

On November 4–5, 2013, Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland, hosted "Maroon and Mi'kmaq: An International Indigenous Exchange." This meeting of ideas and individuals provoked comparisons between Mi'kmaw and Maroon communities and built the basis for further scholarly interactions. This publication reveals many more connections that grew out of this Indigenous symposium.

Spread over two evenings, the symposium profiled special guest speakers Maroon Colonel Frank Lumsden of Charles Town, Jamaica; Saqamaw Misel Joe of Miawpukek First Nation, Conne River, Newfoundland; and Dr. Afua Cooper, James Robinson Johnston chair in Black Canadian studies at Dalhousie University. Dr. Cooper discussed the origins and history of the Maroons within the context of the Atlantic slave trade. Colonel Lumsden spoke about contemporary Maroon history and issues pertaining to his role as leader of one of four Maroon communities in Jamaica. Chief Joe, recognized as the spiritual leader of the Mi'kmaq, spoke about the importance of Native spirituality in the context of revival and survival.

In addition to these lectures, the symposium offered varied and vibrant presentations. The Mi'kmaw Drumming Group's drumming, welcome song, and honour songs provided an essential context and welcome for all. Context was also provided by a screening of Werner Zip's documentary, Mountains of Freedom—Jamaica's Struggle Against Slavery. Ingrid Mary Percy spoke about Indigenous identity and art, and Dr. Angela Robinson talked about the importance of Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaboration. A display of Colonel Lumsden's own art, depicting Maroon culture, served to illustrate his lecture, "Art as an Expression of Culture." The symposium also led to two other events. Chief Joe and Colonel Lumsden spoke to Dr. Michael Newton's class, "Spirituality and the Environment," and later met privately with a group of Indigenous students at Grenfell.

"Maroon and Mi'kmaq" was an unparalleled success. It brought together individuals from the university and the public, from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, in a discussion about the importance of Indigenous international values. This discussion extended to the west coast of Newfoundland, via broadcast on Rogers TV. The symposium served to underscore the need and desire to think outside systems that have largely come to dominate academies and governments and showed that healthy and new liaisons can be forged out of a revisioning and addressing of history.



Through the conferences that we're having, through meetings such as this, there is a community that transcends geography – a community of shared interests.

COLONEL FRANK LUMSDEN







DR. AFUA COOPER

James Robinson Johnston Chair in Black Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax

Dr. Afua Cooper holds a Ph.D. in Black Canadian Studies and the African Diaspora from the University of Toronto. She has conducted research on African-ascended people and their cultures across Canada and internationally, in Jamaica, France, the United States, Britain, Senegal and Ethiopia. Her ground-breaking book on Canadian slavery, The Hanging of Angelique: The Untold Story of Slavery in Canada and the Burning of Old Montreal, was nominated for the Governor General's award.

Further, in 2007, Dr. Cooper served as the coordinator and chief knowledge officer of the Ontario Initiative to Commemorate the Bicentenary of the British Slave Trade Abolition. An acclaimed and celebrated poet, Cooper helped to centre dub poetry in Canada and beyond and cofounded the Dub Poets Collective. She has published five books of poetry, including the critically acclaimed *Copper Woman and Other Poems* and the award-winning *Memories Have Tongue*. She has also published two historical novels, which have garnered Canadian and American awards. Her work in the creative arts has been recognized with the Premier of Ontario Award for Excellence in the Arts and, internationally, with the Beacon of Freedom Award (recently awarded for her book *My Name is Phillis Wheatley*). She was named by *Essence Magazine* as one of the 25 women who are shaping the world. Dr. Cooper is the current James Robinson Johnston Chair in Black Studies at Dalhousie University, Halifax.



SAQAMAW MISEL JOE

Traditional Saqamaw, Miawpukek First Nation (Newfoundland District Chief — Mi'kmaq Grand Council)

Misel Joe comes from a long line of Saqamaws, or chiefs, in the Mi'kmaw territory. In 1982, he became traditional Saqamaw and the Newfoundland

district chief for the Mi'kmaq Grand Council. Saqamaw Joe is also the spiritual leader of his people and has lectured on native medicines and traditional healing practices at several international alternative medicine conferences. He is a member of the Atlantic Policy Congress, the First Nations Trust Fund, the Newfoundland Museum Advisory Committee, the Aboriginal Capacity and Development Research Centre, and a member of the National Aboriginal Advisory Group of Heritage Canada. He also holds a community seat at the United Nations (Human Rights). Saqamaw Joe received an honorary degree of doctor of laws from Memorial University (Grenfell Campus) in recognition of his contribution to the economic, social and political development of the Mi'kmaw people of Newfoundland. Saqamaw Joe is

strongly committed to preserving the language, culture and traditions of the Mi'kmaq. Saqamaw Joe's private interests include bone carving, snow-shoe making, hiking, and spending time learning the Mi'kmaw language and songs. He wrote a children's novel titled *Muinji'j Becomes a Man*, which was published by Breakwater Books, and co-wrote *Mi'sel Joe: An Aboriginal Chief's Journey* with John Crellin and Raoul Andersen.

