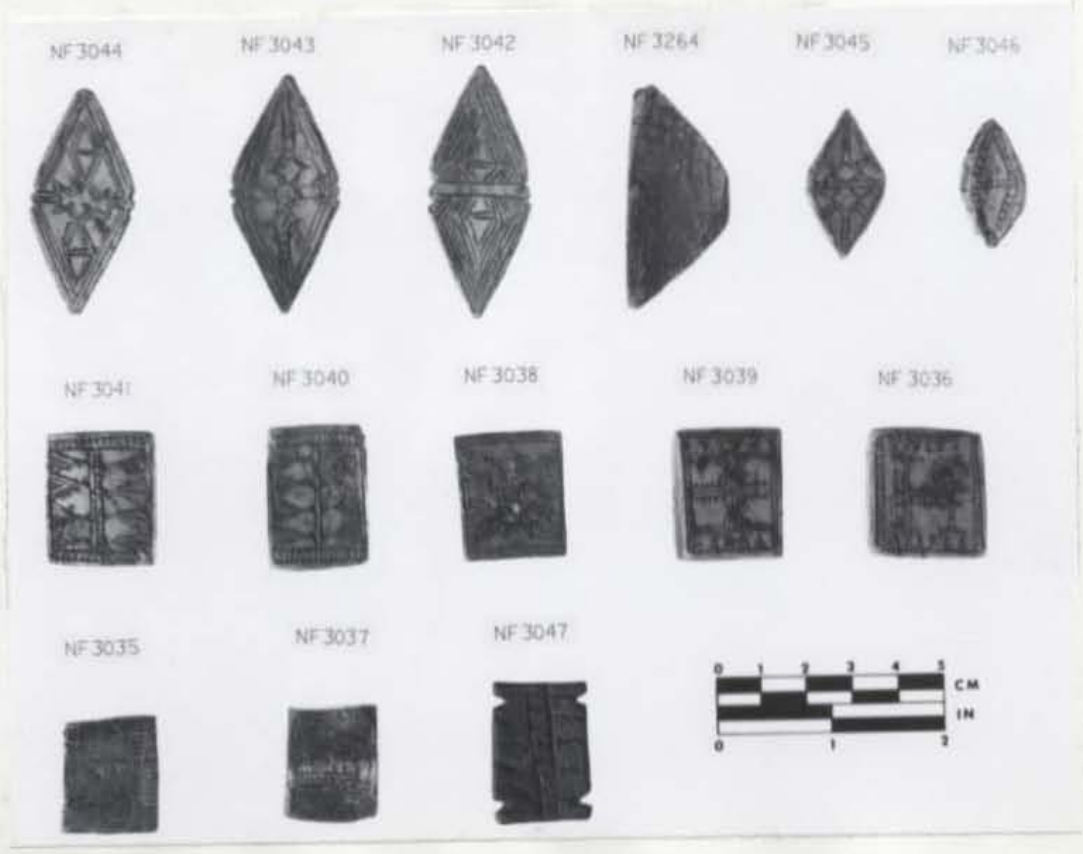
Plate 84



Micmac *altestakun* bowl, dice and counting sticks
Nova Scotia Museum collection

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Harold McGhee,
Anthropology Dept., St. Mary's University, Halifax

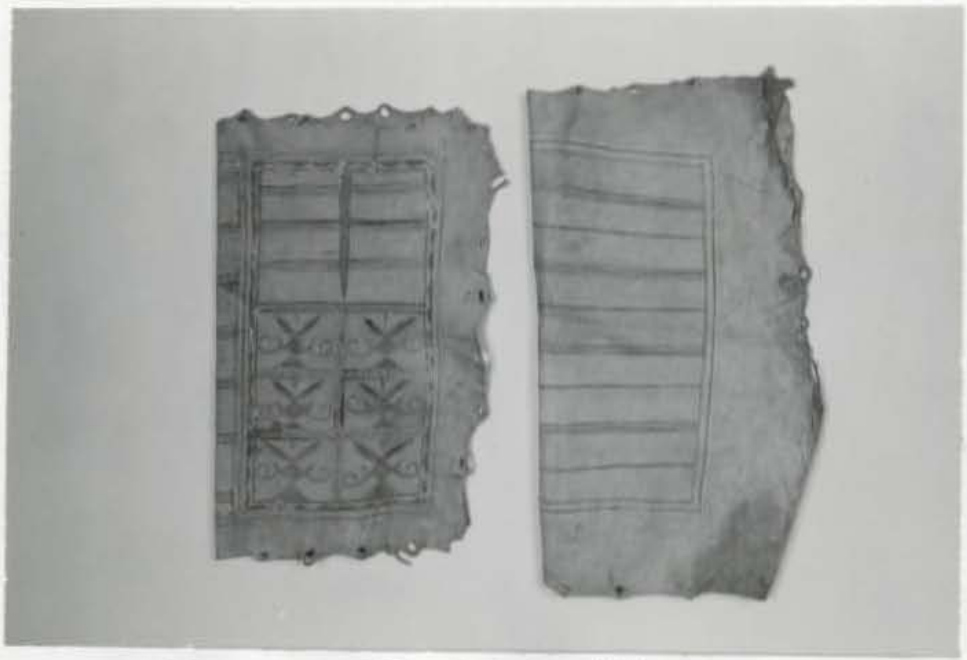
Plate 85



Beothuk decorated bone pieces resembling bone dice
(Numbers on photograph refer to accession system no longer in use).