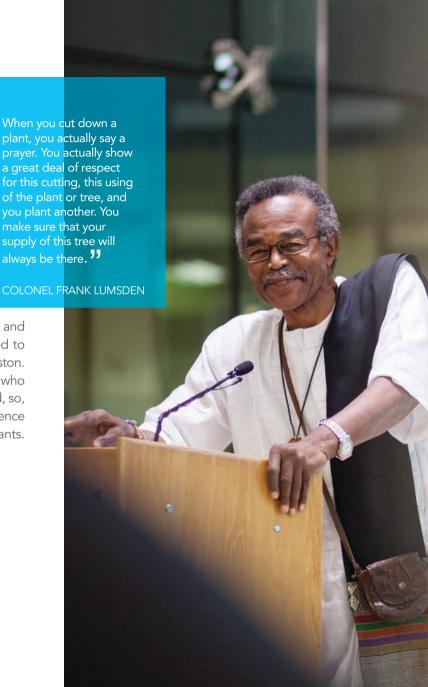


COLONEL FRANK LUMSDEN

Charles Town Maroon Council, Charles Town, Portland, Jamaica

Colonel Frank Lumsden graduated from Southern Illinois University in 1970 with a B.Sc. in business management. He developed the tools for advocacy working in Chicago in computer sales and as an account representative for financial securities brokerages. Lumsden is also a successful self-taught artist with international installations. He became the Colonel of the Charles Town Maroons in 2002, with a mandate to drive economic development using ancestral

heritage. Lumsden developed the Charles Town Maroon Drummers and Dancers and toured Africa and Canada. Lumsden has been invited to attend and speak at conferences in such places as Suriname and Boston. His long-term goal is to build a community of Indigenous people who are able to shine their collective light on each other's challenges and, so, foster change. Now in its sixth year, an international Maroon conference takes place in Charles Town and attracts international participants.





"Maroon and Mi'kmaq: An International Indigenous Exchange" was a symposium that elucidated issues pertaining to the struggles of Indigenous peoples world-wide, but specifically to the history, culture, spirituality, and contemporary strivings of Canada's Mi'kmaw communities and the Maroons of Jamaica.

Speeches ranged from the academic to the popular. Stories were shared and exchanged. Histories explored. Art pieces unveiled. Songs sung. Drums beaten. Ancestors invoked. The symposium was unique in that it provided a space where Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons collaborated and strategized on how to engage in social justice and reconciliation work.

It was a great honour and pleasure to participate in "Maroon and Mi'kmaq." It gave me the opportunity to link the struggles and histories of two Indigenous communities of the Americas. I spoke on the Transatlantic 18th century struggle of the Jamaican Maroons as exemplified in their quest for liberty, sovereignty, and dignity in the face of British colonialism, aggression, and slavery. The Mi'kmaq of Canada faced similar struggles.

DR. AFUA COOPER, JAMES ROBINSON JOHNSTON CHAIR IN BLACK STUDIES, DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX

The Maroon project was an emancipatory one. They entertained African visions of freedom, and over the course of several centuries. they made these visions real. They were in the front lines of freedom for black and oppressed people worldwide as abolitionists and as freedom fighters. "" DR. AFUA COOPER

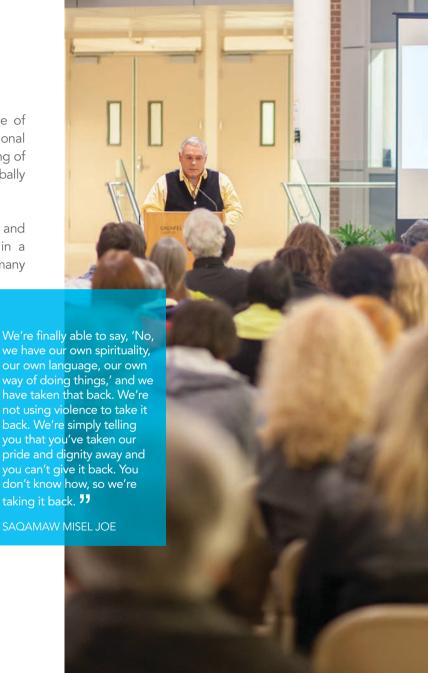
Fulfilling! Deeply fulfilling! To be involved in the rich interweave of people, places and culture in a participatory exchange of international significance. Such events enhance the knowledge and understanding of the diversity of Maroon and Mi'kmaw cultures—cultures that are globally separate, yet distinctly linked.