Photograph courtesy of Newfoundland Museum, St. John's

Plate 86



Double-curve motif painted on hide

Photograph courtesy of Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York

Plate 87

Micmac cloth dress tab showing beadworked double-curve designs

Photograph courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Salem, Salem

Plate 87

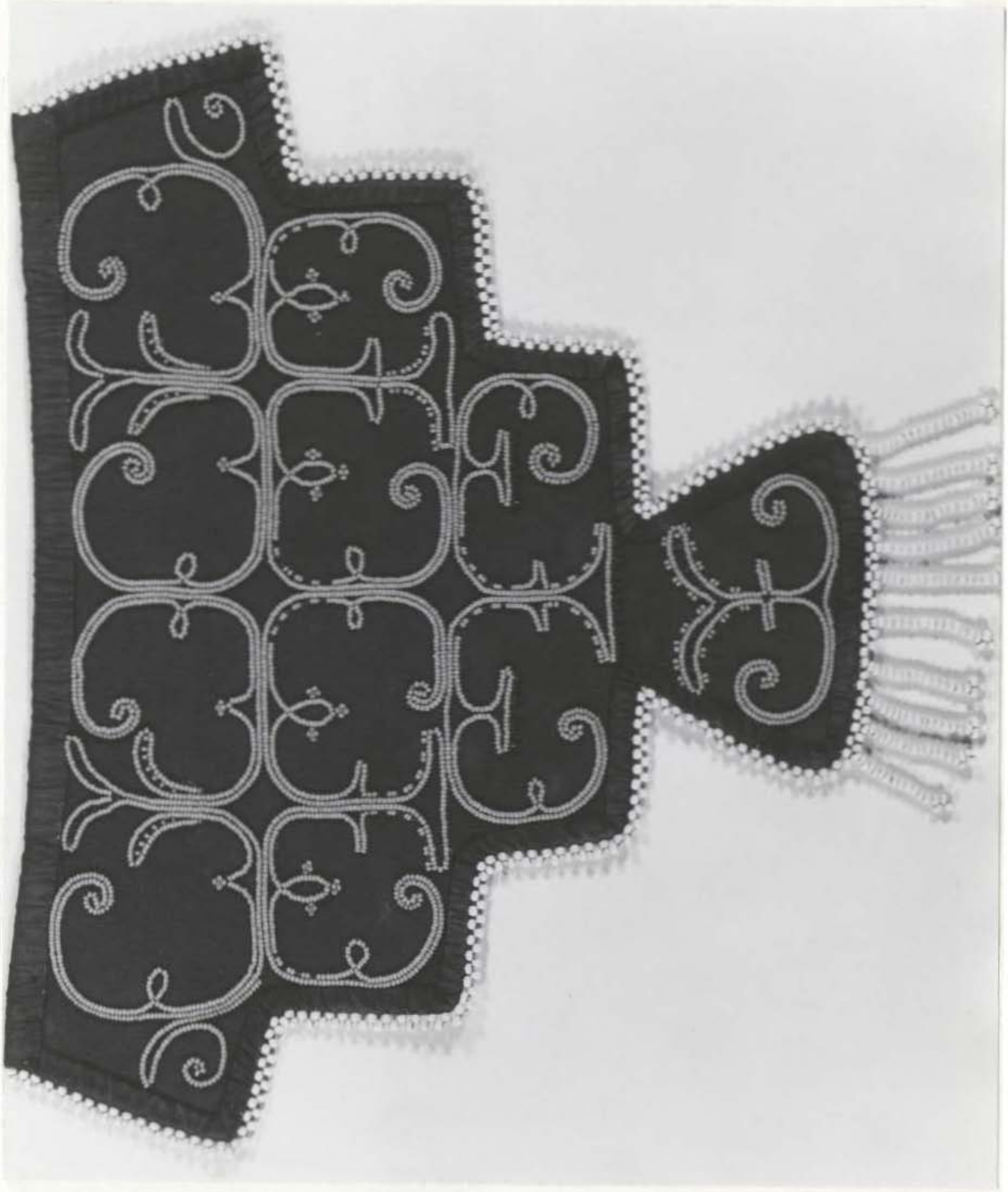




Plate 88

Lid of Micmac quillworked bark box.
In each of the four corner quadrants there is
a 'stepped triangle' design facing inward
from the side.

Photograph courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Salem, Salem

Plate 88



Plate 89

Micmac hanging bark container
showing incised 'stepped triangle' design on upright section

Photograph courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Salem, Salem

Plate 89

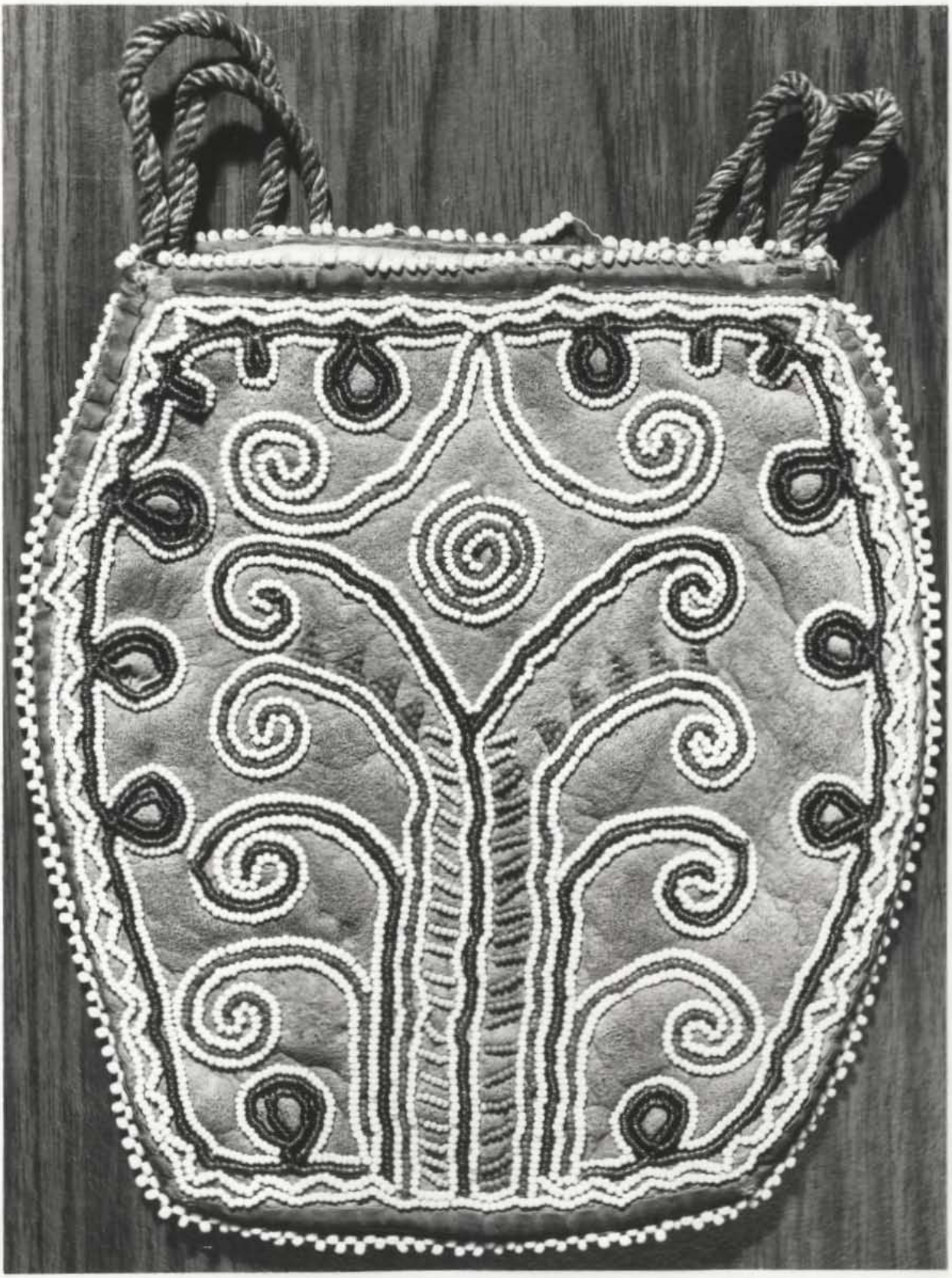


Plate 90

Micmac or Malecite beadworked purse.
The beaded designs resemble the pattern on the Nascapi mat in the Speyer collection (Plate 77). This pattern is probably of Iroquoian derivation.

Photograph courtesy of New Brunswick Museum, St. John.

Plate 90



VI. Use of colour by the Montagnais/Nascapi and Micmac. Red as an outlining colour and blue as a secondary colour were frequently the only two pigments used by the Montagnais/Nascapi in painting hide. Commercial vermillion and washing blue obtained from the European traders produced the brightest colours. Browns were made from powdered earth pigments and black from wood charcoal mixed with grease. Thin border lines of yellow, to give the illusion of depth to an essentially flat pattern, were painted with fish albumen which had been colourless when applied but had yellowed with age. As blue pigment would have been difficult, if not impossible to obtain prehistorically, it has been suggested that blue replaced black among the northeastern Algonkian Indians. (Ted Brasser: personal communication). The variety of vegetable dyes used by the historic Micmac were not prepared by the Montagnais/Nascapi. Only red and black retained a special importance, particularly in association with death, among the majority of Algonkian-speaking peoples.

A comparative examination of the evidence for Beothuk stylistic traits. There was no artifactual or ethnographic evidence that the Beothuk painted linear designs on hide and bone. The only decorative skills which definitely could be ascribed to this tribe were the working simple geometric designs in split root and incision in bone. The range of Beothuk motifs was restricted to a small number of geometric elements: zigzags, triangle, linear borders and 'spine-like' columns. Curvilinear components were absent. Stippled areas, ovoids and dots appeared infrequently. There was no attempt on the part of

the Beothuk artist to centre the pattern about a design focus. Instead, emphasis was placed on the linear proportions of the decorated surface so that the observer's eye was left to wander at will over the length and breadth of the design. In the above ways the existing Beothuk patterns differed radically from the boldly-executed geometric and curvilinear compositions of the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi. Beothuk artistic evidence exhibited much closer similarities with the decoration on late Maritime Archaic stone and bone tools, which implied that the historic Beothuk might have continued an artistic tradition which persisted relatively unchanged for several thousand years.

CHAPTER TWELVE

COMPARISON OF MORTUARY PRACTICES

An investigation of Micmac, Montagnais/Nascapi and Beothuk mortuary practices provided additional evidence of comparable prehistoric culture traits. Detailed descriptions of southern Montagnais and Micmac funerary customs were presented in the *Jesuit Relations*. W. E. Cormack wrote a first-hand account in 1829 concerning the Beothuk's treatment of their dead. Archaeological data from the excavation of Micmac burials in Nova Scotia and of Beothuk grave sites along the northwest and southern coasts of Newfoundland supplemented the information derived from the ethnographic sources.

Composition of historic gravegood assemblages. The historic Indians of the Maritime Provinces, Labrador and Newfoundland placed gravegoods with the bodies of their dead. Burial assemblages were composed primarily of functional items; tools, weapons, clothing and receptacles. Except for a Beothuk custom of including decorated bone pieces in graves, there was no evidence that the historic tribes manufactured a class of specific, non-utilitarian funerary offerings. Lescarbot wrote that each person in the Micmac settlement "maketh him [the deceased] a present of the best thing that he hath." (Bigger 1928: 328). Biard in 1616 described an elaborate Micmac funerary ceremony held on the third day after the death of a hunter. Grave offerings for the deceased were "fastened to poles, and the donors ... named by the master of the funeral." (Thwaites 1897: I, 265). Where trade

items such as iron weapons, tools, glass beads or kettles could be procured from the Europeans, these were selected in token of the love which the mourners held for the dead. Denys maintained that the Micmac lacked discrimination in offering the most precious things they possessed, kettles and quantities of peltries, to accompany the deceased. (Denys 1971: 30). The Micmac practice of placing large numbers of furs in graves may have arisen in response to the increased economic worth of peltries as a result of the coming of the fur trade. Such an extravagant sacrificing of furs was evidently not a prehistoric tradition in the Maritime Provinces, nor was it observed by the Montagnais/Nascapi or Beothuk.

Recorded instances of communal generosity at funerals were much less evident for Indian peoples living northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Le Jeune stated that "they [the Montagnais] bury with the dead man his robes, his kettles, and other belongings, because they love him, and also in order that he may make use of the soul of all these things in the other life." (Thwaites 1897: VI, 211). He also added that the son-in-law of one Montagnais man, knowing that his relative was close to death, presented a blanket and a tobacco pouch to the Jesuit Father so that the priest might bury them with the dying man. (*Ibid.*: 125).

It could not be determined what conditions governed the offering of gifts to Beothuk dead, although it was assumed from the existing archaeological evidence that, as among other historic tribes, care was taken in providing for the needs of the deceased in the Afterlife.

Food offerings. Food was placed in graves as a ceremonial offering or burned at the burial site. Diéreville mentioned that the Micmac placed gifts of corn with their dead. (Diéreville 1933: 161). Le Jeune recorded that the Montagnais threw "the best meat they have into the fire, to give something to the soul of the deceased which eats the soul of this food." (Thwaites 1897: VI, 211). Packages of dried or smoked fish wrapped in bark and fastened with a network of rootlets were found in the Beothuk boy's burial on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay. (Howley 1915: 331). A multiple Beothuk burial on Swan Island near Exploits Harbour contained fragments of lobster shells and two or three sticks "sharpened at the ends and partly charred by fire," which were evidently used to roast meat. (*Ibid.*: 289).

Funerary structures.

I. Scaffolds. Scaffolds were built during the winter months when the ground was impenetrable because of frost. These crib-like structures stood as high as, or higher than, a man and were long enough to support an extended body. Scaffolds were constructed of four corner posts joined across their tops by stringers and were roofed with transverse poles. The Micmac surrounded the scaffolds of their dead with wooden log walls for protection from ground-dwelling scavengers. (Ganong 1968: 302; Thwaites 1897: V, 129).

The Micmac and the Beothuk differed from the Montagnais/Nascapi by occasionally erecting wooden funerary repositories. Lescarbot compared the Micmac enclosure to a cage "which they cover very properly, and there they lay their dead." (Biggar 1928: 327). Le Clercq stated

that the Miramichi Micmac set logs "elevated three or four feet [about 1.5 m] in the form of a mausoleum" over the grave site. (Ganong 1968: 30). At Restigouche the same writer observed a "grave built in the form of a box, containing a quantity of skins of beavers and moose, some arrows, bows, wampum, beadwork, and other trinkets." (*Ibid.*: 303).

II. Hut and box burials. Beothuk and Micmac wooden repositories were similar in form and construction. Cormack recorded two kinds of Beothuk enclosures. The largest of these resembled a "hut ten feet by eight or nine [3.1 m by approximately 2.5 m] and four or five [1.2 m or 1.5 m] high in the centre, floored with squared poles, the roof covered with the rinds of trees, and in every way well secured against the weather inside, and the intrusion of wild beasts ..." (Howley 1915: 193). The bodies of the dead were laid on the floor. The second type of repository was made of "squared posts, laid on each other horizontally, and notched at the corners, to make them meet close..." (*Ibid.*: 194). Although the reference to interlocking corners implied an adoption of European construction techniques, it seemed plausible that the construction of hut and box burials may have formed part of an ancient mortuary tradition in the Northeast.

Jenness (1929: 37) examined a distinctive form of Beothuk funerary structure at the foot of a cliff on Long Island, Bay of Exploits. An earth ring feature and fragments of wooden poles and sheets of birch bark at this site may have been remnants of a small conical hut. Stone cairns were erected over interments along the shores of the Bay of Exploits. (*Ibid.*: 36).

III. Frame and bark coverings. The Micmac and Beothuk usually interred their dead in a fetal or seated position. (Howley 1915: 194, 214, 331, 333; Thwaites 1897: III, 129; Smith and Wintemberg 1929: 87). In the Beothuk burials, the body was laid beneath a layer of transverse wooden sticks, supporting several large rectangular birch bark sheets sewn end to end. Occasionally the bark coverings were upheld in a canopy-like fashion by vertical wooden uprights. (Howley 1915: 289, 293, 332-5). Biard's assertion that the Micmac arched a shallow grave "over with sticks, so that the earth will not fall back into it ..." (Thwaites 1897: III, 129) indicated close affinities with the Beothuk practice. Harper (1956: 9) surmised that the large copper kettles inverted over the grave contents at the Caribou Landing burial site, Pictou County, Nova Scotia, may have served the same purpose as the arched sticks described by Biard.

Secondary burials. Le Jeune recorded that secondary burial took place among the Montagnais only where hunting bands remained in one area for long periods of time. (Thwaites 1897: V, 129). When a distinguished hunter died during the winter the northern Nascapi preferred to forego the building of a scaffold and bury the deceased "where the fire had long been continued within the tent and thawed the ground to a sufficient depth to cover the body." (Turner 1894: 272). The campsite was then abandoned. Most frequently the Montagnais/Nascapi erected a scaffold and then, in the course of their seasonal wanderings, left the structure supporting the body to decompose and collapse.

Secondary burials were recorded in Micmac oral tradition during the early decades of the twentieth century. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 260).

It was the Micmac custom to leave the bones on the scaffold until the bones showed through the skin, after which the decomposed remains were placed in a hide container or 'bundle' and interred. (Harper 1956: 8, 9, 18). The Micmac either lined the walls of the grave pit with bark or wrapped bark sheets about the body -- practices which were also observed by the Beothuk and Montagnais. The northeastern Algonkian peoples coated these bark sheets with red and black pigments. Red ochre was the only pigment recorded at Beothuk burial sites.