It brought great joy to have people from the Maroon culture visit us and bring Mi'kmaw people together in celebration. I participated in a classroom discussion with Colonel Lumsden and am amazed how many

cultures are similar. The struggles we face are not ours alone; they are felt everywhere. It broadened our minds in a way that will be felt for years to come. We have made great strides in achieving our goals; however, we need to not lose sight of the prominence of racism and judgment that remains. We will continue to build our communities and educate the world.

When unity evolves from diversity, there is real progress.

SAQAMAW MISEL JOE OF MIAWPUKEK FIRST NATION, CONNE RIVER, NEWFOUNDLAND



Thanks for including me in the symposium at Grenfell. It was great interacting with First Nation representatives and experiencing the cultural expression of drumming and song. Indigenous people know so little about each other's culture when there are so many related issues. Providing a platform that enables Indigenous people to dialogue directly is very important. The possibility of forging a borderless community of shared interests as a result of such a gathering would make it feasible to help each other.

The victory of the Indians signing that document [the Miawpukek First Nation self-government agreement recently signed at Conne River] acknowledging them as Indigenous with autonomy is a victory for us all.

Each victory will help some other to win.

COLONEL FRANK LUMSDEN, CHARLES TOWN, JAMAICA When Maroons talk of art, which they do often, they refer in some way to its central role in social life."

COLONEL FRANK LUMSDEN



Dr. Cooper's presentation, "The Jamaican Maroons in the 18th-Century Transatlantic Struggle for Black Liberation," explored the history of Maroon communities in Jamaica across several centuries. These

isolated communities had begun in the early sixteenth century when Spain established its hegemony on the island and began to import African slaves to work on the sugar plantations.

The slaves who escaped this enormously harsh existence formed those Maroon communities. Yet the Maroons also integrated with the remaining native Taíno population. When the British seized the island from the Spanish in 1655, the number of African slaves brought to Jamaica increased exponentially. In her presentation, Dr. Cooper provided vivid details about the transport of the slaves across the Atlantic in what became known as the notorious Middle Passage and described the horrific conditions that the slaves were forced to endure working on the sugar plantations. The Maroons successfully resisted recapture by the British and

even harried British forces; indeed, it can be said that the "Maroons ruled Jamaica by night." The British failed to subjugate them, because the Maroons were much more effective at fighting on this difficult mountainous terrain. As such, the history of the Maroons in Jamaica offers an intriguing episode in the history of slavery, black liberation and even, indirectly, in the history of the Abolition movement.

DR. EDWIN BEZZINA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, HISTORICAL STUDIES, GRENFELL CAMPUS, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY The very fact of the existence of Maroon communities opened up material and conceptual spaces for black freedom within the lives of the slaves. That is to say, the slaves could and did think that there was another alternative—that another world, a world of freedom, was possible. 77

DR. AFUA COOPER





To see the pride on the faces of the Mi'kmaw people of the west coast of Newfoundland as they prepared to drum a traditional welcome on our two big drums to the guests of "Maroon and Mi'kmaq: An International Exchange" was overwhelming. The venue in the atrium of Grenfell Campus was an awesome venue with high ceilings and wonderful acoustics. To have the traditional chief of the Mi'kmaw people here in Newfoundland, Chief Misel Joe, sit among us as we drummed the Mi'kmaq Honour song left many people with a renewed sense of pride in our culture and traditions. To hear about the struggles of the Maroon people in Jamaica from the other two presenters left many feeling that Indigenous peoples have been marginalized in general here in the Americas over the centuries.

Our drumming group was extremely happy to be part of this exchange at Grenfell Campus.

KEITH CORMIER, MEMBER OF THE QALIPU MI'KMAQ FIRST NATIONS BAND AND CITY COUNCILLOR FOR THE CITY OF CORNER BROOK



The Ferriss Hodgett Library is pleased to provide online, open access to research events held at Grenfell Campus, made possible through the Scholarship in the Arts Fund. Events are recorded, digitized, and then made available through Memorial University's Research Repository (www.research.library.mun.ca). This is an open access repository, which means dissemination to researchers around the world free of charge and preservation of unique research material. Statistics automatically generated by the system indicate multiple downloads of events held earlier this year. Both evenings of the Maroon/Mi'kmaq symposium, as well as Dr. Michael Newton's "Spirituality and the Environment" class, are included in the repository. The insights from Chief Misel Joe (Miawpukek First Nation, Conne River) and Colonel Frank Lumsden (Charles Town, Portland, Jamaica) will be a valuable enhancement to our growing collection in the area of Indigenous studies.

LOUISE MCGILLIS, ASSOCIATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN, GRENFELL CAMPUS, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY



Both Newfoundland and Jamaica are overshadowed by dominant narratives (historical and contemporary) that focus on Indigenous erasure (i.e. the eradication of the Beothuk in Newfoundland and of Indigenous peoples in Jamaica). "Maroon and Mi'kmaq: An International Indigenous Symposium" focused on the vitality and presence of Indigenous peoples in both places.

For me, rethinking the past and inherited narratives is a crucial step towards the improvement of human rights. If people are invested so heavily in a narrative that promotes a recognition of erasure, they will not be inclined to focus on the reality of presence.

Recognizing presence and the possibility of thinking in different ways is important. Though I am not Aboriginal, I believe core Indigenous values (and an embracing of them) might be a key step in undoing a significant amount of damage that threatens people today. We have all been ripped off by a colonial system (albeit not equally), and we all deserve alternatives to narratives and histories that, for example, would understand mother earth as something to be dominated and controlled for capitalist enterprises and that would understand women as subservient to men. Without romanticizing Indigenous values and suggesting that all Indigenous nations are homogenous, it seems that certain traditional Indigenous beliefs might offer some respite and alternative to a patriarchal and colonial legacy.

DR. STEPHANIE MCKENZIE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ENGLISH PROGRAMME, GRENFELL CAMPUS, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY





Miss America by Kent Monkman.

Indigenous exchange events, such as this, are critical to understanding and contextualizing contemporary art as taught within a BFA Visual Arts Program of a Canadian university. In the past fifteen years, in Canada, there has been a great transformation in the reception and understanding of Indigenous art. Contemporary Aboriginal artists and historians (like Steve Loft, who is Mohawk and Jewish, currently the Trudeau Scholar at Ryerson in Toronto and the newly appointed Coordinator of the Aboriginal Arts Office at the Canada Council for the Arts) are rediscovering the hidden histories of Aboriginal art.

Artists like Rita Letendre, who has traditionally been discussed solely as a mid- to late-20th century, Canadian female, Québécois, abstract painter, is now being understood as a significant figure in the development of Aboriginal abstract art.

Young Indigenous curators are producing some of the most exciting and important exhibitions in the country and receiving national and international acclaim: Tania Willard, co-curator of *Beat Nation: Art, Hip-Hop and Aboriginal Culture,* and Candice Hopkins, co-curator of *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art* at the National Gallery of Canada in 2013, are just two examples.

Contemporary Aboriginal artists, such as Kent Monkman (of Cree ancestry), Terrance Houle (member of the Blood Tribe), Jackson 2Bears (Kanien'kehaka, Mohawk), Jordan Bennett (Mi'kmaq) and Winnipegbased KC Adams are addressing ideas of post-colonialism, cultural hybridity, identity, tradition, sexuality and stereotypes through mediums



ranging from landscape painting to performance art to digital media. These ideas are personal, social and political. Increasingly, we are seeing links between the social activism conducted by artists and within First Nations' societies. Brian Jungen's internationally recognized art uses traditional idioms and pop culture materials to express contemporary concepts. Notably, artists played an active role in the Idle No More movement.

These notions of social engagement, hybridity, and cultural expressions are not unique to First Nations' art or this period in art history. They are, however, a significant way that we can understand the art of today and the world that it reflects.

INGRID MARY PERCY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, FINE ARTS, GRENFELL CAMPUS, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY



The Mighty Culloo. Portrait of Jordan
Bennett photographed by Terrance Houle.

Photo apears courtesy of Houle.





The recent Scholarship in the Arts funds, which enabled Colonel Frank Lumsden of the Charles Town Maroons, Jamaica, to visit our campus, did a great job of bringing various aspects of our work at the university to the general public. In my "Spirituality and the Environment" class, the presentation of Colonel Lumsden, along with the attendance and participation of Chief Misel Joe, enabled my students to get a wider, first-hand account of the connection between Aboriginal spirituality and the environment. My own research interests were fuelled by this introduction to Maroon culture. The Maroons are very similar to the Garifuna people of Belize. The Garifuna are another Afro-Caribbean group who escaped slavery at an early date and were able to maintain and still promote their African heritage.