Embalming in the Maritime Provinces. According to Lescarbot the following techniques of embalming were performed by coastal Indian peoples from the Maritime Provinces southward to Virginia:

> Of what kind this balm is I could not know, not being able to enquire of it upon the places. I believe they [the Micmac] jag the dead corpses and make them to dry. Certain it is that they preserve them from rottenness, which thing they do throughout all these Indies. He that hath written the history of Virginia saith that they draw out their entrails from the body, flay the dead, take away the skin, cut all the flesh off the bones, dry it at the sun, then lay it (enclosed in mats) at the feet of the dead. That done, they give him his own skin again, and cover therewith the bones tied together with leather, fashioning it even so as if the flesh had remained at it. (Biggar 1928: 318).

Le Clercq stated that an almost identical technique of preserving bodies had been practiced by the Miramichi Micmac prior to the seventeenth century. (Ganong 1968: 302). Maintenance of life-like characteristics was also achieved by the Micmac through drying and smoking the body on a scaffold over a fire built beneath the crib structure. (Wallis and Wallis 1955: 260). Extracting the internal organs and removing the skin were not part of historic Montagnais/Nascapi or Beothuk funerary preparations as far as could be ascertained.

The body in the Beothuk child's burial. Howley described the Indian boy's body found in a cave on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay, as "enshrouded in its natural skin, now dried and shrunken and resembling Chamois leather ... Only one hand and a couple of the cervical vertebrae were missing. The other hand, as well as the feet, was perfect, even the nails were well preserved." (Howley 1915: 331). Patterson (1891: 156) suggested that the dry environment of the cave and the layers of bark and hide coverings over the body were responsible for keeping the skin intact. Since close examination of the body during the course of this study revealed no evidence of incisions in the child's skin, it was assumed that the body may have been carefully dried on a scaffold or smoked, rather than treated to an elaborate embalming process.

Similarities in Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi funerary customs as evidence of a widespread northeastern Algonkian funerary tradition. The Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi observed certain customs which evidently arose from the same cultural source. A primary example was the great care taken by relatives of the deceased to carry the body out of the dwelling not by the door, but through whatever wall the deceased chanced to be facing when he or she died. Second, there was a belief held in common by northeastern Algonkian peoples that the soul, after it had left the body, escaped through the smoke-hole and that a summary effort had to be made to hasten its departure lest some misfortune occur to those living in the vicinity. The Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi beat the walls of the dwelling with sticks in an attempt to frighten away the lingering soul. (Thwaites 1897: IV, 129; Ganong 1968:

300). Third, the roles of male and female were clearly defined even after death. (Thwaites 1897: I, 263). Gravegood offerings varied considerably in composition according to the sex of the deceased. Hunting equipment, weapons and other paraphenalia associated with warfare or the taking of game were buried with men, domestic implements were placed in women's graves. Funerary ceremonies for women were also of shorter duration than for men, with less oratory, feasting and presenting of grave offerings. After interment of the body the name of the dead remained unspoken. Biard wrote of the Micmac that "if it happens that they are obliged to speak of him [the deceased] sometimes, it is under another and a new name." (Thwaites 1897: III, 131). The uniformity of these observances among Indians both northwest and south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence suggested that a diffusion of specific ideas regarding death and the Afterlife occurred in the past, and that the direction of spread was probably northwest-east rather than east-northwest.

Historic archaeological evidence supporting the persistence of specific aspects of late Maritime Archaic mortuary tradition. The Micmac and Beothuk often transported their dead to coastal burial grounds, overcrowded these sites, and in certain instances actually damaged earlier burials to make room for additional bodies. (Howley 1915: 194, 289; Harper 1956: 2). Conversely, no account could be found of the Montagnais/Nascapi removing the bodies of their dead to communal burial grounds, either in the interior or along the Atlantic coast, prior to the acceptance of Christianity in Labrador.

Systematic excavation of late Maritime Archaic burial grounds in northern New England, New Brunswick and Newfoundland (Moorehead 1922; Smith 1948; Byers 1959; MacLeod 1967; Harp 1968; Sanger 1973; Tuck 1970, 1971, unpublished ms.) indicated that a practice of transporting dead long distances for burial had an ancient history along the Atlantic coast. The inclusion in graves of red ochre, decorated hide clothing, shell beads and objects,which were deliberately damaged or 'killed' to release the 'spirit' of these items, characterized Maritime Archaic as well as historic Beothuk and Micmac mortuary practice. (Howley 1915: 333; Harper 1956: 9; Tuck 1970: 116). Wooden and bark models of bows, arrows, canoes, canoe paddles, small containers and fetishes found in the Beothuk boy's burial were reminiscent of carved stone and bone miniatures of functional implements recovered from Maritime Archaic and late Dorset graves. (Tuck, unpublished ms.: 102-20; McGhee 1974: 139). No historic parallels to these items were located in the Montagnais/Nascapi museum collections. Organic fetishes such as animal teeth, bird's skulls, feet, bills and mandibles have been found in Maritime Archaic and historic Indian graves in Newfoundland.

The strictures of northeastern Algonkian mortuary custom, which accorded considerably less status to the deaths of women and children than to the deaths of men, was apparently not observed by the historic Beothuk. The consistent furnishing of Beothuk women's, children's and multiple burials with red ochre, tools and decorated bone ornaments implied that the cultural conditions responsible for the composition of Beothuk gravegood assemblages operated independently of the sex, age or number of grave occupants. (Howley 1915: 293; Marshall 1974:

44-5). Multiple burials and an apparent absence of sex and age restrictions on the composition of gravegood assemblages were also reported at the Maritime Archaic burial site at Port au Choix. (Tuck, unpublished ms.: 31). Neither was there evidence either from the Port au Choix or the historic Beothuk burials of rigid conditions governing the directional orientation of bodies in graveyards. (Howley 1915: 331; Tuck, unpublished ms.: 27-8).

The absence of marine hunting equipment in historic coastal burial assemblages. No historic counterparts to the wide range of Maritime Archaic bone foreshafts, lances, toggling and barbed harpoons and stone and bone 'bayonets' have been recovered from Micmac or Beothuk grave sites. It seemed plausible that Hoffman's association of the growth of the European fur trade with the decline of the sea-mammal hunting industry in the Maritime Provinces (Hoffman 1961: 214) might be extended to account for the poor representation of lances and harpoons at Micmac burial sites. Yet, as Hoffman's statements failed to apply to the Beothuk, who continued to hunt seals and whales until the late eighteenth century (Howley 1915: 246-8), it appeared that not all categories of Beothuk hunting equipment known to be made and used by this tribe in late historic times were considered either necessary or appropriate to place in the graves of the dead. Whatever the reason for this absence of marine hunting equipment at historic grave sites in Newfoundland, Beothuk mortuary practice in this regard demonstrated a radical departure from late Maritime Archaic mortuary tradition.

It was tentatively assumed, following this summary revision

of Maritime Archaic and historic grave assemblages, that the practice of including large numbers of sea-mammal hunting weapons in graves may have ceased contemporaneously with the disappearance of the specialized decorated stone and bone lances and 'bayonets'. Influxes of interior-oriented peoples and ideas, already discussed in preceding chapters, may have led to the decline of the late Maritime Archaic mortuary tradition and the introduction of new customs which stressed, not the communal distribution of specialized grave offerings, but the apportioning of gravegoods according to age and sex. With the replacement of late Maritime Archaic mortuary practices in the Maritime Provinces, New England and Labrador, the range of the ancient tradition was restricted farther and farther eastwards until it was finally eradicated in the Northeast, the greatest number of ancient traits persisting among the most easterly historic tribe, the Beothuk of Newfoundland.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

TEMPORAL/SPATIAL CULTURAL SEQUENCES ALONG THE NORTHEASTERN ATLANTIC COAST

A shortcoming of this comparative study was the absence of any appreciable time depth in which to trace evidences of material culture change and the movement of peoples and ideas in the past. The majority of the bark, bone, wood and hide items in the ethnohistorical collections were manufactured during the late historic period. To compensate for this lack the following resume was prepared of temporal/spacial cultural sequences reconstructed from archaeological data recovered from New England, the Maritime Provinces, central and southern Labrador and Newfoundland.

Evidence of a maritime cultural continuum. A cultural continuum beginning with the late Paleo-Indian occupation of the Maritime Provinces has been proposed by Tuck (1970, 1971, 1975a) for that region of the Atlantic tidewater plain extending from the shores of northern New England to Labrador. Paleo-Indian asemblages, characterized by deeply concave-based, bifacially-fluted triangular projectile points have been unearthed at the Debert site, Nova Scotia, dated approximately 10,600 B.P. (MacDonald 1968: 53) and at scattered sites in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. That the southern coast of Labrador was populated prior to 8,000 B.P. is indicated by two radiocarbon dates associated with artifacts that are believed to relate to a late stage of the Paleo-Indian period. (J. Tuck, pers. comm.)

The submergent coastline in the remainder of Atlantic Canada may have innundated similar sites elsewhere (Grant 1972).

Modification of the late Paleo-Indian fluted projectile point form to the straight-based, and eventually stemmed, Archaic point form has been recognized as an *in situ* development at sites along the Atlantic coast. (Tuck 1975a: 140-1). Close similarities have been recorded between Coe's North Carolina Piedmont Sequence (Coe 1964) and Broyles' Kanawha Sequence in West Virginia. (Broyles 1971). Almost identical sequences have been reported at sites on the lower Hudson River (Ritchie and Funk 1971) and at the Neville site on the Merrimac River, New Hampshire. (Dincauze 1971). At least one projectile point from the Hirundo site in Maine (Sanger and MacKay 1973) and the lithic material from the Barney site in southern Labrador also resemble (at least superficially) some of the material from the Neville site (Tuck 1975a). The homogeneity of early Archaic cultural material at sites from North Carolina to Labrador implied that contact and exchange among Indian groups inhabiting the tidewater plain encouraged the spread of transitional artifact types, particularly projectile points, fairly rapidly northward along the Atlantic coast.

The Maritime Archaic Tradition. By 7,500 B.P., or earlier, the coastal population had adapted their material culture to the exploitation of marine mammals. The antiquity of a single, closed-socket antler toggling harpoon from the l'Anse Amour Maritime Archaic burial mound, southern Labrador, dated approximately 7,500 B.P. (Tuck and

McGhee 1975) indicated that this weapon type could not have been culturally 'borrowed' from pre-Dorset Eskimo sources, as suggested by de Laguna (1946). The gradual establishment of a climax forest concurrent with ameliorating climatic conditions in the Northeast may have led to a pine domination around 5,000 B.P. in regions exposed by the draining of the Champlain Sea. (Fitting 1970: 65-6; Ritchie 1971: 3; Tuck 1975a: 144). Pine forest would have prevented the growth of forage plants for small fur-bearing animals as well as caribou, which comprised the major food resource of the interior hunters. Such a limiting factor on the terrestrial game supply may have restricted the Middle Archaic Indian population north of Maine to small, scattered groups living along the narrow coastal corridor where the focus of subsistence activities would primarily be toward the sea.

The Laurentian Archaic Tradition. Finds of ground stone weapons and tools at sites in lower New York State, Vermont, interior New Hampshire and Massachusetts implied that, following 5,500 B.P., coastal Indian peoples pressed inland to the Lake Forest region, with this interior branch contributing to the development of the Vergennes Phase of the Laurentian Archaic as defined by Ritchie. (1965, 1969). Although there was a marked decline in the numbers of ground stone implements after the Vergennes Phase (5,500 B.P. - 4,700 B.P.), subsequent cultural exchange undoubtedly occurred between the coastal and interior Indian populations. (Fitzhugh 1975: 135). Decorated ground stone 'bayonets' and ground projectiles recovered from Archaic sites in southern and eastern Ontario (Wright 1960: 133- 6) were reminiscent

of Maritime Archaic weapon types. Should the coastal Indians have designed the long, nearly parallel-sided ground slate and bone 'bayonets' to dispatch swordfish and marine mammals (Snow 1973; Tuck 1975a: 142-4), then the decorated forms may have been introduced into the eastern Lake Forest region as ceremonial counterparts. Trade contact between the two traditions may have been established sporadically throughout the Middle and Late Archaic periods, yet it was assumed that the predominant drift of peoples and cultural ideas into northern New England and the Maritime Provinces continued to be in a northward, rather than in an eastward direction. (Tuck 1975a: 144).

Northern expansion of Maritime Archaic peoples. By 5,000 B.P. Indian peoples had proceeded up the coast to the Saglek Bay region of northern Labrador and were exploiting local outcrops of Ramah chert for toolmaking purposes. (Tuck 1975; Tuck and McGhee 1975: 106). This blue-grey translucent chalcedony flecked with opaque darker streaks has been found on Maritime Archaic sites in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Maine, evidence testifying to an early coastal trade in tools and weapons of exotic materials, and likely more mundane materials as well. The earliest southward migration of pre-Dorset Eskimo peoples into the Saglek Bay region after 4,000 B.P. coincided with the evacuation of the coastal Indian population from northern Labrador and the rapid decline of Ramah chert at coastal sites both in Labrador and elsewhere in the Northeast. (Fitzhugh 1975: 129; Tuck 1975a: 144-5). The late stages of the Maritime Archaic tradition in Labrador and Newfoundland following 3,900 B.P. were based on arti-

fact assemblages in which dark, light and mottled cherts, felsites and igneous rhyolites predominated as the lithic materials worked by the coastal Indians.

Maritime Archaic mortuary ceremonialism. The fluorescence of a distinctive form of mortuary ceremonialism along the coast after 4,500 B.P. was represented by the Moorehead burial complex in Maine, the 'Red Paint' burials of northern New England, the Cow Point site in New Brunswick and the Port au Choix and Twillingate cemeteries in Newfoundland. Earliest evidence for the beginnings of this cult along the Atlantic coast has been derived from the recent excavation of the l'Anse Amour Maritime Archaic burial mound, coastal southern Labrador, dated at approximately 7,400 B.P. (Tuck and McGhee 1975). Later burial assemblages contained a strikingly uniform array of ground stone and bone weapons and tools: hunting equipment, woodworking and bone-working tools (but few hideworking implements) and a class of non-functional decorated ground stone and bone 'bayonets'.

During the first decades of the twentieth century Moorehead (1922) investigated more than twenty individual 'boneless' cemetery sites in coastal Maine. Ground stone weapons and tools were associated at these areas with large circular patches of red ochre stain, but almost no chipped stone. Occasional finds of ground stone tools continued in Newfoundland and southern Labrador (Lloyd 1875a and b; Howley 1915) until the mid 1960's when MacLeod (1967) unearthed a large number of long, ground slate celts and other ground tools, covered in red ochre, from the Curtis site on Twillingate Island, northeastern Newfoundland.

Harp and Hughes (1968) excavated several coastal burial sites at Port au Choix containing both Maritime Archaic and Dorset interments. There was no evidence of cultural contact and exchange between the Dorset and Indian populations; the geographic proximity and chronological closeness of the burial sites for the two peoples evidently being accidental.

Burial at the Cow Point site (Sanger, 1973) continued for over two centuries beginning around 3,800 B.P. One of the most important contributions of this work to the field of northeastern prehistory was the recognition of a temporal breakdown in restrictions governing the orientation of the flexed interments and the spacing of graves. Bodies in the earliest graves had been positioned longitudinally north-south along the long axis of a hill, whereas later graves lacked any obvious directional orientation and often cut through earlier interments. (*Ibid.*: 87-8).