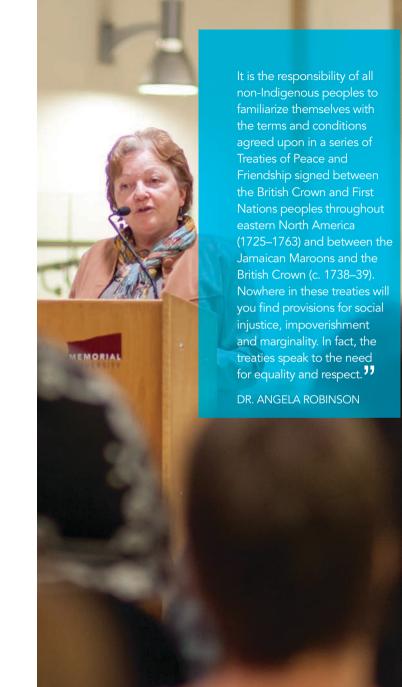
DR. MICHAEL NEWTON, PROFESSOR, RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, GRENFELL CAMPUS, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY



Although culturally distinctive and residing a continent apart, the Mi'kmaq and the Maroons share a number of similarities: both were subjected to the negative impacts of British colonialism; both were repressed by subsequent state governments; and both face present-day political, social, economic, and cultural marginalization. As I work and study as an anthropologist, such a revelation is not the least bit surprising. But perhaps what is most confounding is the fact that the respective governments of each group continue to hold fast to colonial ideals, despite the fact that Treaties of Peace and Friendship were signed between the Mi'kmaq and the British (1725–1763) and the Maroons and the British (c. 1738–39)—treaties designed to replace dissent and conflict with harmony and respect.

Even the briefest of surveys of Maroon and Mi'kmaw history will make it immediately apparent that, in order to address issues of marginalization, poverty, and social injustice, what is needed is a transformation of the socio-political contexts that prevent the formation of Indigenous nationhoods and freedom of identity and citizenship that accompanies political autonomy. In this regard, the symposium was an important event for the peoples of both nations and is one that encourages the exchange of ideas, facilitates dialogue, and opens avenues for future collaboration. On a personal level, I see the potential to expand my research among the Mi'kmaq to include comparative analyses of Indigenous peoples in an international context. I also look forward to collaborations with the leaders and peoples of both nations and other researchers working on similar topics.

DR. ANGELA ROBINSON, CHAIR, SOCIAL/CULTURAL STUDIES, GRENFELL CAMPUS, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY











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We extend our sincere thanks to the artists whose talents bring this book to life. Thank you to KC Adams, Terrance Houle, Colonel Frank Lumsden and Kent Monkman, who generously allowed us to reprint their artwork.

Thank you also to photographers Mandy Jo Keeping and Shawn Corbett, for vividly capturing the symposium, and to KC Adams, Terrance Houle, Rene Jeddore, the Kent Monkman Studio, the *Newfoundland Herald* and Ivan Savić for providing additional photos. Except where noted, the images in this book were photographed by Mandy Jo Keeping.

Permission to quote granted by all performers/artists.

The Smith-Francis Orthography was followed in the production of this book; we use Mi'kmaq as a plural noun and Mi'kmaw as an adjective and a singular noun. Our sincere thanks to Bernie Francis, who graciously advised us on the differences between Mi'kmaq and Mi'kmaw.

Video recordings of the symposium are housed by Memorial University Research Repository and by the Digital Library of the Caribbean and are available at:

research.library.mun.ca/6037/ research.library.mun.ca/6073/ research.library.mun.ca/6040/ dloc.com/AA00019842/00001 dloc.com/AA00019841/00001 dloc.com/AA00019841/00001

This book is also available, in e-book format, at www.grenfell.mun.ca/indigenous-symposium

MAROON AND MI'KMAQ: AN INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS EXCHANGE (November 4-5, 2013) PRODUCED BY

Pierian Arts Edwin Bezzina Stephanie McKenzie Ingrid Mary Percy Angela Robinson



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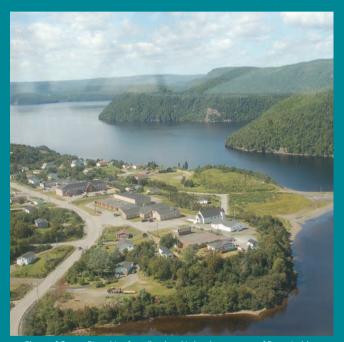


Photo of Conne River, Newfoundland and Labrador, courtesy of Rene Jeddore

"It is the strength of those who walked the path before us that gives us the strength to go on."

KEITH CORMIER, member of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nations Band and city councillor for the City of Corner Brook