In 1968 Tuck began excavation on a large cemetery ground at Port au Choix containing a wide range of ground stone items as well as bone. The unusually high alkaline content of the soil had preserved some of the more perishable cultural objects, decorated bone lances, finely-carved bone pendants, bone combs, bone tubes and whistles, harpoons and serrated and barbed bone points stained with red ochre. Lithic assemblages included finely-ground slate 'bayonets' with linear and nocked designs on both faces. Ground stone tools were represented by short-troughed gouges, celts, adzes and axes.

Close cultural relationships existed among the burial assemblages recovered from Port au Choix, Cow Point and the Moorehead cemeteries.

Ground stone 'bayonets' from Cow Point and Port au Choix were almost identical in form and incised decoration to a number of well-preserved bone ceremonial examples from the Nevin burials near the Blue Hills, Maine. (Byers 1959; Bourque 1971; Tuck, unpublished ms.: 200-01).

Weapons and tools from Late Maritime Archaic occupation sites. The ground stone inventory from burial assemblages represented only a small proportion of the lithic culture of the Late Maritime Archaic peoples. Excavation of an occupation site at the Beaches, Bonavista Bay, Newfoundland (Carignan 1975), and at the nearby Pittman site, White Bay (Devereux 1967), revealed a well-developed blade-core industry in addition to the ground stone celts, axes, shallow-troughed gouges, abraders and fragments of stemmed points. There was also a sizable representation of chipped stone weapons and tools; lanceolate, ovate, triangular and stemmed bifaces, bipoints and projectiles.

After 4,000 B.P. the close cultural ties among Indian groups inhabiting the tidewater plain broke down, particularly in southern New England where an influx of peoples as well as cultural ideas may have occasioned the replacement of the 'narrow point tradition' by the distinctive Savannah River or Susquehanna tradition (Dincauze 1972). Farther northward, the relatively homogeneous culture of the Maritime Provinces underwent regional modification as traits from the south, west and northwest became adopted by the resident Indian population. Only in central and southern Labrador and Newfoundland did the ancient cultural continuum remain comparatively unaltered by migrations of peoples and ideas. Archaeological investigation in the Hamilton

Inlet-Groswater Bay area of Labrador revealed a regular cultural sequence between the Sandy Cove Complex (c. 5,500 B.P. - 4,700 B.P.) and the Rattler's Bight Phase (c. 4,000 B.P. - 3,700 B.P.) based primarily on seriational change within the ancient narrow-bladed, stemmed projectile point tradition. (Fitzhugh 1972: 124-5).

A localized blade-core industry characterized by small, carefully-worked flake points and linear flake forms has recently been identified in late prehistoric components at stratified sites in central Labrador and at the Iceberg site in southern Labrador. (Marcie Madden: personal communication). This industry was undoubtedly the result of an *in situ* development in the far Northeast, as lithic materials (high-grade siliceous cherts including Ramah chert) and flaking techniques used by the indigenous coastal Indians differed radically from those of the continguous Shield and Eskimo populations. Chipped bifaces and narrow-bladed projectiles persisted until historic times, although the blade-core industry declined gradually and eventually disappeared by the first century of the Christian era.

Period of confusion: 3,500 B.P. to the beginning of the Christian era. The archaeological record spanning the time period from Late Archaic to Early Woodland was particularly confusing for northern New England and the Maritime Provinces. Ground stone disappeared from assemblages concurrently with the replacement of the shouldered and stemmed projectile points by broader-bladed, side-notched points. Lithic materials also in many areas; locally-obtained stone being substituted for the finer-grade siliceous cherts. The absence of

ground stone gouges at Woodland sites may have reflected a major shift in woodworking activities, perhaps resulting from the substitution of the wooden dugout by the birch bark canoe. (Snow 1973). Large bone knives and spearheads, serrated darts, open-socketed bone toggling harpoons, barbed harpoons, leister points and gorges persisted throughout Woodland times into the historic era.

The more dramatic changes in the material culture of the resident coastal population may have occurred as the result of a major shift in the seasonal round of subsistence activities. Following 3,800 B.P. deteriorating annual climatic conditions (Nichols 1974) led to a decline in the swordfish population off the shores of northern New England. (Snow 1973). As the swordfish decreased, the exploitation of littoral resources; quahogs, oysters, mussels and soft-shelled clams, increased in importance. The depth of many shell middens testified to the emphasis on littoral resources, whereas swordfish remains were scarce. Snow (1973) proposed that these sites were occupied from early spring to the late autumn, during which time the hunting of moose and deer remained of secondary consideration.

The reliable time marker between Late Archaic and Woodland provided by the appearance of pottery did not extend north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. By 2,900 B.P. two distinct Archaic Indian traditions, the Maritime Archaic and Shield, were present on the Labrador coast. Intrusive Shield-related components were represented at Hamilton Inlet by Fitzhugh's Northwest River Phase (c. 2,000 B.P. - 1,500 B.P.) and in southern coastal Labrador by Area 4b at the Iceberg site. (Marcie Madden: personal communication). Although artifactual ratios from

these components did not comply well with the ratios presented by Wright (1972) for classic Shield sites, lithic materials and stone-working techniques were similar to Shield assemblages from interior Quebec.

Except for temporary Shield intrusions, the Maritime Archaic remained the culturally dominant Indian tradition in coastal Labrador until the early Christian era. Resemblances among notched point types from the Beaches site, Bonavista Bay, Newfoundland 1973), the Forteau Point site, southern Labrador (Tuck and McGhee 1975) and the intrusive Black Island (c. 4,200 B.P.) and Point Revenge (1,300 B.P. - 400 B.P.) complexes at Hamilton Inlet (Fitzhugh 1975: 125) implied a northward and eastward expansion of maritime oriented peoples from the Strait of Belle Isle region, where Archaic sites have been found to contain evidence for a seriation of point types ranging from stemmed to corner- and side-notched. (Tuck and McGhee 1975). Whether or not Laurentian Archaic influences initially stimulated the development of the notched point form in coastal southern Labrador, although plausible, was not archaeologically determined. Diffusion of peoples and ideas from the Strait of Belle Isle region may have contributed to the formation in the far Northeast of the regionalized, culturally-related variant traditions subsumed under the late stages of Tuck's "Northeastern Maritime Continuum." (1975a).

Three hypotheses concerning the cultural origins of the historic northeastern Algonkian tribes in the Northeast.

I. The cultural continuum hypothesis. An hypothesis, first propounded by Snow (1972) and later developed by Tuck (1975), concerned

the existence of a cultural continuum derived from a late Paleo-Indian base and persisting until historic times with minor, regionalized internal variations. Such a proposition allowed for a movement of Indian peoples in a south-north direction along the Atlantic tidewater plain, with a predominant emphasis on subsistence practices based on the seasonal exploitation of marine resources. Ethnographic evidence indicating that the historic Wabanaki tribes were not predominately pelagic hunters and fishermen tended to be 'explained away' by the disruption of the established seasonal round by the coming of the fur trade and the subsequent necessity to hunt fur-bearing terrestrial animals the year around. (Hoffman 1961: 214).

This hypothesis also maintained that a simultaneous, primarily independent development of an interior-oriented cultural tradition, the Laurentian Archaic, occurred to the west in New York State and southern Ontario. The Laurentian Archaic, although exhibiting a ground stone tool inventory in its earliest cultural phase, the Vergennes, lacked the weapons necessary for dispatching large marine mammals and swordfish and, because of its geographic position, was highly susceptible to influences from the southwest.

II. The replacement hypothesis. The second hypothesis supported an eastward migration of interior-oriented Shield peoples to the Atlantic coast and the physical and cultural replacement of the Maritime Archaic population by a group ancestral to the historic Algonkian-speaking tribes. One of the foremost proponents of this view, Sanger (1971), argued for the presence of a Shield-related tradition in the uplands of interior New Brunswick as represented by his Tobique Complex at the

Deadman's Pool site. Although demonstrating close affinities with Fitzhugh's Northwest River Phase in Labrador and by lacking the 'correct' endscraper ratios for a 'classic' Shield occupation site, the Tobique Complex did contain chipped lanceolate bifaces, bipoints and side- and corner-notched projectile points.

Wright's assertion that the Shield Aachaic may have evolved from a Plano Indian base to the west of Hudson Bay (1972: 85-6) concurred with evidence for the 5,000 year-old Wenopsk Shield Complex in interior Quebec. (Martijn and Rogers, 1969). Wright (1972: 87) and Martijn and Rogers (1969: 169) both maintained that future archaeological investigation in interior Quebec might reveal a cultural sequence extending into the historic period.

On the Labrador Peninsula, Shield peoples may have temporarily occupied the coast to hunt seals or fish for cod and capelin when the caribou herds failed to pass through the territory normally inhabited by a band, or when herds were small. Should the Shield population have spoken an Algonkian or a proto-Algonkian language, as suggested by Wright (1972: 87), it also seemed plausible that these peoples practiced bear ceremonialism, used the hide-covered tamborine drum and believed in a Manitou concept similar to the historic inhabitants of northern Quebec and Labrador.

Not only did the Shield peoples differ from the Maritime Aachaic in their seasonal round of subsistence activities, but their focus of cultural orientation would have been toward the west, rather than toward the south. A hypothesis supporting the replacement of the resident Maritime Archaic tradition by a Shield-related tradition provided a most convenient and seemingly adequate explanation for the uniformity of historic northeastern Algonkian language and culture. A major difficulty

with the hypothesis was that it failed to account satisfactorily for the disappearance of the Maritime Archaic population. It seemed unlikely that the latter became extinct, although such a fate cannot be overlooked. A more appealing view to the writer was that the demise of the Maritime Archaic tradition was not dramatic, especially in coastal regions where population numbers were low.

III. The assimilation hypothesis. To allow for the persistence of Maritime Archaic culture traits into historic times, a hypothesis was formulated during the course of this study which maintained that an eastward expansion of Algonkian- or proto-Algonkian-speaking, interior-oriented peoples occurred in the past, but that gradual assimilation, not extinction of the Maritime Archaic population was the result. Ethnographic evidence for the continuation of small-scale sealing, whaling and porpoise-hunting industries along the Atlantic coast in early historic times implied the prior existence of an important pelagic subsistence economy.

Much work has yet to be done on sites in the Maritime Provinces which may indicate a merging of cultural traditions from the east and northwest. Tuck's revision of Sanger's Tobique Complex focused upon the large, chipped bifaces, bipoints and expanding-based points which were also well represented at the Beaches site, Bonavista Bay (Carignan 1973), and at the Teacher's Cove site, New Brunswick. (Tuck 1975a: 142). Similar chipped bifaces were recovered by Erskine (1970/71) from Yarmouth County, Nova Scotia. Tobique Complex assemblages, containing not only the large chipped bifaces, but also formed uniface endscrapers, a

diagnostic trait of Shield assemblages, suggested a merging in New Brunswick of the resident coastal culture with influences from the northwest. Evidently interior-oriented peoples were moving east, but where and when these groups first entered the Maritime Provinces remained unknown.

A much less confusing record existed in the far Northeast where similarities in weapon and tool inventories could be traced between Fitzhugh's Point Revenge Complex and the Fox Bar and Cape Freels I sites recently excavated in northeastern Newfoundland. (Paul Carignan: personal communication). A hiatus of more than 500 years between the Cape Freels I site (c. 900 A.D.) and the earliest recorded prehistoric Beothuk component at the Indian Point site dated at 1,590 ± 100 A.D. (Devereux 1970) represented either an evacuation of these Indian peoples from Newfoundland during the first centuries A.D. or -- a thought-provoking alternative -- defined the temporal boundaries of still unexplored sites, testifying to the continuous occupation of the island from the Late Archaic period.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Emphasis in this study was placed primarily upon the function, construction and ornamentation of bark, hide, wood and bone objects made by the Micmac of the Maritime Provinces, the Beothuk of Newfoundland and the Montagnais/Nascapi of Labrador and northern Quebec. Assemblages of material culture traits were singled out which could be traced to a unitary prehistoric source. Differences in seasonal climate and topography within each culture area were often responsible for minor modifications over time in a specific type of item. The shape and construction of webbed snowshoes and toboggans, for instance, were adapted to suit regional environmental conditions.

Historic material culture in the Maritime Provinces. Southern and Iroquoian influences were evident in Micmac material culture. Wooden splint basketry, the wooden cradle board, the keel-based pipe and tobacco, the fire drill, the shaman's rattle made from the dew claws of moose or caribou, the ball-headed club, gambling games, team games, embalming and, in Woodland coastal shell heaps, the appearance of pottery represented culture traits which diffused from the south and west. Rituals associated with the 'feeding' of masks and fetishes, the exchange of belts of bead *wampum* as tokens of diplomacy and many other aspects of Iroquoian social practice and political organization prevailed among the Wabanaki, but were rare or absent northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Items and practices present among both the Micmac and the Montagnais/Nascapi were the round-bottomed birch bark canoe, the webbed snowshoe, the inverted T-shaped heel seam on hide moccasins, the tradition of painting linear designs on hide clothing, rectangular, cylindrical, oval, expanding-based and flat bark receptacles, the toboggan, the seasonal 'eat-all' feast, a specific body of bear ceremonialism rites, the sweat lodge, and the *Manitou* concept. The Maritime Provinces thus constituted a geographical arena for the merging of prehistoric influences from the south, west and northwest.

Historic material culture northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Material culture traits found northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence but absent among the Micmac included the hide-covered circular drum, hide-covered rattle, composite fish-hook, leg-skin bag, three-pole dwelling frame, shaking tent, the brush and timber drift fence, ceremonial hide, the *nimapan* and *natutshikan*, the bear chin-skin, decorated bear skull, bull roarer and many other objects including a range of organic fetishes associated with the gratification of game spirits. The ceremonial hide and the shaking tent were also made and used by the Plains Cree. Conversely, the *nimapan* represented a localized expression of the broader *Manitou* concept. Snow goggles, the ice pick and the snow shovel constituted a body of winter hunting equipment used by the Eskimo to the north. The harpoon made by the historic Nascapi of northern Labrador was also 'borrowed' from the historic Eskimo.

An instrument diagnostic of subarctic cultures in North America, the hide-covered drum, was not found among the Micmac, but was recorded

historically among the Malecite of New Brunswick and the Penobscot of Maine. The distribution of this item in the Northeast suggested a late-prehistoric diffusion of northern influences cross-country to a region of the Atlantic coast south of Nova Scotia.

Historic Beothuk material culture. Beyond the far eastern margin of the Montagnais/Nascapi territory, the Beothuk maintained a separate cultural existence from the surrounding Algonkian-speaking tribes. Many of the existing bark, bone, wood and hide objects manufactured by the Beothuk implied a grafting of northeastern Algonkian (or proto-Algonkian) ideas on older, indigenous prototypes with radical results. This occurrence was suggested by the shape and construction of the Beothuk birch bark canoe, with its V-shaped hull in cross-section, pointed bow and stern and elevated gunwale amidships, and the Beothuk snowshoe with its small webbed hoop and long, protruding wooden tail piece. Beothuk moccasins differed from those made by the Micmac and Montagnais/Nascapi in having a rectangular vamp, a square toe and a pointed heel seam. Another peculiarity of Beothuk culture was the lavish use of red ochre on the human body as well as on possessions.

Evidence for the persistence of Maritime Archaic traits along the Atlantic coast. During the final stages of the study functional categories were projected 'back in time' and compared with parallel sub-divisions of non-lithic items recovered from Maritime Archaic sites in the Northeast. Maritime Archaic data included the extensive use of red ochre in burials, a multi-functional knife made from a modified beaver incisor blade hafted in an antler handle, a sophisticated bone

and antler carving and incising industry indicated by the presence of decorated combs, pendants, bone whistles, eyed needles and other more esoteric objects, and the apparent absence of drills for boneworking. Utilitarian bone and antler tools and weapons were represented by bone awls, longbone beamers, unilaterally- and bilaterally-barbed harpoons, leisters and darts, toggling harpoons, foreshafts, knives and lances.

Categories of Micmac items showed much closer affinities with classes of objects made by the historic Algonkian-speaking peoples living northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence than with the known range of Maritime Archaic non-lithic artifact types. Unlike Maritime Archaic culture, the focus of historic Micmac culture was predominately toward the land and the resources of the interior, not toward the sea.

By contrast to the Micmac, Beothuk cultural horizons extended to the sea and to the intensive exploitation of marine mammals. The importance of the sea and its resources were implied in Beothuk symbolism and in the nature and shape of organic fetishes made of amputated sea-birds' legs, skulls and mandibles. The Beothuk practice of stringing perforated shell beads on thongs and attaching them to hide articles indicated the continuation into historic times of one of the most ancient decorative traditions along the Atlantic coast. Combs and flat, 'pendant-like' carved bone pieces found at Beothuk sites exhibited finely-incised linear, stippled and zigzag designs on both surfaces similar to the decoration on Maritime Archaic bone and antler pendants, ornamented bayonets and lances. The Beothuk also smeared the bodies of their dead and the gravegoods included in the grave with red ochre, often brought their dead long distances to the coast for burial and

apparently distributed gravegoods irrespective of age or sex, reminiscent of Maritime Archaic burial custom.

Historic wood, bark, bone and hide items with controversial cultural origins. The origins of the crooked knife, the woven net, the fitted hide coat, the moosecall and the sweat lodge could not be ascertained. Of the five, the moosecall and the sweat lodge were definitely of considerable antiquity in the Northeast. The crooked knife, possibly due to the incorrect accessioning of two hafted examples in the Beothuk collection at the Newfoundland Museum, was represented in artifact inventories for all three historic tribes. Although this implement resembled several well-known European knife forms, its distribution among circumboreal peoples from eastern Siberia (Black 1973: 33) to Labrador suggested derivation from a prehistoric tool type, perhaps a modified rib bone or incisor hafted in an antler handle. Net-making may have diffused in prehistoric times from the Bering Strait region of western Alaska, although archaeological confirmation for the antiquity of the technique in North America was extremely tenuous. (Giddings 1952: 36). Similarly, the fitted hide coat northwest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence may have been introduced, or developed independently, in North America prior to European contact. Neither the woven net nor the fitted hide coat were made prehistorically in the Maritime Provinces.

Evidences of a cultural continuum along the Atlantic coast. An hypothesis was formulated concerning the distinct differences between Beothuk material culture and the material cultures of the historic Algonkian-speaking mainland tribes. This explanation viewed the

Beothuk as geographically removed from a mainstream of northern Algonkian (or Proto-Algonkian) influences, and probably peoples, responsible for the formation of a fairly homogeneous culture area ranging, in a north-south direction from Labrador to the southern New England States. The original migration was seen as a two-pronged drift; one branch pressing northeast toward the Labrador Peninsula, the other branch progressing southeast as far as the Delaware Valley before ultimately spreading north and south along the Atlantic coast. It was thought that such an hypothesis might account for the presence of close linguistic affinities between the coastal Delaware and Powhatan groups of the central-Algonkian speakers north of the Great Lakes. (Bloomfield 1946).

The possibility of a cultural continuum along the Atlantic coast has been a preplexing problem to archaeologists working in the Northeast. The hypothesis concerning a broad expansion of northern Algonkian (or Proto-Algonkian) peoples and ideas would explain the striking cultural and linguistic similarities between Indian peoples both northwest and south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The cultural assimilation, rather than cultural extinction, of the late Maritime Archaic population in the Northeast would allow for the persistence of Maritime Archaic traits and practices into historic times. The intricate linear and stippled design patterns incised on flat bone surfaces by the Micmac and Beothuk might have descended from the Maritime Archaic bone carving and decorating tradition.

According to the assimilation hypothesis the greatest number of ancient maritime culture traits survived longest in Newfoundland. An

ancestral strain of the historic Beothuk may even have inhabited the island contemporaneously with the Dorset. Archaeological excavation of the Cape Freels I site extended Indian occupancy of Newfoundland back to about 1,000 A.D. -- not early enough for Dorset habitation, but yet earlier than previously anticipated. Future excavation may in time support the continuous occupation of Newfoundland by Indian peoples from the late Archaic to the historic era. The prominence of the Dorset-type harpoon in Beothuk sea-mammal hunting activities, Beothuk cave burials and the decided emphasis on 'skeletal like' components in design patterns incised on Beothuk bone pieces might be attributable to Dorset influence.

It thus was proposed that Beothuk culture was not a direct descendent of the Maritime Archaic tradition. Two of the most important articles of Beothuk hunting equipment, the bow and arrow, may first have been introduced into the far Northeast by an Arctic intrusion or during an early eastward expansion of Algonkian- (or Proto-Algonkian-) speaking peoples. Finally, it seemed plausible that an eastward migration of interior-based Indian peoples would have occurred in successive waves with assimilation being gradual as no evidences of sudden cultural change have been identified in the existing archaeological record.

Whether or not the Maritime Archaic population spoke Algonkian was impossible to determine from the nature of the evidence examined in this study. It was assumed that the languages of the historic Indians and the Maritime Archaic would not have been closely related. Should they have been derived from the same linguistic stock, they may have been affiliated at the level of a remote proto-language rather than at any lesser familial subgrouping.

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NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. The exact date of the cessation of the Beothuk Institution was not determined, although it had apparently ceased to function by the time its President, W. E. Cormack, died in 1836.

CHAPTER TWO

1. In the winter of 1965/66 a period of mild weather followed by a sudden cold spell caused frost to form over the lichen, driving the caribou to the coast in search of food. (Henriksen 1973: 1).

2. The raccoon, the little economically-exploited skunk, and the porcupine are not native to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

CHAPTER THREE

1. This knife may be the one described by Howley (1915: 332) as found in the Beothuk boy's burial on Burnt Island, Notre Dame Bay, although firm evidence is lacking.

2. Buchan in January 1811 viewed the landscape near Red Indian Lake, where "on a projecting rock, were placed several stag's horns." (Howley 1915: 75). These antlers may have been hunting decoys or they simply may have been disgarded after a hunting foray.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. As late as 1914 Speck could identify the remains of drift fences

along the upper reaches of the Exploits River. Lines of felled tree trunks extended for short distances back from the shore where the moisture from the water had preserved them from the ravages of forest fires. (Speck 1922: 19-20).

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Castoreum or 'beaver scent' was obtained and preserved by soaking the testicles of a beaver, killed in the breeding season, in brandy, and placing them in the castoreum container.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Wallis and Wallis (1955: 79) also mentioned a type of Micmac sleeved hide jacket made from the skin of the belly and front legs of a moose. No additional information could be obtained concerning this garment.

CHAPTER NINE

1. *nimpan* is a Montagnais word, *nimaban* is the Nascapi term (Speck 1935).

2. The Micmac at Mirimachi told Le Clercq in a legend that the cross was not their own, but was introduced to them by a beautiful personage in a time of extreme famine. (Ganong 1968: 147-8).

3. The Beothuk cut the boat loose from Peyton's wharf along the shore of Exploits Bay and then rifled the ship's contents. (Howley 1915: 106).